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Manja Klemenčič *Editor*

From Actors to Reforms in European Higher Education

A Festschrift for Pavel Zgaga

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Manja Klemenčič
Editor

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Chapter 1
Introduction: From Actors to Reforms in European Higher Education

Manja Klemenčič

Abstract In the last three decades, European higher education has experienced more reforms than in any other such (short) period in history. These reforms were accompanied and to a large extent prompted by an unprecedented degree of intergovernmental cooperation in higher education. This introductory chapter to the volume "From Actors to Reforms in European Higher Education: A Festschrift for Pavel Zgaga" presents the conceptual framework drawing on the proposition that 'new policies create a new politics'. The chapter reviews the major reform processes in European higher education over the last 30 years and discusses some implications on the political opportunities of actors, especially students and academics. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the new wave of higher education reforms introduced by the European Strategy for Universities published by the European Commission in 2022 and raises some questions on impact of these reforms on the politics of European higher education. Finally, the chapter summarizes the contributions in this volume. Inspired by and in conversation with Pavel Zgaga's scholarship, teaching and service, contributions in this volume explore the questions of actors and reforms in European higher education and their connections to higher education reforms beyond Europe. The contributors have a highly diverse background and include both early-career and well-established scholars and practitioners, and they come from different European regions, including Slovenia and its neighbourhoods, and beyond Europe.

Keywords Higher education reforms · Europe · Higher education politics · European Strategy for Universities · European University Initiative

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1.1 Reforming European Higher Education

In the last three decades, European higher education has experienced more reforms than in any other such (short) period in history. These reforms were accompanied and to a large extent prompted by an unprecedented degree of intergovernmental cooperation in higher education. This volume reflects on the reforms in European higher education focusing on the reform issues as well as the higher education politics enabling or accompanying these reforms.

The conceptual framework of the volume draws on the proposition that 'new policies create a new politics' (Schattschneider, 1935) and that "policy choices are highly consequential for political life" (Hacker & Pierson, 2014, 1). Higher education reforms not only influence higher education practices but shape a wide range of political forces: from the organisation and mobilisation of groups to the formation of political identities to the strategies of political actors (Skocpol et al., 1989). With new policies comes 'policy feedback' (Pierson, 1993) signalling policy objectives and policy resources, i.e., expected policy benefits or burdens. Stakeholders interpret these objectives and resources as political opportunities to pursue their specific interests. The contributions in this volume offer examples of how new higher education policies not only altered the fabric of higher education practices but have also shaped the new political opportunities for the higher education actors.

The Bologna Declaration signed by the ministers responsible for higher education paved the way towards the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with "more comparable and compatible''national higher education systems in Europe (Bologna Declaration, 1999). The Bologna and the European Union "instruments'', such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Europe (ESG) have created opportunities for some actors to come onto the centre stage in European higher education polity. For example, experts behind the TUNING Educational Structures in Europe became prominent consultants on the design of study programmes, and specifically definition of learning outcomes within the EQFs. The policy focus on quality assurance gave more prominence to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and led to the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Furthermore, as Pavel Zgaga argues (2019b, 272–273) 'the "Europeanisation" of higher education, i.e., building of the EHEA, has resulted in substantially strengthened position of students and their unions not only in the institutional governance but also in the policy making at the national and European level' (see also Klemenčič, 2012a, b, c).

In parallel to the Bologna reforms, reforms of governance and funding of higher education have taken place with more emphasis on "adequate and sustainable incomes for universities", "autonomy and professionalism in academic as well as managerial affairs", "local and regional needs" and "closer cooperation between universities and enterprises" (European Commission, 2003). The European Union's Lisbon Process (Lisbon European Council, 2000) with the goal for the EU "to

become 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" set the tone of these reforms. One consequence has been a stronger involvement of industry stakeholders, such as Business Europe as a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), and industry representatives in the external boards of the higher education institutions. The European Commission's "modernisation strategy for universities" (European Commission, 2003, 2005a, b, c, 2006, 2008a, b, c) influenced changes in the strategic orientations of the higher education institutions (EUA, 2006).

Referred to as promoting neoliberal doctrine and academic capitalism in higher education (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), these reforms have been associated with the proletarisation of academics in the sense of their diminishing social status and the social advantages this status implied (Halsey, 1992), reconfigurations of academics' political power within governance of their higher education institutions (Bleiklie et al., 2011), and managerial control over academics' productivity and their academic time (Barnett, 2008, see also Jamieson, Naidoo and Enders in this volume). Students' political power in institutional governance too has been diminished. However, unlike academics, students have also gained new political opportunities (Klemenčič, forthcoming a).

Even if students' representative rights might have diminished with the changing university governance structures, students have gained influence through "student voice" echoed through student experience and student engagement surveys (Bell & Brooks, 2018; Zepke, 2018), consumer complaint systems and signalling "consumer" preferences (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Molesworth et al., 2009; Williams, 2013; Tomlinson, 2017; Nixon et al., 2018). Furthermore, students are constructing for themselves new roles and new types of authority in quality assessment, accountability, and performance. They are taking on roles as expert evaluators in external evaluations of study programmes and institutions (Klemenčič, 2015, 2018, forthcoming a). Furthermore, student expert advice is called on in managerial decisions on quality, performance, and accountability (Klemenčič, 2015, 2018). Finally, the liberal education reforms introducing more student-centred learning and teaching approaches are changing power relations between academics and students inside the classroom (Bunce et al., 2016; Hoidn & Klemenčič, 2020; Klemenčič, 2020). Students are gaining agency in teaching and learning, arguably curbing academics' teaching autonomy (Klemenčič, forthcoming b).

Since 2020, the ongoing changes in European higher education, have brought forward a new set of policy priorities and objectives. The Rome Ministerial Communiqué (2020) emphasises commitments towards the development of a more inclusive, innovative, interconnected, and resilient EHEA. The accompanying statements demonstrate the collective concerns of the present times: for academic freedom; for the social dimension of higher education; and for the enhancement of higher education learning and teaching. The attacks on academic freedoms and autonomy of higher education institutions in some countries reinforce the concerns about the diminishing democratic values and practices in European societies. Higher

education institutions are affected by the actions of governments, but they also have capabilities, and indeed, responsibilities to play a civic role. The Rome Communiqué (2020) calls on higher education institutions specifically to do a service to society in educating active, critical, and responsible citizens. Enhanced quality of learning and teaching speaks to this as well as to other objectives, such as higher education's contribution to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including addressing the challenges of climate change.

At the background of the Rome Communique, and in fact all higher education policies since 2020 has been the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on higher education. Enabling inclusive higher education in times of crises was undoubtedly a reflection of the differentiated negative effects of the pandemic on students, especially students from underprivileged backgrounds and those enrolled at higher education institutions with fewer resources and lesser developed digital infrastructures. Digitalisation of higher education has become not only an important means of maintaining higher education operations during the pandemic, but it also enables transnational cooperation in higher education and research.

The new politics following these reforms is only just emerging. What is clear is that students, represented by the student unions and on European level by the European Students' Union (ESU) remain politically strong actors in the post-pandemic political landscape. The political clout of academic staff in European-level policy processes, however, does not appear to strengthen. The two European associations - European University Association (EUA) representing universities and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) representing the other types of higher education institutions – remain strong political actors. Their political clout has been particularly visible in the policy processes leading up to the on the new European Strategy for Universities published by the European Commission in January 2022 (European Commission, 2022a) along with the Staff Working Document (European Commission, 2022b) and a Council recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation (European Commission, 2022c).

The Strategy is a non-binding policy instrument that outlines current and future policies of the European Commission and planned actions in higher education, research, and innovation within the higher education sector. The Communication is accompanied by a Staff Working Document which presents the existing European legislation, ongoing actions and initiatives and impact measures, as well as main challenges and gaps in EU actions to address these challenges. The Staff Working Document (European Commission, 2022b) draws on existing literature, reports, stakeholder input and data collected by various monitoring bodies. It then offers recommendations for actions and rationales for the actions outlined in the Strategy. The Council Recommendation (European Commission, 2022c) is effectively "a wish list" by the European Commission of what Member States should do at the national level to support European transnational cooperation in higher education. It lists the structural and operational issues to be addressed by the Council including some of the flagship actions proposed by the Strategy.

At the forefront of the three documents is the uniquely European approach in European Union's investment into higher education which focuses on development of intra-European transnational cooperation in higher education (Hazelkorn & Klemenčič, 2022). The major initiative highlighted in the Strategy is the Erasmus+ European Universities. Through this initiative, the European Union provides funding to alliances of European higher education institutions that commit to integrate structurally and develop deeper forms of strategic cooperation in education, research and innovation and service to society. Since 2019, through two calls, 41 such Erasmus+ European Universities were selected with 280 European higher education institutions involved. Each received up to 5 million EUR over a five-year period, and more funding is earmarked for the future. The Strategy paves the way for extending and strengthening the European Universities Initiative, and the new call has been launched in 2022.

Many of the actions mentioned in the Strategy are intended to remove barriers to successful transnational cooperation. One ongoing action that will be scaled up is the European Student Card which offers a unified form of identification to students enrolled at European higher education institutions. One of the notable new proposed actions is a European Degree. A European Degree is intended to eventually become a certificate granted to students who have obtained a joint degree from European higher education institutions partnering in transnational cooperation such as within the European Universities Initiative. In the first phase, the European Degree would be a quality label for joint study programmes which fulfil common European standards. Another proposed action is to create a legal statute for transnational alliances at the European level to support structural integration. Both initiatives are ambitious and bold steps towards bypassing the obstacles to transnational cooperation due to differences in member states' accreditation systems and incomplete implementation of the instruments agreed within the Bologna Processes.

Overall, the Strategy is carefully aligned with the political priorities of the current Commission. It brings forward actions in higher education, research and innovation that help the European Commission reach the objectives of 1) A Europe fit for the digital age; including supporting Europe's tech and digital sovereignty, 2) A European Green Deal, 3) A new push for European democracy, 4) A stronger Europe in world, and 5) Promoting our European way of life. These objectives clearly resonate through the 50 ongoing and proposed actions listed in the Strategy. Together they testify of an ambitious European Union's agenda for higher education institutions backed by significant (over 80 billion EUR for 5 years period) financial commitment through the main EU's financial programmes: Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Structural Funds and InvestEU. The monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of this investment is planned through the new European Higher Education Sector Observatory which will combine the best of existing EU data tools and develop new both for monitoring and to support evidence-based policy making in the future.

The new policies of this "higher education package" too are creating a new politics in European higher education polity. The European University alliances are becoming notable players in the European higher education arena. They will not be

only recipients of EU funding but will inevitably seek to shape future policies and instruments. The European Commission has already extensively consulted them in the process of preparing the European Strategy and the Council Recommendations (European Commission, 2022a, b, c). It remains to be seen whether they will be represented in European policy making by EUA and EURASHE or perhaps a new association or a network. Students from the European University alliances have already formed a separate body, a European Student Assembly. How the relationship between this body and the European Students' Union (ESU) will unfold will also be an important aspect of future European higher education politics. Given the emphasis on digital technologies in higher education, actors from ed. tech industry are bound to emerge as prominent players. Similarly, actors from "green industries" focusing on higher education addressing the threats of climate change are bound to come to centre stage given the Strategy's focus on higher education supporting the European Green Deal. Similarly, new roles might open up in higher education polity for civil society actors working on protection of democratic values and for those agencies which recruit talent from third countries to Europe and promote European higher education globally.

As the 2020 EHEA implementation report (EACHEA, 2020, 157) suggests, "[m]any have argued that although the Bologna Process proved to be an effective vehicle for structural reforms in its first decade, it seems to have 'run out of steam' in recent years, and is in need of a new 'vision'". Such new vision might indeed be coming from the European Commission with this package of likely most ambitious policies by the European Union so far. These reforms call for new research on European higher education, including research on the consequences of the reforms on the higher education politics in Europe. Inevitably, such research will require understanding of the past. This is what this volume has to offer.

1.1.1 Contributions in this Volume

This volume is dedicated to celebrating the intellectual contribution of Professor Pavel Zgaga whose work has helped advance our understanding of various aspects of higher education reforms (Zgaga, 2007a, c; Zgaga et al., 2015; Zgaga 2019a, b, c), reforms in his native Slovenia (Zgaga, 2002, 2009b, 2010a, 2015a, b, 2021; Zgaga & Miklavič, 2011; Komljenovič and Zgaga, 2012; Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2015), in the South-East Europe (Zgaga, 2003a, b, 2005b, 2006d, 2009a, b, 2010c, 2013a, 2014a, b, 2017a, b, c, d, e; Zgaga et al., 2013a, b; Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2014; Waren et al., 2021), and within the Bologna Process leading towards the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Zgaga, 2003b, c, 2004, 2005b, 2006a, 2007a, b, c, 2012a, b, 2014a, b, 2015b, 2018, 2019a, b, 2020b; Weber & Zgaga, 2004; Zgaga et al., 2016; Branković et al., 2014). Pavel Zgaga made also notable contribution on the external dimension of the EHEA (Zgaga, 2006a, 2007a, 2009b, 2012b, 2019a), as well as other topics, including on academic freedom and higher education governance (Zgaga, 2002, 2006b, 2012, 2016, 2017a, b, c, d, e)

and wide range of other topics. As depicted in the biographical chapter written by Pavel's friend and colleague Slavko Gaber, and reinforced by several other contributions in this volume, Pavel Zgaga has not only been an important scholar investigating higher education reforms but also one of important actors in policy developments towards the reforms and their implementation.

Inspired by and in conversation with Pavel Zgaga's scholarship, teaching and service, contributions in this volume explore actors and reforms in European higher education and their connections to higher education reforms beyond Europe. The volume reflects the development of European higher education, especially the Bologna process reforms and their resonance in other parts of the world through the "external dimension" of the European higher education reform processes. It builds on the prior scholarship on the reforms within the Bologna Process which have received considerable scholarly attention (Corbett, 2005a, b, 2006; Ravinet, 2005a, b; Neave & Maassen, 2007; Neave & Amaral, 2008; Amaral et al., 2009; Kehm, 2010; Gornitzka, 2010; Lažetić, 2010), and especially in the threequel devoted to the study of the Bologna process (Curaj et al., 2012, 2015, 2020). The contributions are structured into four distinct sections: (1) reforming European higher education; (2) global challenges to higher education reforms; (3) social dimension in higher education and democracy; and (4) teachers and teacher education, and academic and academic profession.

1.1.2 Reforming European Higher Education

Liviu Matei opens this section with a discussion on "transformative thinkers and successful reformers" in European higher education. Matei makes a powerful argument that despite the undeniable existence of exceptional individuals that have driven higher education reforms, these individuals are not systematically studied by social scientists nor featured in the public imaginary associated with the reforms. Liviu Matei refers to the formidable thinkers that have developed the visions of the transformations in higher education and the innovators that have introduced "technical" instruments and initiatives that impact millions of people in higher education. Matei highlights Pavel Zgaga as one of such major reformers who had an impact on higher education reforms on many different levels. It should be added, however, that Liviu Matei too is one such formidable thinker and higher education reformer. Liviu Matei's scholarly work on academic freedom and university governance has had unfortunate relevance to his own work as Provost of the Central European University which was effectively forced by the Hungarian government to relocate from Hungary to Austria (2019). Matei has been at the front lines fighting for the livelihood of this prominent university. The Central European University has played a tremendous role in educating social scientists in the region and continues to be a world-renowned higher education institution with global recruitment of students and staff.

Robert Waagenar too is one of those prominent higher education innovators that Liviu Matei refers to in the previous chapter. Waagenar has been one of the initiators of the impactful project "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe' '(TUNING) starting in 2000. TUNING received funding from the European Commission to define and develop learning outcomes for degree study programmes. This was to help reinforce the objectives of the Bologna Process to consolidate higher education degree structures in Europe. Over time, the project developed into Tuning Academy and the Tuning methodology has been adopted by 120 countries across the world. The TUNING project has been one of the European Union's most globally impactful instruments, and Robert Waagenar its foremost protagonist. In this volume, Waagenar puts on his scholarly hat and offers an analysis of the governance of the Bologna Process and its reforms. Waagenar argues that the emphasis in the Bologna Process shifted from policy making to policy implementation. This has resulted in reforms of the Bologna Process's governance model to become more multi-layered and multidimensional. In his meticulous analysis, Waagenar discusses key players in the Bologna Process, their understanding of their own role and responsibilities, and their acknowledging of the new realities of and for the implementation of the Bologna objectives.

The following two chapters take us to Pavel Zgaga's neighbourhood. Elsa Hackl, a longstanding government official in Austria and scholar of higher education at University of Vienna, offers a historical analysis of bilateral cooperation between Slovenia and Austria. In the early stages of the Bologna Process, and before Slovenia's membership in the European Union, it was the bilateral cooperation such as the one described in this chapter that was of tremendous importance for supporting the educational reforms in Slovenia. Pavel would often speak of his interaction with Elsa which helped him navigate the new initiatives within the European Union and make plans for Slovenia's involvement. Elsa's systematic account of the bilateral cooperation begins with a short overview of the cooperation between the two countries before Slovenia's independence in 1991. She continues with analysis of the cooperation after the establishment of the new independent state – the Republic of Slovenia – both bilaterally and as part of the regional cooperation networks. Elsa's account is a powerful reminder that it is the interpersonal interactions that make the reality of the bilateral cooperation formalised in government documents and university partnership agreements. It is these day-to-day interactions between individuals, like between Elsa and Pavel, that ensure that intergovernmental and interinstitutional agreements make actual difference in the world of higher education.

Aleksa Bjeliš too can be described as one of important higher education reformers in Croatia enacted through his numerous roles, including as a rector of University of Zagreb. Aleksa's contribution to higher education reforms transcends the borders of Croatia through his engagement with the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Higher Education Research and the Council of Magna Charta Observatory. A highly regarded professor of physics, Aleksa has also been an important contributor to higher education studies especially on questions of scientific research and development, and the position and role of universities in contemporary societies and economies. It is in this area that Aleksa and Pavel found their common interests and

collaborated over the years. For this volume, Aleksa prepared a highly original study on the role of constitutional courts in promoting legislative changes in higher education. Aleksa notes that in the countries that have transitioned from authoritarian to democratic systems, such as the countries that emerged from the former Yugoslav Federation, the constitutions include legislative provisions that guarantee academic freedom and university autonomy. Such provisions are rarely present in the constitutions of *Old Europe* with long democratic traditions. Aleksa specifically reflects on the constitutional developments in Croatia and Slovenia and the role of constitutional courts in the reforms of higher education.

Susan L. Robertson and Roger Dale have collaborated over many years in conceptualising and mapping the changes in education policies, education as part of state-making projects, and global and regional (higher) education cooperation projects and processes (Dale & Robertson, 2002, 2008; Robertson, Bonal and Dale 2002). Joined by Kris Olds, the authors offer an admirably succinct yet comprehensive historical-political review of the higher education reforms in Europe from the establishment of a single market with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 until the present. The authors consider the present-day European developments – the rise of authoritarian populism, neo-nationalism, the 2008 financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic, and their 'echoes' in higher education. Their joint contribution in this volume reflects Pavel's work on the external dimension strategy of the EHEA, or the 'global echo' as Pavel described it. Susan, Roger and Pavel were very closely involved in the Universities in the Knowledge Economy project (UNIKE; 7FP, Marie Curie), coordinated by the University of Aarhus (Professor Sue Wright), a few years ago (2013–2017).

Anne Corbett, a prominent scholar on and commentator on the higher education reforms in Europe (Corbett, 2005a, b), joins this volume with a theoretical account and a systematic empirical analysis of policymaking on the external dimension for the EHEA. Anne covers the period from 2003 to 2009 which has been the most remarkable time of policy change in this area. Her guiding questions are how the actors involved helped develop the external dimension strategy, and indeed what this specific case tells us about actorhood in higher education reforms as played out in the Bologna Process. Anne meticulously surveys the EHEA archives on the EHEA's executive body - the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) to show individual actors' roles, including to critically examine the role of the European Commission. In her convincing depiction of the dynamic nature of actorhood in this policy process, Anne shows how different actors have crucial impact on the policy making process at different stages. Conceptually, Anne grounds her analysis in the framing stage of the policy making process. This is also the stage in which Pavel's notable report *Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting* (Zgaga, 2006a) is of historical importance as it framed and set critical boundaries around the discussions on Bologna's external dimension that later resulted in the external dimension strategy (Bologna Process, 2007).

1.1.3 Global Challenges to Higher Education Reforms

Anne Corbett's chapter links the previous section on the higher education reforms in Europe to the global context. Pavel's relevant work here includes the report on the external dimension of EHEA (Zgaga, 2006a), as well as his more recent work on the global dimension (Zgaga, 2019a). Of relevance is also Pavel's work on globalism as an ideology and globalisation as a process cultivated by globalism (Zgaga 2017a, b, c, d, e; Zgaga & Fink-Hafner, 2020). Pavel's work offers critical analyses of the macro-level educational policy developments associated with internationalisation and globalisation. He points to dichotomies and complex realities in implementing higher education policies. These emerge from differences in socio-economic, political, and historical-cultural contexts in which these education reforms are embedded as well as from competing interests, power asymmetries and divergent values for internationalisation and globalisation of higher education (Weber & Zgaga, 2004; Zgaga, 2006a, 2009a, b).

The section starts with Meng-Hsuan Chou's chapter on actors and actorhood in higher education regionalisms. Hsuan is one of the foremost scholars in research on higher education regionalisms and defines them as a way to organise policy cooperation and pursue higher education reforms within world regions. Together with Pauline Ravinet they have authored several notable publications on this topic (Chou & Ravinet, 2015, 2016, 2017; see also Cabanda, Tan and Chou 2019). Hsuan and Pavel collaborated in the Jean Monnet Network »Nexus of European Centres Abroad for Research on the European Higher Education Area« which resulted in several publications, including a special issue "Twenty Years of the Bologna Process - reflecting on its global strategy from the perspective of motivations and external responses" (Moscovitz & Zahavi, 2019). In her chapter, Hsuan first conceptualises higher education regionalisms. Then, she analyses the case of 'European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region' (SHARE) as a case of higher education inter-regionalism between the EU and ASEAN identifying the actors and their roles. Hsuan connects her contribution to Pavel's work on the external dimension of EHEA as well as reflects on his knowledge exchange in Southeast Asia.

The chapter by Janja Komljenovic (Lancaster University; earlier, at the beginning of her doctoral studies, Janja collaborated with Pavel at the Center for Educational Studies at the University of Ljubljana) focuses on "the agents of competition and cooperation in global higher education". She offers a rigorous analysis of actorhood of various players attending the annual event and expo of the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) which is the biggest global event for institutional actors of global student mobility. Janja's chapter complements Pavel's work on macro-policy developments on international student mobility by bringing the analysis to the micro-level interactions in this NAFSA event. Janja investigates the actorhood of the attendees at the conference by analysing these attendees' social relations, capabilities, and positionalities in their interactions. Janja has made scholarly marks in several areas of higher education research,

including research on higher education markets (Komljenovic, 2019; Komljenovic & Robertson, 2016; Robertson & Komljenovic, 2016). At present, she is leading a significant research project studying the relation between the digital economy and higher education and how they might affect each other.

Sintayehu Kassaye Alemu was mentored by Pavel Zgaga while pursuing his PhD studies as part of the Marie Curie-Universities in Knowledge Economy (UNIKE) Project and is now Associate Professor at Mekele University in Ethiopia. In his research he has focused on internationalization and academic profession as well as made important contributions on the effects of the Bologna Process's external dimension in Africa (Alemu, 2019). In the contribution to this volume, Sintayehu offers a critical analysis of the diffusion of higher education reforms from the Global North to Sub-Saharan Africa. He also writes about the incremental and piecemeal adoption of the reform instruments towards regional integration within Africa. Sintayehu describes the reform actors in African higher education as well as the impact of the adopted reforms.

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić has a long career in higher education diplomacy through her service in UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) in Bucharest, later as a Chief of Section for Higher Education in UNESCO in Paris, and now as independent consultant to UNESCO and several other international higher education players. Stamenka's and Pavel's paths crossed frequently starting in the 1990s when Pavel was working for the Slovenian government and Stamenka in UNESCO. They continued until present through the web of academic and professional higher education initiatives, networks, and events, including the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and of course the Bologna Process. As an expert on quality assurance in a global comparative perspective (Uvalić-Trumbić, 2016; Uvalić-Trumbić & Martin, 2020), Stamenka contributes to this volume a chapter on global reforms in quality assurance. Stamenka analyses the challenges in reforming quality assurance in higher education. She argues that these reforms are even more pressing now due to increased demand for higher education and persistent inequalities, internationalisation of higher education confronting populism and neo-nationalism, popular controversies regarding the value of and values in higher education, and the global COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, it is these global developments that make the reforms of quality assurance even more challenging. In her contribution, Stamenka leads us through a discussion on the emerging global models of quality assurance in several key areas, such as student-centred learning, internationalisation, micro-credentials, social engagement and more.

In the final chapter of this section, Barbara Kehm analyses how global issues and problems in higher education are reflected in the European higher education systems. She takes us through six examples of global trends: migration, academic freedom, increasing marketization, competition and rankings, cooperation in higher education, and the COVID-19 global pandemic. Barbara is a prolific and highly accomplished scholar in higher education studies. Her research focus is on governance of and professionalisation in higher education, changes in doctoral education (Kehm, 2006) and the Bologna Process, including internationalisation and mobility (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). With Pavel they have interacted most recently when

Barbara has been a co-editor of the Springer's International Encyclopedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions (Shin & Teixteira, 2020) to which Pavel contributed entries on higher education systems and institutions in Slovenia (Zgaga, 2017a), in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017b), on accountability and autonomy in higher education in Eastern Europe (Zgaga 2012, 2020c), and on higher education and democratic citizenship (Zgaga 2018b).

1.1.4 Social dimension in Higher Education and Democracy

Pavel has a longstanding interest in social dimension in education. Over a period of 20 years, he has been involved in four iterations of a research project "Systemic aspects of educational strategies and encouraging of social inclusion in education" funded by Slovenian Research Agency, twice as a senior researcher and twice as principal investigator. One of his most recent publications critically tackles the questions of mobility and migration as freedom or threat within a broader discussion on inequality, innovation, and reform in higher education (Zgaga, 2020b). Discussion on social dimension is featured in several Pavel's flagship publications, including on social dimensions of the Bologna Process (Zgaga, 2005a), university mission between searching for truth and commercialization (Zgaga, 2007b); on eutopic dimensions of knowledge (Zgaga, 2009a), education for "a better world" (Zgaga, 2011), human factors of a global society (Marek et al., 2014) and inclusion in education (Zgaga, 2019a, b, c). Furthermore, Pavel has been deeply engaged with questions of democracy and education. Since 2013, he has been a member of the Core Group of Experts on Competences for Democratic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue within the Council of Europe. He authored and co-authored several publications on higher education and democratic citizenship (Zgaga, 2009a, 2017b) and public role of the university (Biesta et al., 2009).

This section starts with Peter Scott's "unpacking of the social dimension of universities". Peter highlights that the European emphasis on social dimension is one of the key characteristics that distinguishes European universities from universities in more marketized higher education systems. Peter leads us through a careful depiction of the distinct yet highly interrelated aspects of 'social dimension'. Peter Scott is one of the foremost thinkers in higher education studies and one of notable reformers of higher education. He was professor of higher education studies at University College London's Institute of Education. He now serves as Scotland's Commissioner for Fair Access providing impartial policy advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations and leading the system-wide effort to deliver fair access to education. Among his numerous publications, we also find some of the most highly cited works in our field, such as the co-authored book "The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies" (Gibbons et al., 1994) and "Re-thinking science: Knowledge and the public in an age of uncertainty" (Nowotny et al., 2013).

The contribution by Zdenko Kodelja, a prominent philosopher of education in Slovenia, presents a critical discussion on a question whether the introduction of tuition fees presents a social injustice as well as a violation of international law and human rights. Zdenko takes the proposed reform of the tuition fee system in Slovenia as a starting point of his deep questioning of justifications offered by policy makers proposing introduction of tuition fees. Both philosophers of education in a small country of Slovenia, Zdenko and Pavel have been friends, friendly critics and collaborators since student years. Zdenko is a prolific writer and heads the Centre for Philosophy of Education at the Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana.

Åse Gornitzka and Peter Maassen join forces in this volume to reflect on the public responsibility of higher education as a key social institution to support and strengthen democratic culture in society. Their contribution revolves around questions of contemporary imaginaries of the role of higher education in society, how the rise of knowledge-based economy affects the democratic role of higher education, and how the democratic value of higher education manifests itself. The authors weave into the discussion a reflection on how the COVID-19 pandemic displays the democratic value of scientific knowledge. This is a sharply argued and elegantly written chapter by two of the leading scholars in our field. They each individually and often in tandem have an impressive intellectual legacy on topics ranging from governmental policies and organisational change in higher education (Chou & Gornitzka, 2014; Gornitzka, 1999), hybrid steering approaches in European higher education (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000), university dynamics and European integration (Maassen & Olsen, 2007), accounts of higher education policy change (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2014), and many more.

The final chapter in this section is by Sjur Bergan, head of the Education Division in Council of Europe and Council of Europe's key thinker and voice on higher education reforms. Sjur Bergan has served in the Bologna Follow-Up Group since its inception until present day; the only continuous and longest-serving member of this impactful executive body of the Bologna Process. Sjur's direct input to the Bologna Process can be traced in co-authorship of many Ministerial Communiques and serving as chair of three successive working groups on structural reforms. Sjur is also the main author of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (see also his book on qualifications Bergan, 2007). Sjur has been one of the most eloquent and committed advocates for the role of education in democracy. His many speeches and writing on this topic have been collected in his monograph *Not by Bread Alone* (Bergan, 2011) and many other publications (Bergan, 2005; Bergan & Damian, 2010). His contribution in this volume is very much "a quintessential" Sjur Bergan. The chapter introduces us to the Council of Europe's work on competences for democratic culture (CDC) as "balancing intellectual rigour and political action". Specifically, the chapter analyses the Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture developed by the Council of Europe in 2012–18 and the relevance of this framework for higher education.

1.1.5 Teachers and Teacher Education, Academics, and Academic Profession

Teacher education has been one of the persistent and visible research topics of Pavel Zgaga. Pavel tackled this theme on three levels: 1) teacher education as a higher education study programme and as such involved in various intra-university processes and relations, 2) teacher education as an important part in development of educational policies, and 3) teacher education in international (and European) cooperation. Pavel has several notable publications in this area, such as the co-edited books on teacher education policy (Hudson & Zgaga, 2008) and advancing quality cultures for teacher education (Hudson et al., 2010) as well as several co-authored or authored publications (Zgaga, 2003c, 2006a, b, c, d, 2010b, 2013b, Hudson & Zgaga, 2017). Through his government role, leadership roles within the Faculty of Education and service on the promotion commission of the University of Ljubljana, Pavel has also keenly followed the changing conditions of academic work and status of academic profession (Zgaga & Fink-Hafner, 2020) and pointed also to weaknesses in the academic market in Slovenia and the prevalence in academic inbreeding (Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2015).

This section begins with two chapters on teacher education written by foremost scholars on this topic. Hannele Niemi has been an immensely impactful scholar of teacher education, especially active learning in teacher education (Niemi, 2002), as well as in her roles as university teacher and university leader (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs at the University of Helsinki, 2003–2009). In her chapter, Hannele focuses on teacher education as a part of higher education which is where teacher education has been placed in most European countries and where it follows Bologna degree structures and principles. Through a policy-level perspective, Hannele discusses needed reforms in teacher education, the role of research in teacher education as well as how teacher education can fulfil its role in higher education and society.

Vasileios Symeonidis and Michael Schratz address the transformative potential of doctoral networks in teacher education. Their contribution focuses on the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE; EU Marie Curie program), an EU-funded project in which Pavel Zgaga was also involved as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board). The authors explore the impact of the project both on participating institutions and individual participants. In his scholarly work, Michael Schratz (now Emeritus at the University of Innsbruck) also dealt considerably with the issue of the "Europeanization" of teacher education and the mobility of students - future teachers, and he also coined the term "European teacher"(Schratz, 2010). An important result of his efforts was the recent implementation of the EDiTE project, in which he mentored his collaborator in this chapter, Vasileios Symeonidis (now University of Graz).

The last three chapters focus on the academics and the effects that the contemporary higher education reforms have on academics. Ian Jamieson, Rajani Naidoo, and Jürgen Enders examine the changes in the position of academics in English

universities since 1992 and seek to address the question of why there was not more opposition from academics to the reforms imposed onto them. Rajani Naidoo has been a key scholar in examining the "consumerist turn" in higher education (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005) and repositioning higher education as global commodity (Naidoo, 2003) among many other topics. Jürgen Enders has closely analysed the changes in the academic life and work in a series of impactful publications on this topic (Enders, 2005; Enders & de Weert, 2009). In this chapter, the three authors 'leave no stone unturned' in their deep and meticulous examination of the declining power of English academics under the neoliberal reforms.

If the reader gets distressed by the previous chapter, the one that follows by Marek Kwiek won't necessarily raise the spirits. Marek Kwiek links two ongoing trends in higher education: the vertical stratification of national higher education systems and the changing academic profession in a scenario-planning exercise. Based on data obtained from research indexing databases as well as theorization of higher education governance, funding and politics, Marek offers 20–30-year scenarios on the future reforms of higher education. Marek's scenarios depict a sharply segmented higher education sector. He predicts that there will be only a very limited number of universities that will fully combine research and teaching, and these universities will also keep a highly selective access. Majority of higher education institutions will be designed to cater to educate masses of students at relatively low cost and with masses of academics acting as university teachers. Marek Kwiek is a prolific scholar on academic profession as well as numerous other themes in higher education studies. His most cited works address globalisation and higher education (Kwiek, 2001), changing higher education policies in Poland (Kwiek, 2012) and the university and the state (Kwiek, 2006).

The final chapter comes from a collaborative work by Alenka Flander, Sebastian Kočar, Sebastian, Bojana Ćulum Ilić, Liudvika Leišytė, Sude Pekşen, and Nena Rončević who all are part of the APIKS (Academic Profession in Knowledge Societies) global network. The authors draw on the survey data to study the impact of internationalisation strategies on academics' international research activities in the case of three "peripheral" countries: Slovenia, Croatia, and Lithuania. The authors argue that academics are crucial actors in implementing internationalisation strategies and have a certain level of authority to follow these policies or not. The differences between the three countries are pronounced both in terms of the perceived internationalisation strategies of their institutions and the emphasis that is given by the institutions to research excellence. The authors observe that these higher education systems continue to lag in internationalisation activities compared to the Western and Norden European counterparts.

1.2 Conclusion

The contributions in this volume are attuned to the contemporary higher education developments, including the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic during which these contributions have been written. The contributors have a highly diverse background and include both early-career and well-established scholars and practitioners, and they come from different European regions, including Slovenia and its neighbourhoods, and beyond Europe. There are many, many other higher education scholars, and practitioners with whom Pavel closely collaborated over the years that are not included in this volume. As editor, I had to make hard choices to limit the number of contributions to fit a length of an edited volume in a *Higher Education Dynamics* book series and to create a diverse mix of authors which reflects the diversity of Pavel's collaborators. Furthermore, while many of Pavel's publications have been mentioned in this volume, there are also several topics that have not been highlighted, such as, for example research ethics (Zgaga, 2020a, b), research performativity (Waren et al., 2021), a historical account of higher education policies in Slovenia (Zgaga, 2021), and more.

Pavel Zgaga is the father of higher education studies in Slovenia. He has been Slovenia's strongest advocate for the pursuit of academic research into higher education and for the development of higher education studies as a field of study. Pavel is Slovenia's most prolific, most cited, and most respected researcher into higher education. Pavel Zgaga has also been the most important advocate for the field of higher education studies to be included in the study programmes offered at the Faculty of Education at University of Ljubljana. For many generations of students, he taught courses on philosophy of education, educational policies and theoretical concepts in teacher education and educational sciences. Within the framework of the "doctoral school" which also attracts many international students, Pavel has also taught conceptualizations of the university and research space, as well as mentored many graduate students. Pavel has advocated for rigorous data collection on higher education and the development of sound data collection systems both at the governmental and institutional levels. He consistently argued that sound data collection systems are a prerequisite for sound policymaking. Pavel's scholarship and advocacy has made him an eminent figure in higher education circles in Slovenia, neighbouring countries, and the world.

I am one of many scholars for whom Pavel has been and remains a mentor, friend, or valued colleague. The present collection of essays is a token of our esteem and appreciation.

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Chapter 2
Pavel Zgaga: Actor in Reforms of Higher Education

Slavko Gaber

Abstract The purpose of this biographical chapter is to introduce Pavel Zgaga, his educational career and some important stages of his professional formation. After the general biographical data, the years of growing up and schooling until matriculation at the University of Ljubljana (1970) are presented. Pavel's first serious engagement with the idea of fundamental change in higher education was conceived and tested during the years of undergraduate study, culminating in a student project of an "alternative" university (1972). After graduating in philosophy and sociology (1975) and first teaching experiences at a technical secondary school, he became University Lecturer in "Philosophy and Ethics" at the Pedagogical Academy of the University of Ljubljana (1978). In the 1980s he became involved in projects aimed at changes in higher education and, more broadly, in the "alternative" movements of the time, which, together with the gradual disintegration of the Yugoslav federation, related to the conceptualization of the new system, in his case mainly the educational system. The 1990s followed, during which he served as Deputy Minister for Higher Education (1992–1999) and Minister of Education and Sport (1999–2000) in the newly established Republic of Slovenia. After his return to the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana, he and his colleagues founded the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS). In addition to teaching, he continues to devote himself to research work within CEPS until today.

Keywords Pavel Zgaga · Biography · Slovenia · Higher Education Studies

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2.1 Introduction

Such is the prominence of Pavel Zgaga in the field of higher education studies, and educational policy studies in general, that many readers from that field need not be reminded of the importance, scope, and originality of his scholarly and policy work. His deep thinking and understanding of the logic of education – especially higher education in the modern era, based on the philosophy of education – has inspired many of the experts and policymakers he has encountered over the decades of his international and national involvement.

Pavel's efforts to bring critically conceived change and reform to higher education in Slovenia and at the European level, and his dedicated advocacy, have brought his name further to the fore. I believe, therefore, that this monograph will help encourage readers, inspired by his example, to build on his work and make their own contributions to further thinking about the importance of properly designed, structured, and delivered higher education for the well-being of individuals, nations and humanity.

Pavel deliberately builds his thinking and systemic interventions on the tradition of his philosophical inspiration. It is worth noting that, among other classical authors, the work of Immanuel Kant, especially his *What is Enlightenment?* (1784) and *Contest of Faculties* (1798), had a very special influence on him. In our time, with the ubiquitous Fake News and the increasing influence of proponents of counterfactual thinking, it is hardly controversial to argue that Pavel's approach to take Enlightenment as a starting point should be followed. This is even more true now than it was in the challenging decades when he critically assessed and participated in shifts in higher education practice in Slovenia and the Western world.

It is not necessary to sketch his erudition here, as the chapters of the present monograph do so in a more systematic and profound manner than would be possible here. In this biographical chapter, I focus instead on initial glimpses of selected points in Pavel's life course that structurally helped shape his reflections and positioning, and thus his actions. I begin with his early education and university studies and move on to his still active research and academic life.

2.2 Early Education and University Studies

Pavel was born in 1951 in the former Yugoslavia, more precisely in its federal entity the Republic of Slovenia, which declared its independence in 1991, when Pavel was already of mature age, and sought to position education, not least, as one of the pillars of the promised prosperity of its citizens and the whole nation.

It is well known that Pavel is a well-informed, educated, cultured, but also passionate and tenacious scientist and policymaker. What is less well known, however, is that he comes from the rural and mountainous part of Slovenia, close to the border between what is now the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Italy.

He was born in Jesenice Hospital, the nearest public health facility to Hudajužna, a small village in the Tolmin highlands that today has about 100 inhabitants. Here Pavel experienced his first informal and formal socialisation during the years of comprehensive compulsory education. The first years of his schooling, grades 1–4, took place in a branch school in his home village, and he attended grades 5–8 in nearby Podbrdo, still in the same community but with a central public school. His memories of his elementary school years include the idea that he wanted to seek his vocation in either journalism or astronomy. At the forefront of his perception of his early years is, on the one hand, the basic material standard of living in the village, and on the other, the relatively small social and economic differences. Both contributed to his cognitive habitus and thus to his political orientation. If invited, Pavel would elaborate on the ideological divide of his youth as anti-fascism, which was part of the *forma mentis* of the village and the region. From a distance, this seems self-explanatory, since his village and the Primorska region belonged to Italy between 1918 and 1943; that period remained in local memories as being occupied by fascist Italy. In keeping with his character, today he would smile and combine his fondness for Italian food with the taste of anti-fascism in the minds and attitudes of his family and other people from his village.

Looking at his initial formation, I am inclined to summarise his early socialisation as the experience of a relatively simple but equal standard of living with strict upbringing at home and at school in terms of discipline and norms. Pedagogically supportive parents, combined with compulsory schooling, provided a solid basic education that emphasised pronounced equality, socialism, and anti-fascism, ideals that were to be important for his later involvement. At the age of 15, he left his home village and went to the nearest town for further education.

Fortunately for his generation, the welfare state approach and the meritocratic rationality conceptualised by Michael Young (1958) prevailed in the two competing political and economic regimes of the time. In 1965, Nova Gorica Grammar School (*Gimnazija*) welcomed Pavel Zgaga from Hudajužna among its first-year students. As its name suggests, Nova Gorica is a town founded after World War II as a counterweight to Gorizia, the town across the border between what was then Yugoslavia and Italy. As the "new" Gorica, the city was to demonstrate to the West what socialism had to offer its citizens, and one of the ideas was certainly the free enrolment of children and young people from the countryside and the working class in all levels of education. On the other hand, it was also important for his formation that the border between the two countries was completely open at the time, and he could see the wider environment in which he lived daily from two perspectives, so to speak.

As a newly founded grammar school, *Gimnazija Nova Gorica* (1947) was to eclipse its predecessor from the times of Austro-Hungarian (the first Slovenian-language state grammar school was founded in the school year 1913/1914 in the "old" Gorica) and ideologically had a special place on the border. Pavel describes this upper-secondary institution as an arena that shifted his interest from science – which he experienced as academically sound but "repressive" – to literature and art. This shift of interest is reflected in Pavel's involvement in the founding of the school's literary magazine and a youth drama group. As a youth, he also participated

in the work of *Primorsko dramsko gledališče*, a new regional theater founded in 1967 in Nova Gorica.

Pavel's affection for the humanities was evidently rooted in his years of grammar school experimentation with new fields of activity, which extended to relatively frequent visits (hitchhiking) to his older colleagues who had already become students at the University of Ljubljana, 100 km away. This university became his place of study in 1970, when he passed the baccalaureate, and it has remained his home institution to this day, for more than 50 years.

Although his options at matriculation were (A) Comparative Literature and (B) Philosophy (i.e., major, and minor), by an "administrative error" B was replaced by A. This error, Pavel says, paved the way for his permanent professional orientation. In his own words, he quickly realised "that the mistake was a better fit" than his original choice. In fact, after the first 2 years, he decided to take sociology as an additional B subject (minor) during his undergraduate years in Ljubljana. With philosophy as the predominant subject, these two disciplines formed the basis for his research, conceptualization, and interventions in public policy. He graduated in 1975 and defended his dissertation at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana in 1988.

2.3 Agency Aimed at Substantial Change in Higher Education

His student days and later professional life were marked by various interventions and engagements; those that had the greatest influence on his later path are outlined below.

2.3.1 Intervention and Engagement No. 1

During his years at the University of Ljubljana, at the Faculty of Arts (1970–1975), his first fundamental, serious engagement with the idea of substantially changing higher education was conceived and tested, culminating in the founding of an (otherwise short-lived) "Alternative" University.

In socialist Yugoslavia, where the Communist Party oversaw the "proper education" of youth, Pavel was among the students who, in line with the 1968 student movement, occupied the Faculty of Arts (1971), published and edited the newspaper *Tribuna* [Tribune] and the journal *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* [Journal of Science Criticism, Imagination and New Anthropology]; with the declared intention of significantly changing the logic of research and work in the field of scientific production. Ambitious as they were, they also inaugurated the radio station *Radio Študent* [Radio Student; founded in 1969], which still broadcasts continuously, and even organised an "alternative" university in the spring of

1972. In this project, lectures and discussions were held for 2 weeks, just before the end of the semester, in which both (interested) students and professors participated, and in which the student activists tested their ideas of a "different" university.

2.3.2 Intervention and Engagement No. 2

After graduating in philosophy and sociology in 1975, Pavel began his first teaching assignments at the upper-secondary level Ljubljana Electrotechnical School. His first teaching experience was in the subject Self-Management with the basics of Marxism, a kind of civic education in socialist Yugoslavia, and he also taught security at work to meet the required teaching volume.[1]

This was a strange professional commitment for someone with a degree in philosophy. After more than a year of "questioning" his moral and political profile,[2] Pavel was elected University Lecturer in "Philosophy and Ethics" at the Pedagogical Academy of the University of Ljubljana in the spring of 1978. His work was interrupted in the autumn of the same year by compulsory military service. When he returned to the Academy a year later, he began the combination of engagements in higher education that continues to this day: teaching and research activities combined with his participation and frequent leadership positions focused on the development of teacher education as an integral part of higher education. During this time, he and his colleagues recognised the major task in transforming Pedagogical Academy, where research was a marginal task, into a university *faculty of education* with a strong research mission, raising academic standards in the teaching profession, and offering master's and doctoral programmes that had not been previously possible. This transformation was conceptualised in the mid-1980s and legally confirmed in May 1991. This was only a month before the declaration of independence of the Republic of Slovenia.

Pavel's experiences in the student movement and his acceptance of the idea that there was room and need for a higher level of *fairness and quality of provision* in higher education led him to take on the role of Deputy or Head of the Department of General Educational Studies at Pedagogical Academy in the 1980s. Beyond his work in higher education, he retained an interest in the broader educational and social issues that structured the changing society of the 1970s and 1980s.

If I try to highlight some of the most important areas of his activity in the 1980s, the successful engagement in transforming Pedagogical Academy into a faculty within the University of Ljubljana is certainly particularly visible. He also engaged

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[1] It was the time when the reform of "career-oriented" education was being prepared; it abolished the grammar schools and with them the possibilities of teaching philosophy (also Pavel's wish), which drastically affected the graduates of the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts at that time.

[2] This was most likely related to his prominent role in the times of student protests a few years earlier, which had been noticed by the secret police of the time.

on a broader level by participating in the work of university teachers to introduce the *Studium generale* at the University of Ljubljana (in the late 1980s), which was to be available to all students as a group of electives, regardless of the curriculum of the faculty in which they were studying. This was a curricular transitional solution at a time, when the *Ancien Régime* was already saying goodbye, but the new systemic solutions had not yet been fully conceptualized and adopted.

His engagement went beyond the university setting. He participated in the critical assessment of the educational reform of the time, the so-called *usmerjeno izobraževanje* ["career-oriented" education], which was an early attempt to subject education to the logic of the (socialist) market economy and industry in the last years of socialist Yugoslavia. In doing so, he worked closely with a circle of like-minded people, education experts and activists, known as the *Šolsko polje* group [School Field], which during the *Ancien Régime* began to add to the criticism of the education system in the state at that time. In parallel, this group had already considered a possible dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia and drafted thoughtful proposals for the future of education in the new constitutional framework.[3]

Parallel to this activity, he was also a member of the first editorial board of the alternative publishing house KRT.[4] As a representative of the University of Ljubljana, he also chaired the Council of Radio Student during the turbulent times of the disintegration of the then Federation. After defending his doctoral degree and being elected assistant professor, he was elected chairman of the Council of the Faculty of Education in 1990, and in this capacity also joined the Council of the University of Ljubljana as a member.

In retrospect, all these activities served as preparation for his next engagement.

2.3.3 Intervention and Engagement No. 3

After the declaration of independence of the Republic of Slovenia, in the second cabinet of ministers, with Dr. Janez Drnovšek[5] as Prime Minister, Pavel became Deputy Minister responsible for higher education (June 1992). With this position, he became part of the group that accepted the explicit request of the Prime Minister to design and establish an educational system in the newly established independent state.

After the declaration of independence and the armed conflicts to preserve it (June–July 1991), Slovenia fortunately managed to avoid a prolonged armed conflict. However, the ongoing war in parts of the former common state (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) forced hundreds of thousands of their inhabitants to flee the region, a significant number of whom found refuge in Slovenia. At the height of

[3] See *CEPS Journal*, 11(2), 2021 (thematic issue on "Education Reforms and Social Change"); https://www.cepsj.si/index.php/cepsj/issue/view/42

[4] See KRT, 2021.

[5] See Drnovšek, 2021.

the war, more than 17,000 of their school-age children and youth were attending education at all levels in Slovenia. Meanwhile, the country suffered from a lack of funding and had to contend with right-wing nationalists who protested the inclusion of refugee children in the country's public education system. At the time, Pavel belonged to the aforementioned group of relatively young experts known as *School Field*, who advocated democratic state-building in Slovenia after the declaration of independence and gradual integration into European Community. The group (including Pavel) had little or, more precisely, no experience in professional politics, but those were the days of rapid training in the new profession.

As the reform of Slovenia‘s rapidly expanding higher education system in the 1990s – and a few years later, his wider involvement in the Bologna Process – shows, Pavel was again an excellent "student". His immense contribution to the design of the national education system (White Paper, 1996), from pre-school education to adult education, combined with his careful management of one of the most challenging areas, the modernization of the expanding higher education, established him as a recognized expert and policymaker both in Slovenia and at the regional level but also beyond. Because of his skilful reform of the national system of higher education, ministries from the region asked Slovenia for expert assistance in their reforms of higher education.

2.3.4 Intervention and Engagement No. 4

Based on the activities described above, Pavel, as a recognised expert and policymaker in the field of higher education, also became a valuable and respected player in the Bologna Process, which in the last decade of the last century came to the forefront of the efforts of almost all European countries, strongly supported by the European Commission, to give new impetus to *the power of knowledge*.

The Ministry of Education team in Slovenia decided, albeit with some hesitation, to join Bologna Process right at the beginning. After Pavel's presentation of the pros and cons for Europe – and especially for a tiny country that was seeking EU membership at the time – the Minister of Education, together with the cabinet of deputy ministers and senior officials, decided that the optimal solution for Slovenia was to join the process. Pavel was involved in the discussion about this process from the very beginning. In June 1999, he signed the Bologna Declaration on behalf of Slovenia. Because of his versatility both as an expert and as a policymaker, he was later invited by the Bologna Process to serve as *general rapporteur* for the Ministerial Conference in Berlin in October 2003 (Zgaga, 2003). After the conference, he served as a Slovenian member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (the executive body of the Process) until April 2005, after which his work continued as an invited expert working on the "external dimension" of Bologna Process (2005–2007), resulting in a background study (Zgaga, 2006) to support the preparation of "External Strategy" (Bologna Process, 2007). This was followed by a still ongoing period in which he led or participated in many national and international research

projects dealing with various issues of higher education as well as with the development of teacher education.

2.4 Conclusion

Over several decades and to the present day, Pavel has experienced and helped shape higher education at multiple horizons. He began this journey as a student and student activist, rebelling against the rigidity and low fairness of higher education and calling for both institutional and political changes necessary to help as many students as possible succeed and higher education institutions to flourish. Later, as a university lecturer and professor (he received the title of full professor in 2003), he enriched his experience at the University of Ljubljana and at several universities abroad.[6] His most sustained international academic engagement began in 2001 at Umeå University, Sweden, in the field of teacher education, where he was awarded an honorary doctorate for his work in 2008.

In addition to his pedagogical and scientific experience, he also established himself as a high-ranking and esteemed university policymaker, whether at the faculty level as Council Chair (1990–1992) and Dean (2001–2004) of the Faculty of Education, or at the university level, e.g., as a member of Habilitation Committee of the University of Ljubljana (2007–2009, 2014–2017). The decision-making experience he gained at the institutional level – as he himself acknowledges, also referring to Immanuel Kant's *Contest of Faculties* (Kant, 1991), i.e. the "contest" or "conflict" that lasted through the centuries[7] – enabled "his deepest insight into the rationality of *homo academicus*" (Bourdieu, 1990).

Pavel thus helped shape the development of higher education both at the Slovenian and international levels, especially within the framework of the Bologna Process and the Education Department of the Council of Europe's Directorate General for Democracy in Strasbourg.

With this brief outline of the origins and activities of Professor Pavel Zgaga, I would like to invite you, the reader, to continue on the following pages, which are intended to provide a structured, scholarly insight into his research and also invite you to contribute in the coming period to the field of research so dear to our colleague and friend Pavel – in the spirit of Pavel's cherished teacher motto: *Sapere aude*.

[6] He was, among others, a member of the Programme Committee of "Summer University" at Central European University in Budapest (1999–2004) and a member of the board of South-East European University in North Macedonia (2008–2019).

[7] Following Immanuel Kant, Pavel also considers the above-mentioned "contests", despite all their strange framing and positioning, as a legitimate and necessary internal tension that makes it possible to advance in the field. - The German term *der Streit* is translated as both "contest" and "conflict" in various English editions of Kant's work.

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Part I
Reforming European Higher Education

Chapter 3
The Silent Treks of Transformative Thinkers and Successful Reformers in Higher Education: A European Experience

Liviu Matei

Abstract The existence of exceptional individuals and individual contributions in higher education can hardly be denied. This is particularly true for, and accelerated in, the last five–six decades, which are special and unprecedented times in higher education, given in particular the shift to mass enrollment and the key role acquired by advanced knowledge, thus by university education and research, in furthering economic and social progress. And yet, the existence and contributions of exceptional individuals are not systematically studied by social scientists, including the scholars of higher education, irrespective of the disciplinary perspective that informs their approaches. These individuals and their contributions are largely ignored in the public arena and not acknowledged in public imaginary. In the age of massification, formidable thinkers, reformers of higher education, or just initiators of new and remarkable "technical" initiatives that impact the lives of millions of people work mostly unnoticed. If we choose to look at higher education policy, as an area of public policy, that is, outside the universities themselves, we can observe an interesting new phenomenon: changes of unprecedented magnitude have taken place according to a pre-defined, explicit design – as planned public policy reforms. In this paper, instead of "treks" we could as well talk about "traces". More precisely, we can study traces that are left by those individuals (living human beings) who initiated, led or contributed decisively to consequential reform programs, policy blueprints or major actual transformations in higher education. Rather than continuing to talk about them *in abstracto*, we can illustrate with a representative example. Pavel Zgaga, to whom this volume is dedicated, has been one of the major reformers of the post-Cold War period in Europe. His contributions are at multiple levels and in many areas. They can be still traced in the otherwise unwritten, and for this reason uncertain and fading, recent history of higher education in this part of the world.

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Keywords Higher education reformers · Transformative thinkers · Higher education transformations

3.1 Introduction: The Silent Treks of Transformative Thinkers and Leaders in Higher Education

The history of higher education is never an exercise in hagiography. Higher education knows of no celebrated champions, heroes, let alone "saints". It is a surprisingly secular endeavor everywhere and predominantly anonymous. The names of great forerunners are not known to the general public or even to those working in universities and colleges. Individuals who initiated revolutionary higher education concepts, models, practices or policies are quickly forgotten or have never been known beyond very small circles.

How many people today know who instigated the GI Bill (Geiger, 2019), a reform that changed the face of higher education in the US after World War II and marked the beginning of massification worldwide? Who had the idea of the Bologna Process (Bergan & Matei, 2020), the most ambitious continental-wide reform program in higher education ever, aiming at building a European common space for higher education, which, in turn, was designed to support the emergence not only of a European *ethos* but also that of a European *demos* (Matei et al., 2018)? Who was the father (or mother?) of the Erasmus mobility program, a higher education endeavor colossal in its scope, duration, and impact in and beyond higher education[1]? Who launched, or effectively promoted the first, the idea of *higher education policies for the knowledge society*, an approach embraced now by almost every country in the world across and despite all the traditional political, religious or economic lines of divide? Embracing the knowledge society narrative has resulted in surprisingly similar higher education policies and initiatives everywhere. Who started the Higher Education Support Program (HESP) in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall? During about a decade, HESP represented a reform platform of Marshall Plan magnitude and impact in higher education in this part of the world. It is now all but forgotten.

There is little attention to remarkable individuals in higher education and almost no effort to remember, let alone celebrate them. Sometimes, attempts are made to perpetuate the memory of founders of universities, great one-time supporters, or transformative leaders in the names of higher education institutions or their subunits – schools, research centers, chairs, etc. We know of course of such universities mainly from the US. They include Harvard, Stanford, or Yale, to name only a few. They are a lot rarer in Europe (like the Humboldt University Berlin or Charles

[1] The fact that there is no major scholarly reference available for the Erasmus program is relevant in itself. Many studies about particular aspects of Erasmus exist, but none yet about the overall history and impact of the program.

University Prague) and in other parts of the world (Rhodes University in South Africa, for example). Even then, very few know who these individuals were or even realize that they were actual human beings once, rather than just brands or made-up trademark names. In the case of Humboldt University, for example, it is not usually known that this institution is named after both von Humboldt brothers, Wilhelm (a more familiar name in higher education) and Alexander.[2] Not only the positive, direct, or indirect, contributions to higher education of such personalities, it should be said, fade with the passing of the years and decades, when not centuries, but so are historic controversies and darker tales linked to their names and individual legacies.

Higher education does have genuine champions and heroes, only that history is ungrateful to them. There are very few names in higher education that survive in the public consciousness and when they do it is rather only among those who pay close attention. What is commonly known and remembered about higher education are its everyday embodiments (attending a university as a student, being parent of a student, etc.), major trends and developments, and spectacular moments of change and crisis - not individuals or any of their remarkable contributions (Matei, 2021).

3.2 Paradoxes of Memory in Higher Education

The lack of interest in individual contributions and prominent personalities might not be surprising. One of the core aspirations of higher education, at least during the more recent times, is to be of service to the society at large, even be simply *a service*. At their best, higher education institutions aim to provide common, public goods in form of knowledge, for the benefit, direct or indirect, of large swaths of society, rather than exceptional, "heroic" contributions. Is this aspiration of mass, all-encompassing servicing that makes even the most remarkable individual endeavors and contributions in higher education anonymous, or at least not that salient in the society? Or the explanation might be different?

For reasons that have been discussed time and again in the academic literature about higher education, the university is and will remain, in most likelihood, an exceptional institution (Scott, 1988). Why, then, if the university is an exceptional institution, even its most prominent and efficient protagonists – exceptional leaders, thinkers, and reformers – are jinxed to remain anonymous? Perhaps this is just the nature of things, the nature of higher education.

The existence of exceptional individuals and individual contributions in higher education can hardly be denied. This is particularly true for, and accelerated in, the last five–six decades, which are special and unprecedented times in higher education, given in particular the shift to mass enrollment and the key role acquired by

[2] A short history of Humboldt University and the legacies of the two brothers is available at https://www.hu-berlin.de/en/about/history/huben_html/huben_html, accessed on 1 May 2021.

advanced knowledge, thus by university education and research, in furthering economic and social progress. And yet, the existence and contributions of exceptional individuals are not systematically studied by social scientists, including the scholars of higher education, irrespective of the disciplinary perspective that informs their approaches. These individuals and their contributions are largely ignored in the public arena and public imaginary. In the age of massification, formidable thinkers, reformers of higher education, or just initiators of new and remarkable “technical” initiatives that impact the lives of millions of people remain mostly unnoticed. Like aircrafts far up in the sky they leave a silent trek, thicker or thinner, for only a short while or a little longer, fleeting in a corner of the firmament or crossing that moment’s sky from one eyelid of the horizon to the other. All these treks disappear before too long. And very few notice them.

The exceptionality of the university as an institution, on one side, and the anonymity of its even most prominent acts and actors, on the other side, is not the only paradox here. There is yet another one in the fields of higher education and memory, higher education and public imaginary. Where consensual names of heroes and champions are known at all, those very few are usually from older eons, before what can be considered the golden age of higher education represented by the last decades of the twentieth century and containing, arguably, into the two first decades of the third millennium (Birrell, 2020). This list of better recognized thinkers and reformers of higher education usually includes the likes of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), Cardinal Newman (1801–1890), Henry James (1843–1916) or Abraham Flexner (1866–1959). Some would go back in history all the way to Comenius (1590–1670), Ibn Khaldun (1337–1406) or Confucius (551–479 BCE).

Why is it the case, one could ask, that despite many unprecedented, earth-shattering, major developments in higher education after the Second World War, with discernable promoters and initiators (if one looks hard), both in an intellectual and practical order in this golden era when higher education becomes so central to societies, there is so little place for the recognition of extraordinary individual contributions?

If we choose to look at higher education policy only, as an area of public policy, that is, outside the universities themselves, we can observe an interesting new phenomenon: changes of unprecedented magnitude have taken place according to a pre-defined, explicit design – as planned public policy reforms. Some of these reforms, like the Bologna Process, mentioned above, had such a scale of ambitions and perhaps also reality that they have been compared with “moving tectonic plaques intentionally” (Matei et al., 2018).

Exceptional developments during this era are indeed not rare at the national level and even at the regional or international level. They are usually visible when they happen, at least to the people directly involved or affected. Most often, however, it is not known even to most of those who are impacted where these reforms originate from (“who’s idea it was”) or who was in charge. Originators remain unknown within the world of higher education itself and even more so for the general public. To take a few more examples form Europe: one of the most remarkable reforms, starting in the early nineties of the twentieth century, was the introduction of a

European system of study credits, now known as the "ECTS".[3] Credits had not been used at all in most national higher education systems in Europe before this time. The very concept of a "study credit" was almost unknown in Europe. To introduce any credit system at all is a remarkable change already. It has turned around the administration and curricula of almost all universities in Europe. To have *a single system* for all or most of the European countries and introduce it in a relative short period of time is even more remarkable. ECTS credits are currently used everywhere in Europe, at least nominally, in all higher education institutions; all students, academic and administrative staff members work with them. However, nobody really knows where do they come from, who invented this European system and model, and who was able to push putting it in practice all over the continent. ECTS became like air, so normal and common that we breath it but don't really notice it. And we don't ask who invented or started it.

Similarly, Europe (not just the European Union) developed a common qualifications framework for higher education since 2005 (Bologna Working Group, 2005). This is no minor development either. How is it possible for the European countries, with diverse higher education traditions, including with regard to the degree levels, the names, length, structure and content of degrees, with different national languages, political regimes, legislation and level of economic development, to put in place the same exact definitions of what a bachelor, master or PhD program is and implement these decisions? Europe has also developed common standards and guidelines for quality assurance, adopted and implemented since 2005 (ESG, 2015) and backed by novel pan-European institutions, such as EQAR – the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.[4]

There are many other examples that can be mentioned, from Europe and other parts of the world. This period was one of breathtaking developments in higher education. Who initiated them, who articulated them in convincing, or in any case implementable policies and reform programs, who led the efforts to put them in practice is almost never known, or is known only by very few, for a while, and then forgotten. During these decades, many leading individuals in higher education, from many countries, have displayed tremendous amounts of imagination, intelligence, and resilience. They have often acted in coordination. Bringing an entire continent together, for example, in changing core aspects of higher education in Europe is not something that can be achieved easily or can just happen spontaneously or "naturally", by itself. All these reforms and new foundational deeds in higher education, it could be proven, originated in the imagination of identifiable individuals and required their tenacious work, the agency of one or a few individuals, real "human beings". Who are these individuals, how did they work, where did they come from and where are they today is, for the most, overwhelmingly, not known. In the higher education scholarships in general not only in the history of

[3] The European Commission maintains an official page for ECTS: https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en. Accessed on 1 May 2021.

[4] https://www.eqar.eu/. Accessed on 1 May 2021.

higher education we deal with facts and numbers, with groups and categories of people, with trends, analytical frameworks and objective phenomena, not with personalities, even when they are remarkable individuals with remarkable individual contributions.

There are many bright, silent treks in the sky of higher education of the last few decades. They last for a very short time and nobody is paying attention to inventory them. Why should they? Would that even be possible?

3.3 Pavel Zgaga and the Silent Trek of a Successful Reformer in European Higher Education

In this chapter, instead of “treks” we could as well talk very directly about “traces”. More precisely, about traces that are left by those individuals (living human beings) who initiated, led or contributed decisively to consequential reforms programs, policy blueprints and major actual transformations in higher education. Rather than continuing to talk about them *in abstracto*, we can illustrate with a representative example.

Pavel Zgaga, to whom this volume is dedicated, has been one of the major reformers of this period in Europe. His contributions are at multiple levels and in many areas. They can be still traced in the otherwise unwritten, and for this reason uncertain and fading, recent history of higher education in this part of the world.

Pavel Zgaga started as an anti-communist dissident hailing from Slovenia. As his country emerged independent and relatively unscathed from the Yugoslav wars, he became a leader of thought and a leader of action in higher education at the institutional level in his *alma mater*, the University of Ljubljana, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the broader Europe. He left many treks and certainly some longer-lasting traces.

Pavel Zgaga is at core an educator and a humanist. He has influenced his own students, but also young and less young audiences elsewhere. This includes my own former institution, Central European University (CEU), where he taught for years in a unique summer school program bringing together, in the early years of the post-communist transition, students, scholars, and professionals from Central and Eastern Europe interested in how to understand and design new higher education policies. We learned a lot from him over the years, his thinking influenced many of us. What he taught most often and directly was the philosophy or higher education. He was one of the few, and perhaps the most prominent, thinkers and educators in Europe during this time to promote an engaged and relentless reflection on principles and values in higher education, a surprising subject in an age of harrying to technicalities. Over the years, he also taught and influenced (formed?) others intellectually and morally, with method and efficiency, in matters of education and democratic citizenship, another subject most handily prone to neglect in these years.

Pavel Zgaga has also left a mark as an administrator and policy entrepreneur. In his administrative and public policy endeavors, he was promoter of research, a theme that was not at the core of the Bologna Process, certainly not at the beginning. He not only became one of most prominent European researchers in higher education, but also created an entire new research program, perhaps a new paradigm, bringing together the social sciences and humanities in the study of higher education and higher education policy in the new European context. The research center that he established at the University of Ljubljana in 2001, the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS), illustrates this paradigm and became one of the most important and influential centers of research in education, including higher education, policy in Europe. He left another institutional and regional mark while playing a key role in the design and early years of implementation of the Research Support Scheme, a program hosted by CEU, which supported the reform of university research in the social sciences and humanities in the entire Central and Eastern Europe and benefitted from a budget commensurate with this ambition.

Pavel Zgaga served as State Secretary for Higher Education and Minister of Education of Slovenia. He contributed to and led for a while the education reforms in the country during a crucial time, helping to make this national but European-minded reform experience one of the most successful in Europe. The overarching goals were at first to ensure a rapid post-communist transition, while putting in place new standards, a major, almost total transformation in this regard compared with the previous Yugoslav system, and join the efforts to build the European Higher Education Area. As a State Secretary for Higher education, Pavel Zgaga took part in the negotiations leading to the finalization of the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and signed this foundational document on behalf of his country. With the launch of the project of the European Higher Education Area, before and after it was declared a reality in 2010, Pavel Zgaga has worked in various capacities, as a politician, manager and thinker, not only to put this continental reform project into practice, but also to steer it from a philosophical-moral perspective, with attention to a set of recurrent themes, such as the social dimension, education and citizenship, the European dimension, and the fundamental values of higher education. His calm, profound and unrelenting personal engagement in the thinking and re-thinking of the principles of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area, of the reforms of higher education more generally, has made him an intellectual and moral reference in Europe, helping in this way to anchor solidly his own treks, but also the work and treks of others in the sky of European higher education. While, like a quite few others, he is now known to the general public or even to those active in higher education during this time, he has made important individual contributions, which have left traces that are and will remain visible, even when though there is no name, his name, attached to them.

Pavel Zgaga is not a champion celebrated publicly, not a hero, let alone a "saint patron". His career is, however, exemplary for the silent treks of transformative thinkers and successful reformers in higher education.

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Chapter 4
The Myth of Power: Governing Reform in the Bologna Process of Higher Education

Robert Wagenaar

Abstract How does one effectively reform higher education systems and structures in a transnational context? This is the key question countries have struggled with since their signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, which launched the Bologna Process and the development of a European Higher Education Area. Although, initiated by EU (candidate) countries, a voluntary governing model was opted for positioning the reform process independently of the EU decision making structures. Over time the national representatives stressed that national authorities should be responsible for (organizing) (higher) education. Now, after the twentieth anniversary of the Bologna Declaration, is a good moment to look back at the choices made thus far and the extent to which they were appropriate considering the ambition and scope of the Bologna agenda.

During the last two decades, did the initiators and key participants in the Process sufficiently understand the role and responsibilities of the many stakeholders involved, including their own, to make policies a reality? What started as a process to align European higher education, that is a model to be based on two (later three) cycles, applying credits and to assure recognition using shared standards and guidelines for quality assurance, developed into the policy to shift from expert-driven education to a student-centred and active learning approach. As a result, the centre of gravity moved from policy making to policy implementation. This made the governing model – in both theoretical and practical terms – obsolete. Without the key players in the Process acknowledging this reality, the initial unilateral process had become multi-dimensional and multi-layered which meant it had been replaced by a multi-level governance model. Over the years, the auspicious initiative bogged down in a repetition of promises which proved only partly to be delivered by many of the countries involved.

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4.1 Introduction

In the last years of the previous century there were many substantial reasons to reform higher education (HE) degree programmes in Europe. Existing programmes proved not able to keep up with the high speed of societal changes; changes resulting from globalisation, the internationalisation and flexibilization of the labour market, the Fourth Industrial Revolution promoted and supported by the concept of neo-liberalism, traditional manufacturing and industrial production moving to low-income countries such as the Peoples Republic of China. In the mid-1990s many European countries had to deal with a rather high unemployment (Saint-Paul, 2004). This was not much better in 2000 when the combined EU countries had an unemployment rate of 9.2% (EUROSTAT, 2020). This inspired the European Commission (EC) to prepare and publish several green and white papers in the field of HE which were meant to define suitable responses to the challenges experienced. The leading thought of these proposals was to reform HE programmes to reflect the transfer of an industrial to a 'knowledge society'. The argument was made that European economies – not able to compete in terms of working conditions and salary levels with development countries, should focus on services and high-level technology industry which would require a well-educated population. It was thought that not only a high percentage of the population should have a HE degree but also that learning would be better tailored to the requirements of the economy and society at large (European Commission XE "European Commission", 1997). At the same time, it had become evident that many EU countries were struggling with the cost-benefits of their HE systems.

Having a common problem and interests, one might have expected that in such a particular situation an initiative would be taken at EU level. However, the established and rather sensitive paradigm of 'education is a national responsibility' made this unthinkable and unacceptable. Rather unexpectedly the French government took the initiative to approach the other largest EU members to launch an initiative, the signing of a special declaration by four countries in 1998. This is the Sorbonne Declaration agreed in the context of the 800th anniversary of the oldest French university. The initiative, upsetting other EU member states, was followed up by the Bologna Declaration 1 year later, signed by 29 EU member and candidate states. Pavel Zgaga represented his country Slovenia at that occasion. In the subsequent years the initiative was turned into an undertaking, named the Bologna Process and Professor Zgaga became very much involved not as a politician but as an external expert. The consequence of turning an act of signing a document into a process, was that it required a governing model and game rules. Who to include and who not? How to implement the action agenda agreed? Who to make responsible for what? Who to make accountable for failure and success?

More than 20 years have passed since the Bologna Declaration was signed by the first group of ministers. It involves now 49 countries, which are striving 'officially' for the development of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This paper discusses key decisions made regarding its governance model and its scope in relation to its rather ambitious and growing agenda. It argues that the decision-making process was not based on a well thought out, seriously discussed philosophy, and not founded on relevant decision-making (theoretical) models. It was hindered by (1) opinions about the role of the EU in HE, (2) neglected the position of HE institutions as key players for implementing policies, (3) overestimated the power of governments, and the influence of civil servants in delivering what had been agreed. Initially, it was not even considered to involve students, although it was very quickly acknowledged as a huge error that ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe had to invite itself to be present at the Bologna Conference in 1999 (Klemenčič, 2012). This oversight was confirmed in the years to come because student representatives proved to be a very supportive and constructive partner in the Bologna Process (Zgaga, 2014, 2019). Would an alternative approach, by taking into account theory and practical experience, serve the initial aims more successfully, that is a strong transnationally well-aligned European HE sector able to compete with other world regions?

4.2 Matching Aims and Objectives and the Governing Model

The signing of the *Joint Declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European Higher Education system by* France, Germany, Italy, and the UK – each having their own reasons and national interests -, was the closing act of a two-day Forum (24–15 May 1998) entitled *Towards a European University*. Nearly 20 years later, on 26 September 2017, the French president Emmanuel Macron revived the idea of the 'European University' during his Sorbonne speech on the future of Europe.[1] He proposed to establish at least 20 of such European Universities by 2024, being in practice networks of four to six renowned higher education institutions (HEI) involving at least three EU member states. These European Universities should be 'drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence', offering 'real European semesters and real European diplomas' (Macron, 2017). A remarkable initiative in the context of two decades of discussions concerning the Bologna Process and the development of an EHEA. At the one hand Macrons remarks are a reflection of the policies outlined by the EC over time and at the other in contrast with the intergovernmental character of the process based on reforms agreed between individual nations, with the EU/EC acting as the paymaster. It is one indicator that the EU member states were not able to make the distinction between EU

[1] Full-text version of the speech: http://international.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2017/09/29/macron-sorbonne-verbatim-europe-18583.html (accessed 7 May 2021).

and 'European' policies when discussing HE; one issue prominent from the very start of the Process, that would hinder innovation. It also showed doubts about the success of the initial endeavour.

There were good reasons for Domenico Lenarduzzi, the director for HE of the EC to be furious – which he indeed could not hide – at the presentation of the Sorbonne Declaration in Paris. Although more than 2000 policy makers and academics attended the meeting, initially the EC was not even invited as an observer for the event (Wagenaar, 2019). This was not an oversight, as developments in the next months would show. Although, the EC became involved as a member of the Steering Committee to prepare the Bologna Conference, besides the representatives of five (EU) countries and the two Rectors' Conference existing at the time, it was not offered the position of full partner in the process. France and the UK opposing this, using the argument this was not an EU initiative. This might be factually true, in practice both the Sorbonne Declaration and the Bologna Declaration were based on EC policies initiated by the European Communities / European Union (EU) member states since 1984. In that year, the European Council called to strengthen and promote the European identity and image, which resulted in the ad hoc committee on People's Europe, chaired by Pietro Adonnino, comprising of formal representatives of the heads of national governments. One of the many proposals the committee made, was establishing a comprehensive programme of European inter-university exchanges and studies meant for a significant number of students and supported by a European academic credit scheme to facilitate mobility and recognition (Commission, 1985). It was one of the key factors that resulted in the ERASMUS Programme. The Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 confirmed that the EU had a role to play in HE, although limited by the principle of subsidiarity. In article 126 it is stated that "The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of their teaching and the organization of educational systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity'. Confirming the axiom that harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States should not be challenged in any way (Treaty, 1992).

This chapter is at odds with the expressed claim of the *Magna Charta Universitatum*, signed 5 years earlier (1988) by 388 of the leading and oldest universities at the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna (Magna Charta Universitatum, 1988). They require autonomy from 'all political authority and economic power' to allow for contributing to the welfare of society at large; stipulating the fundamental principle of freedom of teaching and research and not to be hindered by the national boundaries within the European Communities (the processor of the EU). The new 2020 version of the Magna Charta upholds and confirms the principles as outlined in the original document, stressing even more the global context in which universities (are expected to) operate (Magna Charta Universitatum, 2020).

The title of the Sorbonne Declaration, *Harmonisation of the architecture of the European Higher Education system,* which seemed to be well chosen and

appropriate, provoked outrage among the other EU countries because they were not being informed about the initiative, and because it felt indeed as being subverting national autonomy in educational policy making. The Declaration stipulates the role universities play in developing the 'intellectual, cultural, social, and technical dimensions' of the European continent. No reference is made to the Magna Charta. However, it refers to the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997), 'mutual recognition of higher education degrees for professional purposes through the respective directives of the European Union' and the 'fast growing support of the European Union, for the mobility of students and teachers' (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). This is no surprise, because the real (and only) innovative element of the Declaration is the proposal to *restructure* European HE on the basis of a 'system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognized for international comparison and equivalence' and to tailor these better to the needs of society. The key sentence in this respect is: 'Progressive harmonisation of the overall framework of our degrees and cycles can be achieved through strengthening of already existing experience, joint diplomas, pilot initiatives, and dialogue with all concerned'. Although the ministers of the UK and France claimed that the Declaration was not meant as a hostile action versus the EC, their comments over time to defend their action showed otherwise (Wagenaar, 2019).

This was confirmed by the fact that the EU was only allowed to become a full member of the 'Bologna club' (Adelman, 2008) in 2001 when it had become clear that the countries that had signed the Declaration – could not do without EU funding and its infrastructure to run the process smoothly, it started 2 years earlier. At that time it had also become clear that the governing structure would be based on a model developed in the context of the EU, and applied directly as part of the Lisbon Strategy to turn the EU into 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world …', the *Open Method of Coordination* (Gornitzka, 2006), a governing strategy to 'progressively develop their own policies' intended to achieve greater convergence (Lisbon, 2000). A remarkable choice – which raised questions about its effectiveness from the very start (Veiga & Amaral, 2006) – for an action plan, the Bologna Declaration, that – as a follow-up of the Sorbonne Declaration – asked for system changes according to its main objectives: adaptation of a *system* of easily readable and comparable degrees (including the implementation of the Diploma Supplement according to a fixed format) and a *system* essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, establishment of a *system* of credits (such as ECTS) and co-operation in quality assurance resulting in comparable criteria and methodologies. The last item would result in 2005 in qualifications frameworks based on the so-called Dublin Descriptors and the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*, which together could be perceived as a 'system', building trust and confidence.

A system can be defined as a mutually coherent whole of parts that are organized in such a way that they fulfil a function and can achieve a goal. It has characteristics that are present in all systems: organization (structure and order), interaction, interdependence, integration, and a central objective. In addition, three basic elements can be distinguished: input, development and output. These require monitoring and

result in feedback. Each system has its limitations or scope and has to deal with an environment. Changes in the environment affect the working and impact of the system.

The Bologna Declaration did not include anything new, because its six action points had been initiated by either the European Commission / Union, the Council of Europe and the Sorbonne Declaration, without giving these initiatives (much) credit. However, the agreement to actually implement these intentions should be perceived as a serious step forward. The implication was not so much to convert existing systems, but to replace or introduce these, because it implied fundamental change, that is commanding the introduction and/or adjustment of national legislation, followed up by implementation involving many stakeholders, including students. Only the first being the prime responsibility of national governments.

4.3 What Theory Tells Us

By opting for the Open Method of Coordination – in theoretical terms – the choice was made for the research area of public policies analysis, that is policy diffusion / transfer / convergence theory. This is in accordance with the expressed aim in the Bologna Declaration to develop the EHEA and its related aims by coordinating national policies through intergovernmental co-operation, 'together with those of non-governmental European organisations with competences on higher education'. The two European Rectors' Conferences, which would join as the European University Association in 2001, were directly involved in preparing the Declaration. No surprise that a direct reference is made to the *Magna Charta Universitatum*: 'Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge'. The Bologna document speaks of promoting the 'European system of higher education world-wide' (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

Having these objectives in mind, it would have made sense for opting for 'harmonisation' regarding the policy making process, being stricter than the range of 'diffusion' – 'transfer' – and most far reaching 'convergence'. The first focussing on process only, the second including also the behaviour of actors and the third in addition focusing on the effects, that is similarity in change (Vögtle, 2014). Harmonisation can be defined as a process of adjustment of differences and inconsistences to align significant features. However, the term proved (still) to be toxic because those involved wanted it to be understood in (legal) terms of European integration, uniformity, and unification (Höllinger, 2010; Witte, 2006). It is remarkable that many researchers proved to be receptive to framing the process in these terms by the public authorities. Over time much attention would be devoted by them to the (trans) national processes and not to meeting the targets defined as one might have expected (Keating, 2013; Kushnir, 2014; Vögtle, 2014).

Although the policy makers distanced themselves from the decision-making process of the EU, in developing the governance structure they applied the EU Troika model with the rotating EU Presidency acting as the chair of two bodies that were set up: the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) and a separate Preparatory Group, renamed Board in 2003, responsible for day-to-day activities and the preparation of the next Ministerial Meeting. The organiser of that meeting would act as vice-chair. From 2003 the vice-chair would be supported by a temporary Bologna Process Secretariat established by, and in, the organising country. In 2009, due to the growing number of signatory non-EU countries, a double Troika was set-up for the Board, one for non-EU member states and another for EU members.

As a consequence, a double rotating chair was introduced doing justice to the two Troika's.

By setting-up the Process outside the realm of the EU or – as a possible alternative – the much wider 'partnership' of the EU SOCRATES / Lifelong Learning Action Programme, in principle membership was open to any country. Because it seemed rather attractive to be part of the Bologna club, not only European countries, stretching from Iceland (member since 1999) to Russia (member since 2003) and Kazakhstan (member since 2010), also countries from other continents such as Israel (Zahavi, 2019) and Saudi-Arabia,[2] actually applied or intended to apply for membership. It allowed, in their perception, for boosting visibility and prestige of its national education sector, even perceived as an element in the many 'excellent initiatives' that developed over time (Froumin & Lisyutkin, 2015). After intense debate in the BFUG it was decided to limit membership to those countries that had signed up to the European Cultural Convention. It was not a condition that these countries had to be a member of the Council of Europe. In 2015 Belarus – a non-Council member – joined the process as member 48, although not undisputed, a country not known for championing European values and freedom of education. When in 2020 it became clear that the country did not respect the rule of law, it was publicly reproved in coordinated speeches of ministers at the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020 (EHEA XE "European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" , 2020). Comparable criticism could be made regarding the EU member states Poland and Hungary as well as Russia but singling them out was perceived as too sensitive.[3] Membership remained a hotly debated issue as was the establishment of a real infrastructure based on a permanent Secretariat. The Council of Europe offered the – rejected – option to host such a Secretariat. This made sense as being the home of the European Cultural Convention (Committee of Ministers, 2010; BFUG Secretariat, 2016). The discussion is ongoing (Bergan & Geanta, 2020).

[2] Learned by the author from a discussion with the Minister of Education and senior civil servants and advisors in Riyadh, 9 May 2010.

[3] According to several national BFUG representatives.

4.4 Conditions for Change

The above is of relevance because it informs us about responsibilities and the power struggle to allow for governing reform to establish *change*. Change thought necessary to allow universities to play a key role in innovation-based economies (the knowledge-based society) and global competition. This brings us to 'change theory' and 'Theory of Change', perceived as highly relevant for understanding the implementation of the aims of the Bologna Process / implementing an EHEA. The wider 'change theory', which is phrased as a framework of ideas, supported by evidence, that explains some aspect of change beyond a single initiative', is distinguished from 'Theory of Change', being defined as 'a particular approach for making underlying assumption in a change project explicit, and using the desired outcomes of the project as a mechanism to guide project planning, implementation, and evaluation' (Reinhold & Andrews, 2020). This theoretical model, based on the notion of governance and management by set objectives, was developing from the second half of the 1990s. Theory of Change is used by a growing number of governmental sectors, NGOs, companies, and institutions to promote social and political change. It makes a distinction between desired and actual sequence of outcomes: shorter-term, mid-term and longer-term ones. The model allows for measuring effectiveness regarding the changes aimed for, both in process and methods, but also for evidencing next steps. Before starting a process of change, one should be aware of the feasibility of the aims defined in relation to the starting conditions and also to assure oneself that the different steps and final product can be evaluated. This implies that solid, concrete, observable and measurable indicators should be in place, which allow for convincing stakeholders that the initiative has been implemented according to required standards and has been successful. In this respect success is much more than just knowing 'what works', because experience in HE settings shows that blindly copying or scaling will hardly ever work, because of change conditions, commitment and ownership of those directly involved (Brest, 2010; Centre for Theory of Change, 2020; Taplin & Clark, 2012).

The Bologna Process claimed to realize systemic change, which turns us to the issue, what conditions this type of change. In 2018 a model was published, which allows for comprehensive insight in the different dimensions of 'system change'. A distinction is made between (1) structural change, involving policies, practices and resource flows, (2) semi-explicit factors, that is relationships and conditions and power dynamics, and finally (3) transformative change (or implicit factors, phrased as mental models (Kania et al., 2018). The model is highly appropriate to the Bologna Process as its definitions of the terms, show us. The crux is the quality of connections and communications among actors as well as the distribution of decision-making power, authority, and the role of formal and informal influence among individuals and formal entities. The model is clearly aligned with the *Tuning governance model: Bologna Process in Higher Education* published exactly at the same time, which makes a distinction between the system dimension and the structure and content dimensions (Wagenaar, 2018). See Fig. 4.1. Centrally positioned in

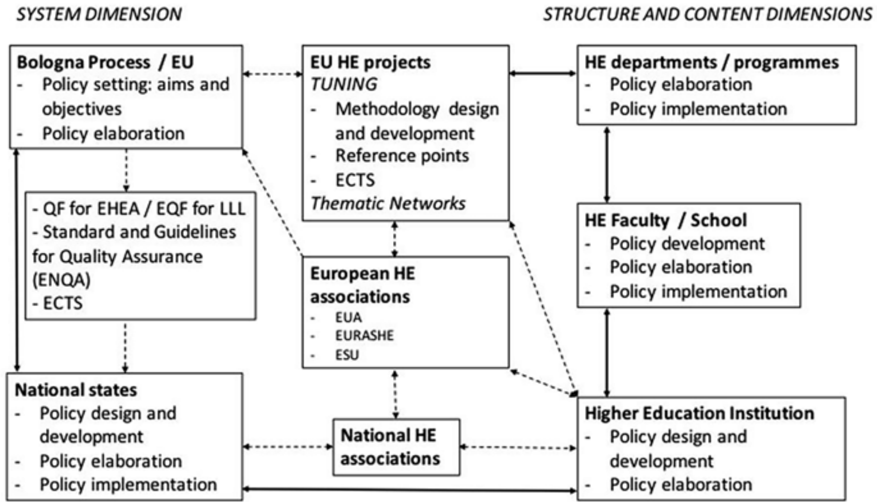

Fig. 4.1 Tuning governance model: Bologna Reform Process in Higher Education

this model are overarching initiatives and (inter)national organisations, which could be complemented with international university networks. These initiatives and organisations represent the semi-explicit and implicit factors, that is informal power, key for realising change.

These theoretical models highlight that objectives, process and actor behaviour are fully interrelated regarding the effectiveness of the governance model. It also shows the level of challenge to overcome. In that context it is important to stress that the Sorbonne and Bologna Declaration were initiated to use international leverage for national system change, to make these systems financially affordable, competitive and the education offered relevant for society at large.

The Ministerial Bologna Conference (2005) in Bergen was perceived at the time – but also retrospectively – as an overwhelming success (Haskel, 2009). The basic assumptions for a first and a second cycle had been agreed 2 years earlier, although the compromise found for the length of the second cycle was not very straight forward. A political arrangement highly influenced by budgetary arguments, not by substantive ones. While the first cycle was fixed at 180 to 240 ECTS credits – which allowed to take in to account differences in outcomes of secondary education and diversity in profiles – the formulated minimum requirements of the second cycle can be perceived as a monstrosity. The following definition was endorsed: ‘While master degrees programmes normally carry 90-120 ECTS credits, the minimum requirements should amount to 60 ECTS credits at master level. As the length and the content of bachelor degrees vary, there is a need to have similar flexibility at the master level. Credits should be of the appropriate profile’ (The Bologna Process Conference on Master-level Degrees, 2003). The formula meant a confirmation that there were considerable differences between countries and the

acceptance that these would be kept, which was clearly in conflict with the Bologna objective of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. In particular with the notion, that cycles should be clearly distinguished. In the years to come the compromise would not only keep hindering transnational recognition of studies but would also block access to the third cycle in a number of European countries.

In Bergen the Ministers of Education were asked to endorse the ECTS credit-based Qualifications Framework for the EHEA offering a clear set of descriptors, what to expect from a first, a second and a third cycle programme (Bologna Working Group, 2005). In combination with the also accepted document *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (SGQA)* a powerful 'system' was created to facilitate international cooperation and trust and confidence. In particular, because the Tuning Educational Structures initiative, co-financed by the EU, obtaining strong support of the European University Association, allowed the EC to publish a completely revised ECTS Users' Guide. It implied not only moving from a transfer to an accumulation system for workload-based credits, but also for making a model available for (re)designing feasible study programmes. The 'new' ECTS conditioned the awarding of credits by achieving the (intended) learning outcomes for a degree programme and its individual units. Its formal name became European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, still abbreviated as ECTS, keeping the brand name (European Commission, 2004).

With these 'systems' in place, one can argue that the mission of the main aims of the Bologna Process were accomplished, the actual implementation and remaining action points to be left to the individual countries. In retrospect, the Open Method of Coordination could have been perceived a successful governance model when all signatory countries would have indeed (1) fully introduced a two-cycle system, according to the model of a bachelor covering 180–240 ECTS credits and a master holding 90–120 credits, (2) integrated the SGQA in their national HE systems and (3) fully accepted ECTS as a credit accumulation system. In reality, the many evaluation reports prepared by the BFUG, the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB/ESU), the EUA with its eight Trends reports, the three Eurydice reports as well as independent researchers (Directorate-General, 2010) spanning the period 2003–2018 show this has proven not to be the case. As ESIB already noticed in 2003 in its report *Bologna With Student Eyes*, 'implementation' of the Bologna objectives is done 'à la carte' by the countries involved. It repeated this message in its evaluations of 2005, 2007 and 2009 (ESIB, 2003, 2005, 2007; ESU, 2009).

4.5 Derailed or Late Arrival?

Although, the Bologna Process got real momentum due to its promising results halfway through the first decade of the twenty-first Century, it also showed the first cracks. The image arises of a train with an engine not strong enough to pull a growing number of wagons – each representing a country – to keep its speed. During the period 1999–2005 the Bologna Process had been highly facilitated by involving

quality assurance experts as well as informed academics. For example, it had two academic rapporteurs, Prof. Pedro Lourtie and Prof. Pavel Zgaga, for reporting to the ministers about progress respectively at the Ministerial Conferences of Prague (2001) and Berlin (2003). The key documents mentioned in the previous paragraph had been prepared by (academic) experts. They proved to be instrumental for success. It is important to stress that in all three cases wise leadership was required to come up with results embraced by those meant to implement the 'systems' agreed.

Having the necessary 'systems' in place in 2005, it was the moment to start their roll out. The working group Institutional Autonomy and Governance was so right, when its chair Christina Ullenius, Rector Magnificus of Karlstadt University in Sweden, reported at the Bergen Ministers Conference that optimal co-operation and division of labour between public authorities and autonomous EU institutions would be required to implement 'Bologna'. She stipulated the need for a legal framework in which the autonomous role of the HE institutions would be defined, but also that governments should be accountable to HEIs for providing the necessary means to achieve the Bologna objectives. It would imply state regulated degree structures, the introduction of ECTS and student support. The conclusions of the working group are crystal clear: change regarding governance is required, legal obstacle to change and creativity should be removed, the focus should be on quality assurance and outcomes and HEIs should be trusted 'to take charge of implementation of the Bologna Process' (The Bologna Process, 2005). This is not what would happen in the years to come, to the contrary.

Logic demanded that moving from policy making to policy implementation would require clear cut decisions regarding next steps. The bold choice could have been made to wrap up the role of the BFUG as a means to steer the Bologna Process by completely restructuring the governance model involving directly the key stakeholders required to reform their degree programmes according to the 'system' changes agreed. This would have implied moving actively from a unilateral approach based on an intergovernmental model to a multi-dimensional and multi-layered one, limiting the role of the BFUG to a monitoring mechanism. Instead, the BFUG chose the option to narrow the group involved to ministerial staff and experts directly linked to the government, such as QA organisations, academic experts were deliberately side-tracked.

A remarkable choice, because in the period 2005–2009 the BFUG gradually realized that the reform of HE programmes did not only depend on system change, but required most of all structural changes in the way degree programmes were designed and delivered. To meet the *zeitgeist* the educational paradigm had to change from expert driven to student-centred education, by focussing on what students should know and be able to do to be prepared for their role in a dynamic society. It would imply both the revision of degree programmes and the introduction of additional learning, teaching and assessment approaches. This was a message that had already been sent by countries with an Anglo-Saxon educational tradition as well as the Tuning Educational Structures initiative from 2001 (González & Wagenaar, 2003). In 2009 the student-centred and active learning approached was formally embraced by the Bologna countries in the Louvain la Neuve / Leuven

Ministerial Communiqué. This was a confirmation that educational experts and academic staff had to brought into play. By endorsing the student-centred, or outcomes-based approach, governments intervened with the prime role of HEIs: how learning, teaching and assessment should be organised and delivered. It meant a clear violation of the principles of the *Magna Charta Universitatum.* Governments claimed a role they should not aspire to, because it would come with responsibilities.

Both theory and practical experience evidence that the most complicated part of change is not developing the groundwork in terms of systems, frameworks and the like but their actual implementation. In railway terms, not only the curviest but also steepest part of the track, still had to come. It is therefore remarkable that in both the scholarly and the public debate so little attention has been offered to the actual implementation process and the conditions for change. Instead, the scholarly debate concentrated on the Process itself, the role of the EC and soft power (Brand, 2011). In particular in the period 2006–2012 this resulted in a very substantial number of publications. However, the key point whether the Bologna train would make it to the station was not really covered, although there are exceptions, both regarding systemic changes (Garben, 2011) and change of the learning paradigm.

Returning to the theoretical models, lack of results should not surprise anyone. The BFUG itself concluded that general conversion at system level, let alone harmonization, had not taken place fully, the results so far to be uneven and incomplete. In 2014 in a paper *The Bologna Process Revisited* – meant for internal use – in a spare moment of self-reflection – it was noticed that the Process had failed to communicate its vision well, did not distinguish clearly between structural reforms at national level and actual implementation, had not sufficiently acknowledged and promoted 'student-centred learning' as a main pillar for reform and had fundamentally underestimated the complexity of the Process (BFUG, 2014). It was also acknowledged that in practice the Bologna train went into a tunnel, allowing for an 'agora', a meeting place limited to 'a community of officials and experts and far less genuine practitioners'(BFUG, 2014). The experts involved were staff close to governments, not the wider academic community essential for implementing the Bologna objectives.

'Change theory', 'Theory of Change' and models for 'system change', all resulting from practical experience over time, highlight how crucial the semi-explicit and informal factors are for developing commitment and ownership of change. This besides the fact that a measurable step by step approach is required to make progress and avoid pitfalls. Overseeing the Bologna Process some went right but much went wrong. It seemed in the perception of the time to make sense to transform the Bergen summit outcomes at national level: detailing an overarching European qualifications framework according to the national structure of degree programmes, to anchor ECTS in national legislation and to build a national infrastructure for quality assurance. Intended to reach comparability and compatibility at system level, it would have been more sensible to simply copy the European wide 'systems' agreement achieved, at national level.

From the very start national interests played a prominent role in the Process, in particular the (in)ability of the many countries and their HEIs to initiate real reforms.

The initial aim of the Sorbonne Declaration had been to move elephants, that is to make universities and their staffs to reform their degree programmes. In most countries they did not move much. This was due to lack of political pressure but probably in particular due to inadequate incentives. In this context it has to be understood, that the vast majority of academics are not trained in offering teaching and learning at tertiary level, have not been informed about educational paradigms, and derive their status from being 'knowledge experts' and researchers. Many still operate on the notion that a teacher is the 'boss' in his/her own class room; the notion of having a shared responsibility for delivering high level degree programmes clearly underdeveloped (Birtwistle et al., 2016).

4.6 Balance of Power

In terms of power balance and influence, it has been claimed that the EC was able to regain the initiative of agenda setting regarding educational reforms since it became a full member of the Bologna Process in 2001 (Olsen & Maassen, 2007). This might have been the case in terms of intellectual input regarding the documents, including the Commission communications and reports produced over time, it was clearly not in terms of political impact. To the contrary, from 2004 onwards it let its power base be eroded.

The strength of the EC was its direct relation with the world of academics as a result of its action programmes. It is well known that the EC was the main driver for creating an infrastructure for quality assurance, resulting in European organisations such as ENQA, EQAR and ENIC. In potential it created also a powerful infrastructure for curriculum reform by lining up with academics operating with assent and support of their HEI managements: (working) groups of academic experts operating as 'change agents'. The most significant examples: academics directly involved in developing and promoting ECTS and LLL (Yemini, 2012), Thematic Network Programmes (TNPs) and the Tuning initiative, of which Pavel Zgaga was a member of the Education Science group. All these initiatives, which were closely aligned, were meant to build trust and confidence between academics and to initiate reform of HE degree programmes based on individual and group commitment and ownership. These had as their ultimate aim to guarantee relevant and evidence-based degree programmes worth public investment.

In 2004 the EC proposed to the BFUG to turn the ECTS Expert Group, organized and financed by the EC into a Bologna Expert Group. The BFUG went along with this proposal but conditioned that their composition and ultimate responsibility for activities would be that of the national authorities, the check still to be paid by the EC (Wagenaar, 2019). It meant breaking up a transnational group into national ones. When moving from the SOCRATES II to the LLL Framework Programme in 2007, the EC gave up the TNPs, of which the vast majority had proven to be very influential in setting the reform agenda at subject area level. Peer-to-peer learning between disciplinary experts, developing reference frameworks as well as offering state of

the art models of good practice to be perceived as their main contributions. The impact of TNPs could still be traced some ten years later (Birtwistle et al., 2016). In 2015 the EC allowed the BFUG to take over the responsibility for ECTS. In that year only a very small number of national Bologna Experts teams were still operational, mainly in EU neighbourhood countries (Sphere Project, 2020).

In April 2019 the EUA concluded, on the basis of an inventory among the National Rectors Conferences, there was very limited vertical communication on the Bologna issues, that is structural contact between the Ministry and the HEIs (EUA XE "European University Association (EUA)" , 2019a). This is supported by the findings of a Tuning research project on the implementation of student-centred learning. In countries where the dialogue was established the level of implementation of the main Bologna aims, in particular the correct use of ECTS and the introduction of student-centred learning, is demonstrably more successful. These seem also to be the countries where the national Bologna teams (have) operate(d) more effectively, e.g., Austria, Belgium-Flanders and The Netherlands among some others (Birtwistle et al., 2016).

This research as well as the Tuning initiative and its follow-up CALOHEE confirm that change requires most of all horizontal (inter)national cooperation to reform HE programmes as the recently established CALOHEE Qualifications Reference Frameworks indicate; frameworks – being the products of academics – which are based on a merger of the EQF for LLL and the QF for the EHEA. This experience is fully compatible with both the multi-level governance model and the Theory of Change as visualized below. Key here are two types of experts: educationalists responsible for academic staff training and development and subject area experts. Student-centred learning expects a deep and agreed understanding of the paradigm as is outlined quite well in the *Routledge Handbook on Student-Centered Learning and Instruction in Higher Education* published in 2020. The publication also confirms the rather disappointing level of implementation (Hoidn & Klemenčič, 2020; Klemenčič, 2020). Finding common ground what student-centered learning and teaching is / should be, requires vertical but most of all horizontal multi-layered peer-to-peer learning. See Fig. 4.2.

In April 2019 the outcomes of an online survey on the governance and thematic priorities of the EHEA after 2020, completed by 32 BFUG members and 8 Consultative members, was published (BFUG, 2018). From the responses it can be digested that the BFUG membership – although acknowledging 20 years of results falling short – still sees itself in the pilot position instead of sharing that position with ‘practitioners’. Main suggestions, arriving from the survey for breaking the deadlock: at EHEA level regular consultation of practitioners to be included in the BFUG working method and events and at national level involvement of practitioners in national implementation/dissemination activities; re-invigoration of Bologna expert teams (widespread positive assessment of the model) for dissemination and peer-to peer learning activities at national and sub/regional level. Furthermore, it is suggested that national practitioners should – as country representatives – be involved in the BFUG governing structure and activities. Much of this already suggested by the EUA in April 2019 (EUA, 2019b).

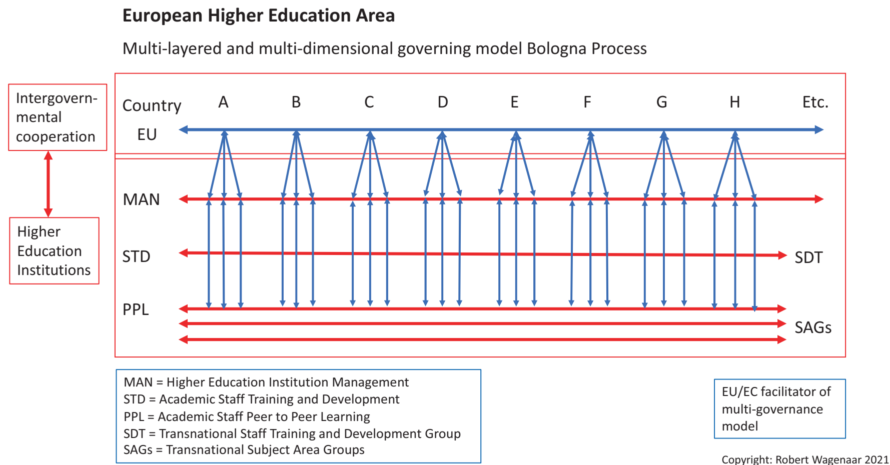

Fig. 4.2 Multi-layered and multi-dimensional governing model Bologna Process

The theoretical models outlined as well as the practical experience obtained from European projects show that this seems an inadequate way to cure the problem at stake, a derailed train or at least a train that has rescheduled its late arrival time again, adding another decade. Taking past experience seriously and taking for granted that all Bologna signatory countries really want to establish an EHEA (which one might doubt), it will be required to re-establish European wide networks of disciplinary experts familiar to curriculum reform and delivery as well as practitioners responsible for staff training and development. Such a model would be the best guarantee for building effective relationships and conditions and organising effective power dynamics (both vertical and horizontal), as well as establishing transformative change by developing ownership of the actors directly involved. This would imply a multi-level governance model – doing justice to the balance of power involved – in giving the modernisation of the European HE-sector a real boost, using multiple locomotives instead of a single one; not to diverse speed in terms of different countries, but to reflecting the levels of decision making involved.

4.7 Conclusion

Lack of grip of governmental power on the university sector was the main reason for preparing the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998. Due to stagnating economies resulting in high unemployability there was ample reason for looking at the university sector as one of the engines to turn the tide. Being part of a common market, it would have made much sense for coordinating action according to the proposals of the EC to transform university education. Public authorities thought that they could command HE change as a result of intergovernmental cooperation in the context of the Bologna

Process. This proved successful in developing the necessary ‘systems’, but the vast majority of Bologna signatory countries were less successful turning these paper agreements into reality. They simply underestimated the effort required to make HE education institutions and its staffs and students change behaviour.

Given the growing number of wagons of the Bologna train and the unwillingness of the machinist to split the train in time, it became rather doubtful that the train would ever arrive at its terminal station. From 2005, the chosen governance model was no longer fit for purpose.

Both theory and practice show that this was to be expected. Theory of Change and system change models offer clear indicators. The most crucial ones: dialogue/communication and ownership. Ownership requires a clear division of roles and responsibilities, that is power distribution. Covering mutual levels implies a governance model reflecting this. From the 10 years celebration of the Process in 2010 it became gradually clear the Bologna train had derailed or at least halted, after the time of arrival had already been postponed to 2020. It was an obvious indication that intergovernmental cooperation had its limitation regarding the power to deliver promises made. Further postponing the trains arrival to 2030 and the reluctance by national authorities to acknowledge that they lack the power to deliver what they promised and agreed among themselves implies that this train has come to a halt. The question remains whether an alternative train, the EU European Universities initiative, ironically based on the EU reform agenda, will offer a way out. Will these networks of universities – flagging ownership – offer the engines to develop together a strong transnationally well-aligned EU HE-sector – which is not equal to a EHEA – able to compete with other world regions? Is this an adequate response to the myth of power? It will all depend on the ability of these networks to become fully inclusive, that is doing justice to the multi-layered and multi-dimensional entities universities are. It will also require alignment of these networks at European level to allow for meeting at the same terminal station. The role of the EC, as the initiator of the European Universities, might prove crucial here and do justice to the balance of power.

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Chapter 5
From the EHEA to the EEA: Renewed State-Making Ambitions in the Regional Governance of Education in Europe

Susan L. Robertson, Kris Olds, and Roger Dale

Abstract The launch of the Bologna Process in 1999 supported by the European University Association was widely seen as an ambitious intergovernmental project to reshape national higher education institutions across Europe. Over time, however, the Bologna Process framework has not only been taken up in other parts of the world, but the European Commission has incorporated it into its European Higher Education Area, and most recently the creation of a European Education Area by 2025. In our chapter we explore the framing of this expanded agenda for the European Commission for education more generally in the face of rising national populisms across European, the new challenges posed by COVID-19 and institutional lockdowns, and the geo-strategic challenges to the East with the rise of China and its Belt and Road Initiative. We note the continuing dependence in techniques of governing such as mobility and ask about the ongoing challenges facing this state-making project.

Keywords Regional governance of education · Europe · Global challenges · Bologna process · European Commission

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5.1 Introduction

We first met Pavel Zgaga in Madison, Wisconsin in 2005 when Kris hosted a major conference on the European Higher Education Area with funding support from UW-Madison's Global Studies program and it's European Union Center of Excellence, as well as the Worldwide Universities Network. Susan, Kris and Roger had been collaborating on work on Asian and European regionalisms, and it had become evident to us that Pavel was positioned right in the centre of these developments and debates.

Given our interest in the rise of second wave regionalisms, it is hardly surprising that we would be intrigued by the emergence of the Bologna Process in 1999 to restructure the architectures of higher education degrees across Europe, as well form inter-regional relationships. It was also clear to us that the Bologna Process had a synergistic relationship to the Lisbon Agenda launched in 2000 to promote economic competitiveness and social cohesion across the member states of the European Union. When discussing who we might invite to the conference in Wisconsin there was an unequivocal agreement that Pavel be invited as keynote speaker. The former President of the University of Lyon, Eric Froment, was also on the invitation list given his role as President of the European Universities Association (EUA) (2001–2005) in helping navigate the realisation of the Bologna Process across member states and beyond.

Pavel, of course, agreed and we remember instantly liking this multi-talented academic. Not many academics can boast a successful career as a leading international academic and also politician. Pavel had held a Ministerial post in the Slovenian government. A philosopher by training, a radical in terms of politics, and an instinctively generous colleague, makes for the kind of public intellectual and friend you value over the long haul. We went on to collaborate with Pavel on multiple occasions, including a major European Commission funded project on Universities in the Knowledge Economy (UNIKE).

In this chapter in honour of Pavel, we want to reflect on the unique contributions of Pavel to the development of the Bologna Process and its take-up globally (Pavel described this as a 'global echo'). We also review the development of the European Higher Education Area, and more recently its replacement by European Education Area, to be realised by 2025 In what is a bold move given the principle of subsidiarity for the European Union, the shift from higher education to education more generally signals an interest in shaping education policy across the board. At the same time, the European Commission has now launched its European Universities initiative with funding available for clusters of universities to come together to share teaching, student mobility and research around a specific area of expertise.

Yet our reflections are made against a very different backdrop to our initial collaboration in the early 2000s, and first encounters with Pavel beginning in 2005. The rise of authoritarian populism around the world has presented higher education institutions with major challenges. In June 2016, in a surprise result, the UK voted via a referendum to leave the European Union (Brexit). This was followed by the

election of Donald Trump in November 2016. Add to this the rise of the far right in France, Austria and the Netherlands, and authoritarian projects that include Putin in Russia, Xi in China, Erdogan in Turkey, Orban in Hungary, Bolsonaro in Brazil and most recently Lukashenko in Belarus and it is clear new cleavages have emerged that are fanning the flames of a rising neo-nationalism. It could be argued the idea of Europe as a cosmopolitan project (Habermas, 1989) is badly needed in this fractious world, though of course Europe's regional project was also always about global economic competitiveness.

The rise of neo-nationalisms presents significant challenges for the European project more generally and higher education institutions specifically, as free speech, security and university autonomy are threatened. At the same time global stability is at risk with the rise of China and its determination to bring Hong Kong and Taiwan back into the ambit of China's rule. And then there is COVID-19, with major implications for universities and their collaborations, including student and staff mobility. As Marx (1848) famously remarked, all that is solid melts into air! What appeared as solid structures in the closing days of 2019, almost overnight were shown to be fragile edifices as separate spheres of life – work, family, education, collapsed in on themselves in early 2020.

5.2 Locating Bologna in the European Regional Project

Researchers examining the ongoing Europeanization of once determinedly national higher education institutions and sectors described in detail the launch of the Bologna Process in 1999 (cf. Huisman & van der Wende, 2004; Keeling, 2006; Ravinet, 2008). The Bologna Process was aimed at reforming the degree architectures and systems of credit transfer amongst European universities. By anyone's reckoning, this project has also been an astonishing success given that education is the constitutional responsibility of national and sub-national governments. Over time the Bologna Process has been rolled out across the European Union (EU) and used as a model for other forms of educational regionalisms worldwide.

It is worth stating at the outset that our work on understanding the relationship between the Bologna Process (BP) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is anchored in a deep interest in theorizing region-making, including how regions interact with each other in what is called inter-regionalisms. In that sense it sets our own work as collaborators (see Robertson et al., 2016) on a different path to colleagues working more specifically on the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Area with an interest primarily in governance, resource distribution and institution steering (cf. Huisman & van der Wende, 2004). Aside from being a key policy actor and shaper of the Bologna Process via the activities of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), Pavel has retained a strong philosophical and critical pedagogical interest in the 'idea' of a European higher education system, and what this contributes to a wider project of making active social citizens and how this might contribute to enhancing social cohesion (Zgaga, 2020).

Our own interests have been guided by our own disciplinary backgrounds – economic geography and the political economy of education. This has led us to trace out different regional projects which have been theorized as second wave regionalisms. These are a reaction to neoliberal globalization that was launched in the 1980s following the collapse of the post-WWII development project. Second wave regionalisms began in the early 1990s, and have included developments in the Latin America region, in East Asia, parts of Africa, nascent initiatives in the Arab world, as well as North America and Europe (Robertson, 2018).

Broadly we have been concerned to understand the ways in which higher education has been drawn into the logic of capitalist expansion and world market-making. The 'region' – in the case of the EU we can see overlapping but distinct higher education regional projects –dependent upon, and with ongoing effects on, the socio-political and spatial relations between domestic economies, the (supranational) region, and the 'extra-regional', or global. In sum, along with colleagues we have argued in a series of publications that these are a novel, spatial strategies deployed by the state and allied social forces which transform the state, the region, and overlapping higher education sectoral projects (cf. various chapters on diverse regions in Robertson et al., 2016).

At its most basic, and to avoid regionalist ideology, we have approached regional projects and region-building through a set of questions so as to reveal underlying mechanisms that are activated to produce regional space and its social relations. Questions include what underlying logics are at work? What is the ideational basis of these (political, cultural, economic) projects? How are meanings brokered, and by whom? What processes, mechanisms and contradictions are at play, with what outcomes, and for whom? How are multiple overlapping spatial projects managed? In our own responses to such questions, we have consistently argued for a way of researching regions conceptually and methodologically that focus on a cultural political economy of regionalism, and specifically higher education sectoral regionalism (Robertson et al., 2016; Robertson & Dale, 2015).

Whilst our own research approach to understanding regions have been different to Pavel's, our differences have provided the basis for ongoing and engaging conversations at conferences and research meetings, that are driven by an interest in making sense of the worlds around us. Pavel for his part always went one further. He was typically at the centre of the politics of the Bologna Process given his key role as Rapporteur at various points in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (Zgaga, 2020). Pavel would also chart the rapid rippling out of the Bologna Process globally – in what he euphemistically and diplomatically called 'global echoes' (Zgaga, 2006).

5.3 History and Politics Matter

Whilst Pavel's training is as a philosopher, he also insisted history and politics matter, and that bringing the past into view can reveal the contingencies, decisions and lessons of the path travelled (Zgaga, 2020). In this sense, too, the history of Bologna matters in that it has its antecedents in the 1950s, where higher education initiatives began to play a role in the development of post-WWII Europe (Corbett, 2005; Hingel, 2001). However, between the 1950s and early 1990s, the EU's higher education project was almost entirely intra-regional in its ontology and outcomes. With the notable exception of the United Kingdom (and to a lesser extent France and Germany), the internationalization of study programmes, curricula, student mobility and research career paths were primarily oriented towards European partners and Europeanizing processes (Corbett, 2005).

In 1992, a single market and European Union were announced by the Treaty of the European Union and signed at Maastricht by the heads of the European Community's member states. The Maastricht Treaty acknowledged the European Union's direct role in education whilst attempting to limit the European Commission's room for manoeuvre by restricting European-level action to 'supplementary' activities. Whilst the Maastricht Treaty appeared to suggest that the EU's role would be modest, under Jacques Delors, the European Commission (EC) had ambitions to develop a more comprehensive policy for higher education at the European level (Corbett, 2005). The 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education shows that higher education 'had already become part of the Community's broader agenda of economic and social coherence' (Huisman & van der Wende, 2004: 350).

To make sense of the politics behind the Memorandum and the events that followed, it is crucial to consider the changing nature of the wider economic and geopolitical context that Europe's member states found themselves in. In 1991–1992 the biggest economies (including Germany) experienced a recession which increased the number of unemployed graduates in Europe (Teichler & Kehm, 1995). This provided some legitimacy for the EC's higher education project. However, of greater significance were the wider changes taking place in the global economy as a result of economic globalisation, the transnationalisation of production and finance, and the emergence of neoliberalism as a political project to guide social policy sectors and the economy (Harvey, 2005). These changes in the global economy had implications for the European project, as they directly affected the restructuring of the EU. To be competitive in the global economy, Europe had to transform itself along free trade and free market lines, whilst higher education institutions were tasked with producing more graduates who could better contribute to high value-added knowledge production as well as innovation-oriented development agendas.

In 2000, the European Union's educational activities were given a significant boost by the 'Lisbon Strategy' which declared: 'the European Union must become 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). The Lisbon Strategy provided a mandate and an agenda for extending the reach of Europe's policy responsibility deeper into national territory – education – and ultimately outwards to the rest of the world. In January 2000, upon the proposal of the European Commission, a decision was also taken to establish a European Research Area (ERA), with the principal explicit objective of supporting a knowledge-based economy on a European scale under the framing of a 'Europe of Knowledge'.

5.4 Enter the Bologna Process

The Lisbon 2000 agenda for higher education was paralleled by the Bologna Process, a distinctive and ambitious project driven in this case by national governments and other key stakeholders to create a common degree architecture and a European area for higher education. The Bologna Process therefore had its roots in a strategic articulation between domestic and regional agendas. Following a meeting in 1998 in Paris to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Sorbonne, French Minister for Education Claude Allegre secured the agreement of the German, Italian and United Kingdom Education Ministers to commit their countries to a new architecture for higher education (Ravinet, 2008). Allegre argued that to develop a knowledge-based economy, Europe needed to emulate the US system, and stem the flow of European graduates to the US.

The following year the Bologna Declaration (1999) committed 29 signatory countries to six 'action lines' directed towards establishing the EHEA to be realized by 2010. Within this 'Area', staff and student mobility was to be enhanced by the alignment of national quality assurance mechanisms, compatible degree structures, the adoption of a credit transfer system, and a common way of describing qualifications to be outlined in a personal 'diploma supplement'. Pavel made a central contribution to all this work. Pavel will also have his own up close and personal account of keeping a project like the Bologna Process 'on the road', not least because it entered national policymaking spaces and was sensitive to national political agendas. As he would later write, taken together, these regulatory mechanisms enabled Bologna to act as a vehicle for raising the attractiveness of Europe as a destination for study, and as a process that was itself attractive to a growing number of countries around the globe who also depended on the ease of movement of international students (Zgaga, 2006: 10).

The Bologna Process is a voluntary international agreement, situated outside the European Union's formal governance framework, although increasingly and over time the European Commission has taken a stronger interest in the project, and promotes many initiatives (such as the European Credit Transfer System, ECTS credit system) originally piloted by the European Commission (Keeling, 2006). 'Convinced that the establishment of the European area of higher education required constant support, supervision and adaptation to the continuously evolving needs' (Bologna Declaration, 1999), the European education ministers decided to meet

regularly to assess progress, transforming the Bologna commitment into an ongoing policy process (via a Bologna Process Ministerial Conference held every 2 years). The latest meeting was held in Rome in 2020. However, because of COVID-19 and the global pandemic that has shut down university buildings across Europe, the Conference was held online. We will return to this issue shortly.

Membership of the Bologna Process and the associated EHEA (again, officially launched in 2010) has increased over time; by 2021 the Bologna Process had 49 countries who were members, with Belarus the most recent signatory (in 2015). The Bologna Process as a spatial project with its own temporal rhythms, politics, and legal instruments (see Hartmann, 2008), extends far beyond the European Union as a constitutional entity. Being a member does not guarantee full implementation.

A series of Trends Reports provide an account of the implementation of the Bologna Process – which has been particularly uneven both in terms of governance arrangements and in meeting mobility targets. For example, despite the target to 20% graduates moving across Europe, the figure currently sits at 9.4% (EC, 2020). In the context of COVID-19, new mobility practices – such as virtual mobility – are currently being explored (EUA, 2020). As a regional project, the multiplicity of memberships and its spatial sprawl raises important questions about the overall coherence of the Bologna Process. As Harmsen (2013: 11) observes, this 'pick and choose' 'looseness' has its costs in that there are quite different levels of participation amongst member states which is also evident in the Trends Reports.

5.5 Building the Region Within and Without

Regional theorists like Hettne (2005) argue regions are built from both within (via integration processes) and without (as a protection against global forces, also giving rise to other regions). In other words, they involve endogenous and exogenous processes. If higher education had been oriented toward managing the territorial project and its politics within the expanding region because of different stages of accession, from 2003 onwards the various political institutions of Europe, in particular the EC, began to pursue a more explicit extra-regional globalizing strategy.

This extra-regional agenda had direct and indirect effects on higher education as a sector and on the higher education region building strategy. The direct effects are the outcomes, both within and outside of Europe, of explicit strategies to realize a competitive European higher education area and market following the launch of projects such as the Erasmus Mundus programme, the Neighbourhood Policy, and the mobilization of old colonial links to align with Europe's market interests. The indirect effects were the consequences of reactions to this strategy in domestic economies in the global political economy, where the Bologna architecture had become increasingly viewed as variously a threat (USA, Australia) (Robertson & Keeling, 2008), as a model for domestic restructuring (USA, Brazil, China), and as the basis for new regional projects and higher education architectures around the globe (Africa, Latin America, ASEAN).

One of the triggers for a change in strategy came from a *Mid-Term Review* of the European *Commission's* strategy led by Kok following declining growth in the early 2000s, and the realisation Europe was falling behind the USA and Asia. This was added to by the spectre of the rise of China and India, as threat and opportunity (Kok, 2004: 12). EU Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, delivered a stirring speech at the European University Association convention in Glasgow entitled 'Strong Universities for Europe', asserting that the state of education in Europe compared to other world regions was 'miserable' (Barosso, 2005: 25).

In a new departure, the Commission issued direct recommendations to universities as to how to restructure their governance arrangements, as well as their financing and research management (including performance measurements and incentives) (European Commission, 2005, 2006). This included bringing 'third countries' into cooperation agreements to impede their alignment with the US. Education also became an important area of sectoral dialogue with a number of Asian countries, including China. The EU's global talent strategy also sought to attract leading European researchers back to Europe by refining the Marie Curie instruments. Higher education thus became deeply incorporated into the European Union's drive to improve its economic position and influence around the globe.

In sum, these techniques of regional governance had their potency in shaping internal regulation as well as in the potential for normative leadership in the education services sector. This has been given considerable impetus by the direct and indirect effects of Europe's higher education project on other domestic economies and nascent regional ambitions within the near region, and beyond. The Bologna Process and its role in the creation of the EHEA has clearly inspired more strategic ways of thinking about regions and the value of creating and institutionalizing the role of education in regional relationships.

5.6 The 2008 Financial Crisis, Authoritarian Populism and Neo-nationalisms

It could be argued that the heyday of the rapid rise and extension of the Bologna Process is now over and made particularly challenging over the past decade because of changes in the world economy. The global financial crisis in 2008 generated major challenges for national governments and their higher education institutions, on the one hand, and the EU and the legitimacy of its regional project, on the other.

In this final section we review evidence of what this means for Europe's EHEA and ERA projects, its launch of the European Education Area strategy (to be achieved by 2025), growing anxieties about the uneven development unfolding across Europe (EC, 2014; EUA, 2021) following the 2008 crisis and most recently the global pandemic as a result of COVID-19.

In 2014, following dramatic challenges to economies like Greece, Portugal and Spain following the crisis of 2008, the European Commission noted:

> Much like most other regions across the world, Europe is going through a period of transformation. The global economic crisis has wiped out years of economic and social progress and exposed structural weaknesses in its economy. Meanwhile, various long-term challenges such as globalization, pressure on natural resources and an ageing population are intensifying. If we are to adapt to this changing reality, Europe can no longer rely on business as usual (EC, 2014: 3).

Once again, the European Union's state institutions have been faced with major challenges: how best to move forward to boost sluggish economic growth, and how to stem the rising social and economic inequalities that had cut even deeper into the social fabrics of the various countries making up the European Union. Smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth was the new strapline (EC, 2014).

In September 2020 the European Commission launched a new communication titled 'on achieving the European Education Area by 2025' (EC, 2020). Its close temporal horizon – 2025 – suggests that being able to read further ahead and chart a path forward might be problematic. Its lower case start to the title also suggests a degree of tentativeness, though this may well be a case of over-reading the visual language of the Communication. That aside, the Communication recognizes the consequences of COVID-19 for Europe, and particularly for its education and training systems. Paradoxically the crisis has stimulated the extension of the EC's strategy into all levels of education – from early years learning and care to schools, higher education and to training initiatives and lifelong learning – on the premise that a wholistic approach is needed to ride the crisis out (p. 1) and to build an inclusive culture (p. 4).

The idea of mobility is presented as fundamental to a quality education for European member states, and that learning mobility and cooperation across borders, along with language learning and multilingualism, is central to enhancing the quality of education (EC, 2020: 6). The EC (2020: 10) Communication acknowledged the role of the Bologna Process in driving internationalisation and mobility, arguing that mobility helps job prospects, but that the costs of mobility, plus ongoing issues of recognition across national jurisdictions, induces low levels of mobility.

The recent launch of the 41 'European Universities' pilots programme, initially proposed at the Gothenburg Social Summit in 2017 (European Commission 2019, 2020) was another significant initiative and just 2 years later 17 European Universities were announced. Funding of up to €85 million was committed to this initiative (EC, 2019). In our view, these new institutional arrangements can be read as a different kind of strategy for the Commission aimed at overcoming what it saw as the slow pace of the Bologna Process; the purpose of these European Universities is to accelerate deeper and more ambitious forms of cooperation amongst universities in Europe.

Funds (€5 million over 3 years to be shared amongst the consortium partners) are available for consortiums to become inter-university campuses around which students, doctoral candidates, staff, and researchers, are to move 'seamlessly" (EC, 2019: p. 1). The consortiums are expected to pool "expertise, platforms, and resources to deliver joint curricula or modules covering various disciplines" (p. 1) and enable the recognition of credits (including micro-credits). By 2024 it is

expected that there will be 20 European Universities, and that these will be a key institutional component of the European Education Area by 2025. Given the challenging financial situation facing institutions of higher education across many European countries, exacerbated by COVID-19, universities are likely to be incentivized to engage in this way. However, COVID-19 has also meant many universities have operated virtually since March 2020 and are likely to for some time to come. What does virtual mobility mean in this context, and is it likely to be attractive to staff and students? It is different to mobilise a positive argument given that student mobility at least has depended on selling 'the student experience'.

But there are also other challenges now on the horizon, which are presenting the European Union with major challenges regarding its integration project. In June 2016, by a small margin the UK voted to leave the EU. Dubbed BREXIT by the leave campaigners, the decision to leave has had major ramifications for UK universities given that they secured a significant amount of research funding from the various EU research programmes. But it is what BREXIT represents, which is more disturbing for the EU's regional project, in that it signals a new set of populist and nativist politics that have emerged out of at least more than decades of neoliberal policies shaping social policy sectors.

This new populist politics has been described as authoritarian populism by some, and neo-nationalism by others (Douglass, 2021). In essence they are describing the same kind of phenomena: a set of oppositions which have emerged between those who have done well out of decades of neoliberalism, and those who have been left behind. Levels of education map onto these cleavages, so that what appears to emerge is a vertical framing 'the people' versus 'the elite', on the one hand, and a horizontal opposition in the form of 'the people' versus 'outsiders', on the other (see Brubaker, 2017). Rather than levels of education being regarded as 'causal' (the better educated you are the more open-minded and tolerant you are), we agree with Cohen (2019) who argues that a new politics of resentment has emerged from diminished opportunities for social mobility, the loss of status, and a new politics of financial precarity. Populists like Trump in the US and Farage in the UK have exploited these resentments for their own political purposes, and while both of these figures have moved on to a degree, the underlying forces that contributed to their rise are still present and will be so for the foreseeable future.

5.7 Final Note

Perhaps this takes us full circle back to Pavel, and his ambition as an academic, educator, politician and philosopher, for the Bologna Process. Pavel took the view that widening access to higher education at the European scale would enable individuals to develop their full capacities and potentials, and this has happened on many levels. However, as the decade unfolded and higher education institutions were hitched to economic competitiveness projects at the national and regional levels, they have compromised important aspects of their emancipatory potential.

When the idea of a graduate premium dominates an individual's judgement about what subjects are worth studying, or when the value of a discipline is measured in terms of a labour market outcome as we see with the UK, the love of learning and the value of all kinds of knowledges give ground to instrumental thinking. Unhooking higher education from market logics, an excess of individualism, and nationalist agendas, would not only go some way to reorienting higher education toward more democratic goals, in our view this is a necessary step to building a more cohesive society at the level of Europe. These are the sorts of debates Pavel has always been keen to engage in, and we are forever thankful for his openness, sharp insights, and commitment to transform higher education systems in Europe (and beyond) in positive and enduring ways.

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Chapter 6
Pavel Zgaga and Bologna Actors: Policymaking on the External Dimension and the Bologna Policy Forum, 2003–2009

Anne Corbett

Abstract Pavel Zgaga is one of the best-known Bologna actors of the early years. This chapter takes his experience as a starting point to recount and theorise policymaking on the external dimension for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a case of policy change. Drawing on the EHEA archives relating to the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) this account shows an informal 'club' of long-term Bologna actors working together to advance the Bologna Process. It challenges the scholarship on the supposed controlling role of the European Commission within the Bologna Process, suggesting that within the Bologna arena, a socialising process operates in which members in general accept the informal and as well as the formal rules and different actors have crucial inputs at different stages of the policymaking process. Pavel Zgaga is an example.

Keywords External dimension of the Bologna process · Policymaking · Bologna policy forum · European higher education area

6.1 Introduction

In this chap. I approach 'actorhood' within the Bologna Process from the standpoint of roles played in policymaking and policy change. I focus on the external dimension in the years 2003–2009 and its management by the EHEA's executive body, the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG). This policy episode can be traced from the agenda ministers set for BFUG in 2003 through to the recommendations presented to ministers in 2007 and 2009. In London (ministerial, 2007) ministers approved the proposed external dimension strategy, laid out in the report European *Higher Education in a Global Setting: a strategy* (Norwegian Ministry of Education, 2006).

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Two years later Ministers in Leuven /Louvain-la-Neuve (ministerial, 2009) accepted the recommendation of the BFUG *the European Higher Education Area in a Global Context*: *Report on overall developments at the European National and Institutional Levels* (ministerial, 2009) for a strategy which included the creation of a new institution, the Bologna Policy Forum. This was to open the door to a Bologna-focused dialogue and cooperation with similar regional actors across the world.

The key question, in the context of this book, is what does this external dimension policy episode tell us about actorhood, as played out within the Bologna Process in the period 2003–2009. I ask how the actors involved evolved a strategy to reflect the aspiration of the ministers who, in signing the Bologna Declaration in 1999 (Ministerial, 1999) hoped that European universities would be seen as attractive to a wider world. How and why did the BFUG actors reach a decision to create the Bologna Policy Forum? What might be an appropriate theoretical framing to enlighten us about actorhood involved?

Conceptually I diverge from recent scholarship on the external dimension which sees this Bologna theme as a global foreign policy endeavour (Moscovitz & Zahavi, 2020; Zahavi & Friedman, 2019a, 2019b and see also Damro, Gstöhl and Schunz, 2017; Damro & Friedman, 2018; Asderaki, 2019; Charlier & Panait, 2015). I note that all but Asderaki, a former actor as the official representing Greece in the early days, tend to see the European Commission as the dominant actor. I have also taken a different path from classic actorhood texts (Drori et al., 2009; Meyer & Vaara, 2020).

My approach to the question is through a focus on the policy process to see how actors exploit opportunities to pursue the policy solutions they favour. My conceptualisation follows Kingdon (1984; Corbett, 2005) in which the actor has a crucial role in the early stages of policymaking, that is to say the framing is the process of policy change rather than the actor with agency.

In theorising the significance of agenda setting in policy change, Kingdon pointed to the importance of a process usually hidden from public view, that of the alternative specification is which issues are thrashed out, deals done, and choices made which can be presented to decision-makers. He modelled the challenge of agenda setting in terms of multiple streams with different ('problems, policies, and politics') brought together at a politically opportune moment (a window of opportunity') in which an actor ('a policy entrepreneur') joins the 'streams' together. Later scholarship has usefully supplemented the Kingdon model by strengthening the context-specific theorisation that ideas have their time, and the role of institutional ambiguity (Ackrill et al., 2013).

My sources are the EHEA archives, focussed on the ministerial communiques, the BFUG archives and Pavel Zgaga's contribution, notably the 2006 report *Looking Out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting. On the 'External Dimension' of the Bologna Process*, presented to the London Bologna ministerial in 2007 (Zgaga, 2006).

6.2 The BFUG Defined

The BFUG is the actor in chief of this account. It is the executive of the EHEA. Its task is to translate the wishes of the ministers, as expressed in the ministerial communiqué at the end of a cycle into deliverable policy recommendations for the next ministerial meeting. Its day-to-day functions are discharged by the BFUG Board and by the secretariat, which is charged with managing the rigid policy-making cycle on which the EHEA's policy sustainability and development depends.[1] At this period, it was held by the country which had volunteered to hold the forthcoming ministerial meeting. Working Groups (WGs) treat the issues.

BFUG's voting membership consists of representatives of national higher education systems[2] and of the European Commission, and it is assisted by consultative bodies active in the Europe of higher education. Ministers are formally and numerically the main political force. Although not an EU body, there are tie-ins between the EU and Bologna. National representatives wield extra diplomatic weight during follow the six-monthly EU Presidency timetable and the same troika pattern when they assume the presidency.[3] The European Commission has the crucial role of keeping the EHEA in being as its main funder. It also brings its immense expertise and its reach into wider EU policies. Hence the assumptions about its 'long arm' which surface in the scholarly literature (Damro et al., 2017).

However, the BFUG is probably, outside academia, the body the most representative of the Europe of higher education. In terms of policymaking influence and the ability to create coalitions, its consultative members who have a place on the BFUG Board, are big actors. The Council of Europe and UNESCO as long-established international organisations bring a particular strength in decades of educational cooperation, including important work on conventions for recognition, and in the case of the Council of Europe of democratic values (Melo, n.d.).

The European University Association (EUA) represents more than 800 universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries and has been represented by the same small group of officials of 20 years. The European Students Union is the umbrella organisation for student unions in the 48 EHEA countries. It has a changing membership but a strong institutional memory. Education International is the European section of a global teachers' union that spans 178 countries. The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) represents universities of applied sciences and university colleges. Business Europe is a recognised social partner, with a membership of national business federations and speaking for all-sized enterprises in 35 European countries.

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[1] For EHEA-Bologna activities, including the BFUG archives see https://ehea.info. Follow Events/1999-2018/Past Events/Work Programme 2007–2009.

[2] The Bologna Declaration was signed by ministers representing 29 higher education systems. In 2003, 29 national systems were in membership, in 2005, 46, and by 2021, 49.

[3] Non-EU systems did not have the right to co-chair until the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial.

So, even before turning to the policy episode of the external dimension examined here, we can see actorhood within Bologna structures as likely to be more complex than the image widely projected of the European Commission as key actor.

6.3 Assembling Ideas

In signing the Bologna Declaration (Ministerial, 1999) ministers made the case that 'the vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. 'We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions.' But they also stressed the objective of increasing the competitiveness of the European system (sic) of higher education.[4]

At Prague (Ministerial, 2001) the first ministerial meeting after the signing of the Bologna Declaration, ministers expressed 'an intra-European view (Zgaga, 2006): 'Higher education and research should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractivity and competitiveness'. But it was not followed by action. The German secretariat working with an embryonic BFUG to prepare the Berlin ministerial had more urgent issues to deal with, notably the desire of Russia and the former communist states of Ukraine, the Caucasus, which, unlike the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe had joined Bologna as EU Associated Countries. A report commissioned under the Danish presidency on attractiveness, openness and cooperation fell by the wayside.

At Berlin (Ministerial, 2003) ministers elaborated the idea of attractivity to include the openness of European higher education, and forms of higher education governance respecting academic quality and academic values. It also launched the notion of policy dialogue in agreeing 'to work for that end in all appropriate fora'.

However yet again there were bigger issues at stake. The Norwegians, who took over the secretariat in 2003 after the Berlin ministerial, faced significant programme overload (BFUG, 2005a). One actor of the time reports 'we were all under at the time to refine and adopt two of the pillars of the EHEA: the quality assurance guidelines and the qualifications framework'.[5] Another cites a working group drafting meeting on stocktaking, another priority area, entailing drafting session entailing 16-hour days.[6] There was also the issue of what should happen after 2010 when the EHEA was declared to exist. The BFUG chair, Germain Dondelinger, the top education official of Luxembourg, took charge of the working group, *Halfway in the Bologna Process. Towards 2010* (BFUG, 2005c). It did not mention the external dimension.

[4] Thereafter the European system became European systems.

[5] Personal communication, May 12, 2021.

[6] Personal communication, May 1, 2021.

The Bergen communique in May 2005 (Ministerial, 2005) nevertheless showed that ministers now wanted to put the issue high in the agenda: 'We ask the Follow-up Group to elaborate and agree on a strategy for the external dimension'. This was in part due to the energy of consultative members, UNESCO-CEPES[7] and the Council of Europe in servicing the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition (NARIC) and the relevance of UNESCO-OECD activity on Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

6.4 Developing a Strategy

The Bergen communique was a turning point for the external dimension. Under the Bologna rules the secretariat had already been handed over to the UK, who would be responsible for preparing the London ministerial in 2007. Nevertheless, the Norwegians remained deeply involved.

The Norwegians volunteered to head a working group on the external dimension, with an obligation to draft an External Dimension Strategy in time for the London ministerial. They also commissioned Pavel Zgaga, well known in Bologna circles, to follow the process of the working group and to write an analytical report to enrich discussion both before and after the Bergen ministerial, when it was hoped the issue would be high on the agenda. Toril Johansson, the Norwegian official with responsibility for the Bologna dossier, was chair. Barbara Weitgruber of Austria, a major voice in Bologna, was vice chair (BFUG, 2005b).

The working group brought together 11 national systems and eight organisations.[8] It engaged in three seminars between 2006 and 2007: on the cultural heritage and academic values of the European university hosted by the Vatican,[9] on developing strategies for attractiveness hosted by Greece[10] and held in Athens, and as the London ministerial loomed closer, a seminar in Oslo hosted by the Nordic countries,[11] on a possible strategy. By then they had Pavel Zgaga's draft report to guide them.[12]

Professor and pedagogue that he was, Zgaga seized the opportunity to explore the roots and historical perceptions of the concept of the External Dimension and, very valuable at the stage, to collect data on how other education systems were

[7] See General Report of the Bologna Follow Up Group to the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education Bergen, 19–20 May 2005.

[8] See membership in Annexe.

[9] http://ehea.info/cid102390/academic-values-2006.html

[10] http://ehea.info/cid102392/strategies-for-attractiveness-2006.html

[11] http://ehea.info/cid102395/external-dimension-oslo-2006.html

[12] Zgaga himself was no longer a Slovenian representative after the Bergen ministerial but he was still closely in touch with this world through his status as expert for the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research.

viewing Bologna. The result was *Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting. On the "External Dimension" of the Bologna Process* (Zgaga, 2006).

The report lays out the complexity of conceptualising the external dimension. Attractivity had been interpreted in many different ways from the start. Was Bologna advocating cooperation or competitivity, or as Andris Barblan, long time secretary of the CRE, a European university association, asked: was Bologna going for the UNESCO or the World Trade Organisation model? (cited in Zgaga, 2006). Was it about internal or external drivers: the Bologna 'tools' designed to demonstrate the quality and compatibility of European systems. Or was it about exporting[13] the European dimension?

Not least of the challenges was the fact signalled by the ACA: 'Overall Europe is not perceived as a union as regards higher education. There is a perception of Europe as an entity in general terms and as an economic unit. However, students rather saw Europe as a range of different countries (ACA, 2006, cited in Zgaga, 2006).

There were also changing political imperatives tied up with the question of Bologna membership. At the start the question was whether the external dimension targeted non-EU members as well as systems in other world regions. What happened when they who wanted to join the Bologna process? Unsurprisingly in the early days the issue of the external dimension went into the too-difficult-to-solve box.

Zgaga, deputed to accompany the working group and seminars, had the advantage of being able to step in at an early stage with the ideas he thought were crucial before the WG External Dimension got committed to a strategy. These were notably that the Bologna actors should not be thinking from the purely European perspective. Members should recognise the growing interest in other world regions in different aspects of Bologna, especially in relation to international competitiveness and recognition. There was a general modernisation of higher education across the world matching many of the Bologna priorities. But no less important Bologna was also being seen as offering the potential for partnership, cooperation, and policy dialogue (Zgaga, 2006).

Another key message was that whatever strategies were adopted, they would be interpreted at institutional levels as well as policymaking levels and in a variety of ways both within and outside Europe. This made the concept of partnership of utmost importance. It would be the practice of partnership which offered the most productive outcomes at policymaking and institutional levels, and in the relationship between Bologna and other systems. Bologna recognised diversity, but could it find common denominators?

The evidence of how other countries and regions were reacting to the Bologna Process, should also feed into the debate as to whether the external dimension was for exporting Bologna values or finding common grounds for cooperation. The report also contained an extensive bibliography, a window on higher education thinking on the issue at the time.

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[13] A controversy still going on in 2019 see Zgaga, 2019.

By October 2006, having been through the BFUG Board, the first draft on the External Dimension was ready for presentation to BFUG 9 meeting in Helsinki. The Zgaga draft report was available (BFUG, 2006). Toril Johansson, the WG chair, introduced the draft strategy as underlining that the EHEA aimed to be both cooperative and competitive. The strategy also strongly reflected a European view that respect for academic values should be at the core of partnerships, and that potential partnerships across the globe should respect the recognition guidelines proposed by OECD/UNESCO.

- The EHEA should be open and attractive.
- Cooperation should be based on sustainable development in accordance with OECD/UNESCO guidelines
- Academic values should prevail
- EHEA shall be a partner and stimulate cooperation with other parts of the world
- Enhance understanding of the Bologna Process and share experience.[14]

She added that the WG anticipated the need to monitor implementation of the strategy as part of the overall Bologna stocktaking process, should the WG continue to 2009.

The report was given a critical reception.[15] There were requests for a revision which would clarify how the strategy would enhance competition as well as some scepticism as to whether Bologna would continue after 2010.

In March 2007, the WG report, now retitled as *European Higher Education in a Global Setting, a Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process*, was presented to BFUG 10 in Berlin (BFUG, 2007a). The strategy had been energised ('improving' 'promoting' 'strengthening' 'intensifying') but become more of what one member called 'a toolbox'.[16] A stronger information strategy, where the Commission had much to contribute, headed the list. Respect for academic values had disappeared as a criterion. But policy dialogue newly emphasised suggested an 'Open' Europe approach.

- Improving information on the EHEA
- promoting its attractiveness and competitiveness
- strengthening cooperation based on partnership
- intensifying policy dialogue
- furthering recognition of qualifications, this work to be seen in relation to the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

[14] Toril Johansson reported to the BFUG 9 held in Helsinki in October 2006 that discussions had been held with Barbara Weitgruber of Austria, Bernd Wächter of the long established Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) and Michael Gaebel, a senior official of the European University Association, using Pavel Zgaga's report Looking Out as background.

[15] BFUG 9 minutes.

[16] Personal communication, April 24, 2021.

In April 2007, at BFUG 11 (BFUG, 2007b), the revised report was signed off as ready for the London ministerial.

The message about the commitment to cooperation and the importance of academic values, still in the text of the report, got through to ministers. As had the argument backed by UNESCO and ENQA that the external dimension could not be purely outward facing but needed to demonstrate a quality dimension.

6.5 Creating an Instrument

The ministers in London took from the strategy document that many developments were under way: European and international partners had been in discussions on such issues as the recognition of qualifications, the benefits of cooperation based upon partnership, mutual trust and understanding, and the underlying values of the Bologna Process. Some countries beyond Europe had adopted at least a partial Bologna model. They also took on board the 2003–2005 advocacy that stakeholder involvement was crucial: 'All stakeholders have a role here within their spheres of responsibility' (Ministerial, 2007).

The work programme for 2005–2007 relaunched the external dimension WG as the WG Global Setting with Barbara Weitgruber as chair and a set of specific tasks. As formally approved in Lisbon on October 2007 (BFUG12c) this involved cooperating with the Secretary in the development of a website, designed for a global audience, and with the EUA on its handbook. Thy were also instructed to cooperate with the Council of Europe, the Commission and UNESCO, the recognition bodies ENIC and NARIC to enhance fair recognition of qualifications; and to liaise with the European Commission on EU initiatives and programmes on global promotion and cooperation; as well as to look for way of integrating the OECD/UNESCO guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education.

The WG Global Setting had already held two meetings when they made their first report to the BFUG Board BFUG (BFUG Board 16, Ljubljana, 16 January 2008) and then the full BFUG (BFUG 13 Brdo, 13–14 March 2008. BFUG, 2008a).

At that stage the report-back was a mere two pages long and the issue of most concern was a decision on an EHEA website as a tool for the promotion of information. Transnational education (TNE) continued to be a sensitive issue with the need to insist on academic criteria, an issue on which European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) provided the lead. As for policy dialogue, the WG considered that existing fora and platforms were adequate for policy dialogue.

The next stage was the presentation of the draft strategy report, programmed for BFUG 14, to be held in Paris in October 2008. However, by the time of the BFUG 14 meeting (BFUG, 2008c) a new and controversial idea had been added: a proposal for a Bologna Policy Forum on which the BFUG Board and BFUG members had widely different views.

An unforeseen problem had arisen in BFUG. Particpants were debating how to treat applications for membership from not obviously European countries, but which nevertheless admired the Bologna model. Israel's application had been turned down although it had adopted many of the Bologna reforms. Kazakhstan had been pressing its case since. Unexpectedly the Commission had jumped in with the suggestion that countries not eligible for EHEA membership should nevertheless be rewarded for their interest and given associate membership if they followed the Bologna model.

Unable to give an instant response, BFUG at its meeting in Brdo in March (BFUG 13) (BFUG, 2008a) had asked the WG Global Setting to prepare a proposal based on a partnership model of cooperation for discussion at the 'extraordinary' BFUG meeting called to 'brainstorm' the report *Bologna Beyond 2010*, being managed in a WG chaired by Germain Dondelinger and to beheld in Sarajevo in June 2008.

The Weitgruber WG had a terse answer to the Commission proposal ready in its presentation for Sarajevo. As the Draft Outcome of Proceedings records (BFUG, Sarajevo, 2008) (BFUG, 2008b) the WG Global Setting note said that it was not possible to come up with objective criteria for granting countries the status of 'partner countries' or 'associated countries'. They argued that criteria for EHEA membership developed at the time of the 2003 expansion of Bologna membership held good.[17]

They produced some ideas which were to stand the test of time. Taking the line that the question that needed to be addressed was not whether to cooperate but how to best cooperate, they suggested cooperation mechanisms that could be of mutual benefit to Bologna members and those not eligible for membership, such as policy dialogue on specific issues or the concept of the EHEA, invitations to seminars etc. At some point in the email or corridor talk, the idea for a specific Bologna Policy Forum took root.

But as the Sarajevo outcome document also records, the European Commission, while agreeing with most of the WG conclusions reiterated its view that countries that were not eligible to join the Bologna Process should be given a special status. The Commission then, for good measure, circulated the Sarajevo outcome document to BFUG members before the BFUG meeting in Paris meeting (BFUG, 2008c).

Some of those present at BFUG 14 in Paris were overtly hostile to the 'labelling' amendment proposed by the Commission. ESU took the lead in objecting to a special status for those attending. But there was general support for the new idea of the forum to set up policy dialogues with interested non-European partners (BFUG14, minutes). However the reporting back, linked to the overarching WG on Bologna Beyond 2010,reported was that while there was a consensus on the creation of a Bologna Policy Forum in the margins of Bologna ministerial meetings as a solution

[17] To become a member of the EHEA, countries have to be party to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe and to declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process. The Convention has been taken as a symbol of geographic Europe This excluded others interested, such as the US.

to the status of third countries, there was still the question as to whether countries participating in the Bologna Policy Forum would obtain the status of Bologna Partner Country or any other term which reflected their strong interest, without suggesting that membership is within reach. (BFUG 14–9a).

That proviso in the BFUG 14_9a report based on comments received from participants unusually broke into anger at the Board meeting in Prague in January 2009 (BFUG Board 18) (BFUG, 2009). Norway was scandalised to see that the report included 'new bullet points on page 10' including that 'countries participating in the Bologna Policy Forum would obtain the status of Bologna Forum Countries' suggesting that the Commission had continued to lobby for its idea, outside or possibly behind the back of the WG Global Setting.

Among the comments: 'The issue of a certain type of status or standard for countries which have aligned their systems to the 'Bologna standard' has been discussed several times including the last BFUG meeting in Paris', said the Norwegian representative. 'The conclusion has always been negative.' Austria's Board official interjected 'Not a single country championed any non-EHEA countries except the European Commission!' The EUA supported the criticisms.

The Council of Europe, represented by its experienced and respected official, Sjur Bergan, said 'the Bologna process is not in a position to pass judgement on higher education systems in other parts of the world by issuing labels or other kinds of official judgements'. He called for the report to be clear that 'cooperation…will be carried out on the basis of respect and equal dignity.'

Somewhere in the corridors peace was achieved. The Commission desisted. But this was not without some ongoing disappointment. In its view, others had failed to recognise that the argument was about giving third countries an incentive for reform on Bologna lines, which also matched UNESCO/OECD Guidelines, and thereby would help to drive up standards. In its view the 'disrespectful' thesis was laughable. Was Australia going to be enslaved by associate status?[18]

By the subsequent BFUG meeting (BFUG 15) (BFUG, 2009) in Prague, 12–13 February 2009, the BFUG Board put an end to the argument. The reference to a special status for those who attended the Bologna Policy Forum had disappeared. The report went on to be approved by the ministerial meeting held at Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve (Ministerial, 2009).

6.6 Legitimating a Decision

When Ministers met for the fourth time under Bologna auspices at Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve on April 28–29,2009, their main task was to define political orientations for the coming 10 years based on the Dondelinger report: *The European*

[18] Personal communication May 20, 2021.

Higher Education Area [EHEA] in a Global Context. Report on overall developments at the European, national and institutional levels.

> We call upon European higher education institutions to further internationalise their activities and to engage in global collaboration for sustainable development. The attractiveness and openness of European higher education will be highlighted by joint European actions. Competition on a global scale will be complemented by enhanced policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership with other regions of the world, in particular through the organisation of Bologna Policy Fora, involving a variety of stakeholders (Ministerial, 2009. Communiqué para 16)

As far as ministers were concerned, BFUG had delivered on the London ministerial request to develop Bologna's global strategy. The first Bologna Policy Forum took place immediately in Louvain-la-Neuve on 29 April 2009.

6.7 Actorhood in Practice and Theory

The episode recorded is not an example of grand policy change. But the structuring the account of the pre-decision process in Kingdon terms is nevertheless valuable. It serves to track the policy process and provide evidence of actorhood more generally. It shows how the external dimensions strategy was generally settled by revision of the policy priorities which took place after BFUG 9 in Helsinki (BFUG, 2006)9, and that the idea of the Bologna Policy Forum was an amplification of the 'policy dialogue' strategy rather than a new point of principle.

But the Bologna Policy Forum did however introduce an instrument designed for policy implementation. Such a move fits in with the process literature that an important test of in the pre-decision phase is whether the policy recommendation being made are viable in the view of those likely to be charged with implementation (Kingdon, 1984; Corbett, 2005).

However, the episode did not produce a typical Kingdon policy entrepreneur, the actor always on the lookout for an opportunity to advance a favourite idea and adept at presenting that idea as a policy solution. The Commission, which might have liked to lay claim to the title, did not win in this instance, and did not win on what looked like point of principle relating to the Bologna Policy Forum.

There are several plausible reasons for suggesting that the BFUG is not friendly territory for heroic actors in the Kingdon style. What we see here is varied leadership linked to different policy process challenges.[19] The challenge for a non-hierarchical group of actors to develop a solution is a better theoretical fit is with the literature which recognises some socialisation of the policy process (see J.P.Olsen, 2007).

In this policy episode the Norwegian government was the first to exploit the opportunity given by the 2003 ministerial communique. Having put in a successful

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[19] See Gunn, 2017, for looser interpretations of policy entrepreneurship than in Kingdon.

bid to host the 2005 ministerial meeting and in consequence run the secretariat, they appointed some outstanding staff, who stayed involved in 2007–2009, notably Per Nyborg, former general secretary of the Norwegian rectors association who had headed the Bergen secretariat, and two officials, Jan Levy in charge of higher education and Toril Johansson, who held the responsibility for Bologna issues. Actors of the time speak warmly of all three. They operated strtegically, as when commissioning Pavel Zgaga's report.

The names of two national other national officials recur in this policy episode because they had a special responsibility at the time: Germain Dondelinger, of Luxembourg, and Barbara Weitgruber, of Austria, senior figures, who had already been Commission interlocutors before 1999 and the Bologna Declaration. There were several on the WG External Dimension distinguished by long service and by having fought policy battles together including several long-standing national officials, the Council of Europe's Sjur Bergan, and Lesley Wilson, general secretary of the European University Association, and some of the EUA presidents. They were undoubtedly effective as a group ambitious to advance policy.[20]

The institutions represented in BFUG see a positive advantage in being part of the Bologna platform (cf. Lažetić, 2010). An example is the Council of Europe. Bergan has spoken of how he persuaded the Council of Europe to join and influence the process from the inside rather than staying on the outside.[21]

It is also true of the Commission. Since its direct education powers are weak,[22] it can use Bologna successes as leverage for participation in the EU's wider external relations which historically have encompassed Tempus and the EU Enlargement negotiations and currently include the EU's neighbourhood policies and the opportunities that arise within the European External Action Service (see Highman, 2018) co-player on global higher education regulation (Asderaki, 2019).

Highman talks of the relationship between Bologna and the Commission as a game of mirrors. Corbett (2011) has used the image of ping-pong. Such images reappear in Bologna discourse highlighting the value of cross-institutional work, for example in relation to the OECD/UNESCO guidelines and in its partnership agreement with third countries. Those which would not have the content they have without the Bologna experience.[23]

Overall, the evidence of this episode supports the view that actorhood needs to be defined in its institutional setting (Ackrill et al., 2013). All these Bologna actors are dealing with multiple issues in multiple arenas (Vukasovic et al., 2018). Actors adapt to the situation they are in. The Olsen formula is that there is a logic of appropriateness involved, where actors respect the rules, informal as well as formal of the institution that they are in (Olsen, 2007).

[20] See Annexe for WGs membership.

[21] Personal communication, February 26, 2009.

[22] See Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 165.

[23] Personal communication May 20, 2021.

6.8 Concluding Remarks

This account does not attempt to treat the modern history of the external dimension. It so happens that the Bologna Policy Forum has not lived up to its original hopes (Bergan & Deca, 2018).

But my choice here was to examine this early policy episode as an example of actorhood, because of Pavel Zgaga, because his *Looking Out* report led to our first contact, and because it was a challenge to try and uncover how policy developed in ways that actors concerned would also understand (cf Kingdon, 1984). I had no idea of how the episode would play out when I started. I did not know that the Commission would lose out on this occasion. But I suggest that the evidence here produces a much richer picture of agency than sloganising about the Commission and that it ties in with work in the European higher education domain as multi-level, multi-actor and multi-issue (Vukasovic et al., 2018).

Pavel Zgaga appears as one of a group of actors who made a difference to policy and policymaking, and partly because of who he was. His work, his academic authority and his conviviality played a crucial role in the early days in helping colleagues to see problems as soluble. It was only once the different implications had been spelt out, and understandings shared in the light of evidence that they could work as a group. It was then that they could begin to combine the themes within a policy solution which was generous and open, even if it did not always work out like that later. Pavel Zgaga was an important actor in the pre-decision process of Bologna's external dimension. For that reason, his report *Looking Back* has a historical importance. It set some critical boundaries around the early discussions on Bologna's external dimension.

Annex 1

WG External Dimension Members 2005–2007

Permanent members of the Working Group 2005–2007: Toril Johansson (Norway) Chair. Barbara Weitgruber (Austria) Mogens Berg (Denmark) Eric Froment (France) Birgit Galler (Germany) Athanasios Kyriazis (Greece) Padre Friedrich Bechina (the Holy See) Joseph Mifsud (Malta) Pedro Lourtie (Portugal) Felix Haering Pérez (Spain) Annika Persson Pontén (Sweden) Bernd Wächter (ACA) Sjur Bergan (CoE) Monique Fouilhoux (EI) Daithí Mac Síthìgh (ESIB) Anita Līce (ESIB) Alan Smith (EC) Peter van der Hijden (EC) Michael Gaebel (EUA) Lesley Wilson (EUA) Stefan Delplace (EURASHE) Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES)Annika Persson Pontén (Sweden) Bernd Wächter (ACA) Sjur Bergan (CoE) Monique Fouilhoux (EI) Daithí Mac Síthìgh (ESIB) Anita Līce (ESIB) Alan Smith (EC) Peter van der Hijden (EC) Michael Gaebel (EUA) Lesley Wilson (EUA) Stefan Delplace (EURASHE) Jan Sadlak (UNESCO-CEPES) Yvonne Clarke joined the group on behalf of the

Bologna Secretariat from London and Pavel Zgaga was invited to be the Rapporteur of the group. The Working Group has also been supported by Foteini Asderaki (Greece), Hélène Lagier (France), Søren Nørgaard (EURASHE), Rolf Larsen (Norway) and Alf Rasmussen (Norway).

WG Global Setting Membership 2007–2009

Armenia, Austria, Belgium/French Community, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom, Council of Europe, European Commission, EI, ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, UNESCO-CEPES, and ACA.

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Chapter 7
Cooperation in Higher Education Before and Beside the European Higher Education Area: Slovenia and Austria

Elsa Hackl

Abstract It is commonplace that actors in higher education at the national and institutional level have engaged in bilateral and cooperation with neigbouring countries well before internationalisation, Europeanisation and globalisation became catchwords in higher education politics. Bilateral cooperation continues to play a role, also in enhancing internationalisation and Europeanisation. This chapter looks at a case of bilateral cooperation, namely that between Slovenia and Austria. It identifies instruments the actors used and that continue to be in place besides supranational and international ones.

Keywords Bilateral cooperation in higher education · Slovenia-Austria · Agreements on cooperation · Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the cooperation in higher education between Slovenia and Austria after 1991. It is the period when the bipolar world order has come to an end and when some former states disintegrated. These disintegrations were accompanied by a new wave and quality of international cooperation and competition. Therefore, the chapter starts by discussing the concepts internationalisation, Europeanisation, and globalisation in higher education. Then it looks at the bilateral cooperation between Slovenia and Austria, starting with a short overview of the years prior to 1991 and then focussing on the time after Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia. It describes how these cooperations evolved and analyses the main actors and their instruments. It also refers to the cooperation of the two countries

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within regional networks. The conclusion attemps to assess the role of bilateral and regional cooperation in the European Higher Education Area and in a gobal setting.

7.2 Internationalisation, Europeanisation, Globalisation

Speakers at academic festivities and university anniversaries frequently mention that universities have been international since they first appeared in Europe. However, this is correct to a limited extent, only. It holds true for the first few universities that evolved in the then economically most developed European regions. But when sovereigns founded universities to educate their personnel and for advancing their power and rule – as it was the case with the university of Vienna in 1365 – academic mobility slowly and gradually started to decrease. This process continued and intensified during the centuries that followed and universities became closely linked to the evolving nation states and confessions. The regionalisation of higher education, a rising number of universities and students entailed that the latter went to the nearest ones and subsequently that universities' structures and studies became more diverse. Academic mobility almost vanished and universities deteriorated. When Humboldt became Secretary of State in 1809, one of his first petitions to the King of Prussia concerned the abolition of the ban on student mobility. After this Humboldt developed his concept for the University of Berlin which should become a model for universities in German speaking countries. Only around three decades after Humboldt's reform Cardinal Newman worked on his "Idea of a University", a model that should spread from England (or more correctly Ireland) to many other countries. A decade before Humbodt's reform already, a still different higher education system was set up in France. These differences in organisation and study courses were hindrances to the mobility of staff and students and still more were periods of nationalism and wars. With exceptions, it was only after World War II that the experience of the devasting nationalism and efforts to abolish trade barriers as well as evidence concerning the role of education for economic growth enhanced international cooperation in higher education. In addition to organisations like UNESCO, the Council of Europe and later on OECD that strengthened multilateral information exchange, international cooperation in higher education was mainly based on bilateral agreements and individual initiatives. These were also the beginnings of the cooperation between Slovenia, then part of Yugoslavia, and Austria.

Over the last 50 years internationalisation in higher education has become a policy target and academic mobility increased unprecedentedly. However, the rationales for internationalisation changed and new concepts such as Europeanisation and globalisation emerged (Amaral, 2016, p. 3). Multilateral agreements supplemented the former bilateral ones and new actors appeared. The collapse of the bipolar world order set off a new wave of cross-border activities.

Generally, internationalisation means that the nation states are the main actors, but they become more interconnected, their cooperations in various policy areas expanded and their governments put an emphasis on facilitating border-crossing

activities (Van der Wende, 2004, p. 10). Globalisation assumes a different rationale: Economic considerations have gained prominence over political, academic, and cultural ones. The elimination of national barriers moved new institutional and individual actors to the front, also in cross-border activities (Rosa et al., 2016, p. 269). Europeanisation is used to describe the expansion of European Union competence to areas that originally were not covered by the Treaties as well as for the resulting process of change on the national level. As a regional cooperation it is intended to enhance the global competitiveness of Europe. In higher education EU policies, notably the Erasmus programme as well as the intergovernmental Bologna Process together with individual actors at the supra-national and national level have been drivers of Europeanisation. To a large extent bilateral cooperations in Europe have been replaced by European networks.

I was privileged to cooperate with Pavel Zgaga in several contexts. These, in a certain way, reflect the above mentioned developments in higher education policy. We met first in the mid1990s in the course of an OECD review of national policies for education in Slovenia which Pavel Zgaga, who was then State Secretary for Education and Sport, had initiated. I had the opportunity to act as a member of the review team (OECD, 1999). Some times later we met in connection with the Bologna Declaration which Pavel Zgaga had signed for Slovenia as Minister of Education and Sport. At several conferences and seminars, e.g., in Ankaran, Shanghai, Ljubljana, we discussed the aims and possible results of Europeanisation. Finally, we were concerned with changing principles of higher education resulting from globalization, the General Agreement on Trade in Services and European Union's Service Directive (Zgaga, 2012; Hackl, 2012). Although the situations and topics of our meetings changed, my encounters with Pavel Zgaga were always intellectually enriching, stimulating and personally most delightful.

7.3 Bilateral Cooperation Slovenia: Austria

For centuries Slovenia and Austria shared universities and higher education institutions that were all situated in what is now Austria (Petritsch, 1972). The disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy and the decades that followed that period were turbulent, crisis-ridden and averse to cooperation, also in higher education. Basically, it was only in 1970s as a consequence of increased economic collaboration that within the framework of treaties between the Republic of Austria and the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia a formal basis for cooperation in higher education was eventually established. In the context of cooperation between Austria and Yugoslavia, Slovenia was the most important and active among Yugoslavia's republics as it was the one that adjoint Austria and due to the Slovenian minority in Austria for which Yugoslavia assumed the role as a kind of protecting power. A Cultural Agreement of 1972 provided for mutal scholarships, summer schools and the exchange of guest professors and lecturers. The implementation had been delayed by a political dispute when the right for bilingual topographic signs was

violated in Carinthia (Bachmaier & Weilguni, 1988, p. 184). In the same year Austria and Yugoslavia concluded also an Agreement on economic, industrial and technological cooperation that covered applied research. In the mid-1970s agreements on the equivalence of high school leaving certificates and on the equivalence of study courses were entered. These state treaties were preceded by cooperation activities of individual and regional actors (Ferenc & Repe, 2004). Already in the 1960s grants for postgraduate studies in Austria and Slovenia, respectively, were in place (Weilguni, 1990, p. 50). Around the same time two professors of the faculties of law in Graz and Ljubljana, Gustav E. Kafka and Gorazd Kušej, initiated a still flourishing cooperation (Brünner, 1985). A little later university lectures from Ljubljana came to teach in Austrian universities and lecturers from Klagenfurt to do so in Ljubljana (Weilguni, 1990, pp. 51–56). The departments of German and Slavic studies (Gabrič, 2004, p. 604) began to collaborate and historians of both universities (e.g., Janko Pleterski, Dušan Nećak, Karl Stuhlpfarrer) met regularly and engaged in a reappraisal of Austrian-Slovenian relationship. Joint seminars for further education of teachers were initiated. In the early 1980s further faculties of the University of Graz, the Universities of Klagenfurt and of Technology Graz entered cooperation agreements with the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Verkehr und Kunst/Österreichische Rektorenkonferenz, 1996, pp. 144–148). Also, the Academies of Science and other research institutions already have cooperated since the 1960s. These cooperations and treaties paved the way and served as examples to cooperation between Austria and Slovenia after independence.

7.3.1 Government Level: Agreements on Cooperation in Culture, Education and Science, on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, on the Mutual Recognition of Certificates and Studies

The first 10 years after Slovenia's independence saw an adaptation of treaties of the 1970s to the changed political circumstances. In 1993 already, the governments of Austria and Slovenia agreed on the continued use of a certain number of Austrian-Yugoslavian state treaties, amongst others one on the equivalence of high school leaving certificates and one on equivalences of study courses. This might seem remarkable as both countries are signatories of a number of multilateral treaties on the same issues. However, whereas these treaties relate to the academic recognition only, the bilateral treaties also authorize to enter professions which is important for neighbouring countries.

In 1998 the governments of Austria and Slovenia signed an agreement on scientific-technological cooperation which came into effect in 1999. It provides for the support of direct cooperation of higher education and other research institutions as well as for the support of cooperative projects within European and international

programmes. A joint committee was to follow the implentation of the agreement and to draw up working programmes. For the ongoing period (2020–2022) the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research that acts as the Austrian programme manager lists 32 joint projects. Almost all universities are involved.

Finally, in 2001 the governments of the two countries signed an agreement on cooperation in culture, education, scholarships, and research that came into effect in 2002. It, too, essentially, is a renewal of the relevant agreement of 1972 and implemented by a joint commission that meets every third year. As most decision-making in higher education now rests with the universities, the government agreement restricts itself to welcoming and encouraging direct cooperation between Austrian and Slovenian higher education institutions, the rectors' conferences, the exchange of staff and students. The working programmes are more specific, the so far last programme, for the period 2017 to 2021, for example, emphasizes the cooperation of teacher education colleges and faculties, a closer cooperation of the relevant ministries and the agencies for quality assurance in both countries, the importance of lecturers and guest professors in the partner countries for Slovenian respectively Austrian language and literature. The Slovenian working group members refer to the support and importance of the University of Vienna in Slovenian language and literature (see below).

Taking into account the decisive role of higher education institutions and hence the more or less vague commitments of the governments, these bilateral contracts and meetings as well as their outcomes might be questioned. In addition, many cross-border activities of both countries now take place at the European level, within the Erasmus programme, the Bologna Process, or the framework programmes in research. However, responsibility for higher education still rests with the national governments. Moreover, certain issues result from a common border, history and linguistic minorities and are the concern of the two countries only. Hence, the involvement of national public administrations and the meeting of administrators in joint commissions are relevant. Bilateral cooperation is required in order to form alliances within the European Union, as the above-mentioned bilateral treaties underline. In addition, the European Union faces, not for the first time in its history, profound problems – Brexit, migration issues, rule of law. A network of bilateral cooperations might help to meet these challenges more efficiently.

During the last three decades governments of those European countries where traditionally decision-making in higher education had been centralised in the relevant ministries, as was the case in Austria and Slovenia, engaged in policies of decentralisation, out-sourcing and permitted the establishment of private universities. Often these policies were preceded and happened along with austerity measures, both at the governmental and institutional level. The latter also resulted in efforts to shut down study courses with low student numbers and which are offered by several universities. Study reforms that lead to more structured courses, also at the post-graduate level, and hence required more qualified personnel and equipment reinforced this trend. In addition, the debate on excellence in European higher education entailed a pressure on universities to concentrate on priority areas in research

and teaching. Hence, the existence of the study courses "Slovenian" at three Austrian universities, i.e., Vienna, Graz, and Klagenfurt, has been questioned since years. Otherwise, the relations between Slovenia and Austria have developed smoothly and have intensified. The Austrian Ministry responsible for higher education and some actors at the institutional level have argued with the economy of scale and student numbers for their policy of reducing the number of study courses, notably of closing down the the Slovenian course in Vienna: In the academic year 2019 at all three Austrian universities 34 students were enrolled in the course "Slovenian", 20 thereof at Graz University, 12 at Klagenfurt University and two at the University of Vienna. In the academic year 2016/17 four students graduated, two in Graz and two in Klagenfurt. Most of the students who studied Slovenian did so to become teachers (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2020). The Slovenian side and a number of actors in Austria, on the other hand, have argued with the traditional role and the status of the University of Vienna for Slovenian students, for Slavic studies as well as for the Slovenian minority in Austria. Up to now this cultural rationale prevailed. No need to say that Pavel Zgaga has played an important role in this context.

7.3.2 Institutional Level: University Cooperations and Academic Mobility

It has been mentioned above that at the end of the1980s globalisation gained in scope and speed. The role of the state in cross-border education diminished and institutional and individual actors gained in importance. In most countries universities have become legal entities able to enter contracts, also with foreign institutions, without governments' involvement. The Erasmus Programme and the Bologna Process, too, enhanced "institutional autonomy" and collaborations in a European Higher Education Area.

The rising number of partnerships between Slovenian and Austrian higher education institutions reflects this increase in cross-border activities. In 1995 the then two Slovenian universities had cooperation agreements with four Austrian universities, in 2001 the number of agreements had doubled (Club International Universitaire/Österreichische Rektorenkonferenz, 2002, pp. 164–168) and today 17 out of all 22 Austrian public universities cooperate, according to their homepages, with at least one Slovenian university. In addition, in 2020 15 out of 21 universities of applied science in Austria stated on their homepage to have Slovenian partner universities. The number of cooperation agreements is lower with the 16 very small Austrian private universities: Only two private univerisities for music and drama, the Anton Bruckner University in Linz and the Gustav Mahler University in Klagenfurt, report to have Slovenian partners, namely the AMEU Dance Academy Maribor/Ljubljana and Akademija za glasbo Univerze v Ljubljani. And one private university, the Sigmund Freud University Vienna, has a branch in Ljubljana. It must be underlined,

too, that seven out of 14 university colleges of teacher education – in Vienna, Carinthia, Styria, and Upper Austria – cooperate with the relevant faculties of the Universities Ljubljana, Maribor and Primorska. These cooperations facilitate student exchange and joint projects or programmes. Many of the ongoing activities can be traced back to collaborations that started from the 1960s onwards (see above).

During the last two decades the number of students from Central, South-Eastern, and Eastern Countries at Austrian universities has increased continously and substantially (Hackl & Stein-Redent, 2006). In part this is due to reforms initiated by the Bologna Process that – at least formally – harmonized study courses (Zgaga, 2013) and, in part, to the principle of free movement of people in the European Union. Within the last 10 years the number of Slovenian students at Austrian universities almost doubled to about 950 in winter term 2019. In most cases these students are "free-movers", only 13% thereof or 134 students participate in one of the many mobility programmes. This low proportion of mobility programme students corresponds to that of students from Central Europe in Austria, generally. Another 16 students from Slovenia participate in a mobility programme and attended an Austrian university of applied sciences (academic year 2019/20, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2020). Unfortunately, the number of Austrian students in Slovenia remains low. Only 36 Austrian programme students attended at Slovenian universities in 2019/20 (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, 2020). The number of Austrian students in Slovenian universities beside those participating in a mobility programme could not be assessed. According to estimates of former students at the Austrian Slovenian high school in Carinthia very few graduates of this school went to a university in Slovenia to do a whole course there – although they would not have encountered any language barrier. In the last 30 years at most 50 graduates did so, the same number is estimated for the about the same period when Slovenia still formed part of Yugoslavia. Many more graduates of the Austrian Slovenian high school, however, spent and spend a semester or academic year at a Slovenian university. Especially art students seem to have always been attracted by the relevant faculties in Ljubljana.

The trend of the data on staff in Austrian universities from Slovenia and vice versa is still less easy to assess. However, we know that from winter term 2005 to winter term 2019 the number of Slovenian staff members rose from 33 to 131, seven thereof are university professors. A considerable number of the non-professoral staff are engaged in off-budget projects, but this is also the case with Austrian staff members.

Considering the staff of universities of applied science and private universities no official data exist. Due to the limited time exact data could not be collected for this article. It was found out, however, that at least one professor from Slovenia teaches at a university of applied sciences and probably more non-professoral straff works in both types of institutions.

7.4 Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe

Bilateral activities paved the way to regional cooperation and the latter again enhanced bilateral ones. Regarding Austrian-Slovanian collaboration in higher education the following regional cooperations need to be mentioned.

The oldest one is the Alps-Adriatic Working Group that has been founded in 1978 in Venice by the states Carinthia, Croatia, Slovenia, and the province Friuli Venezia Giulia. Later on, it has been joined by additional regions of Austria and Hungry. It was to promote cooperation in economy, politics, culture and science in the Eastern Alps and Northern Adria area. To this end conferences, common and bilateral projects, summer schools, scholarships for young researchers have been financed as well have cooperation of universities and rectors been promoted. In 2013 the Alps-Adriatic Working Group was replaced by the Alps-Adria-Alliance with its general secretariat in Klagenfurt/Celovec. The Alliance includes Austrian, Croatian, Slovenian regions and in Hungary the region Vas. It is to cooperate in projects in several areas, among which higher education is explicitly mentioned, also cooperation within the Erasmus programme. Cooperation of universities has already been a target of the Alps-Adia Working Group. As soon as 1979 a former rector of the University of Graz, Anton Kolb, together with others took the initiative and founded the Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference in order to facilitate cooperation between universities (Gabrič, 2004, p. 605). Today about 40 universities participate, since 2011 also universities of the Western Balkans.

A further university network in which Austrian and Slovenian institutions participate is the Danube Rectors' Conference that originally was set up in the 1980s by German, Austrian and Hungarian universities for joint research on the ecology of the Danube. Later it extended its research areas and further members joined. Besides Slovenia and other countries of former Yugolslavia, members are the Czech Republic, Italy, Moldovia, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

The initiative for another regional cooperation was taken in the time after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The main actor was the then minister of higher education in Austria, Erhard Busek. Ceepus, the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies, has been established in 1993 and came into effect in 1995. It is an international exchange programme of universities in Central and Eastern European countries, especially focussing on joint-degree programmes, and covers mobility grants for students and teachers. It is based on an international agreement by the member states. The founding states are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Later on it was joined by Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania and Serbia. Within the framework of Ceepus Austrian and Slovenian universities are engaged in joint networks, e.g., "Language and Literature in a Central European context" (Universities of Ljubljana and Vienna), "Slavic Philology and its Cultural Contexts" (Universities of Graz and Ljubljana) and "Applications and diagnostics of electric plasmas" (Universities of Innsbruck and Ljubljana). According to the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in

Education and Research that administers Ceepus in Austria, in the academic year 2005/06 Austria and Slovenia collaborated in 15 networks; their number rose to 49 in the academic year 2018/19. The number of students participating in the Ceepus mobility programme is included in the above stated data.

With Slovenia's accession to the European Union in 2004 the cooperation programme Interreg, funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), offered another instrument for cooperation, not only for public and private enterprises but also for higher education and research institutions in Slovenia and in Austria. It supports cooperation across borders through project co-funding in order to enhance the region's competitiveness. Interreg V-A Slovenia-Austria for the period 2014–2020 funds about 50 projects in the fields of tourism, sustainibility, energy, ecology, transport, and health. Almost all universities of the region act as leading or partner institution, the Universities of Ljubljana, Graz, Leoben, Maribor, Nova Gorica, the University of Technology Graz, the universities of applied sciences in Burgenland, Carinthia, and Styria (http://www.si-at.eu/en2/).

The most recent initiative of regional cooperation is "Universities for Enlightment" and dates from 2018. It seems to have been influenced by the emergence of authoritarian tendencies in Europe. Then representatives of 10 European Rectors' Conferences – Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland – have met in Vienna in order to discuss what role universities should play in today's societies. In a joint declaration the rectors reconfirm the principles of the Magna Charta Universitatum and commit themselves to further these fundamental values of higher education and strengthen dialogue and share experiences, both within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and beyond, fostering intercultural understanding, equitable access, civic engagement, and ethical education, and enhancing social responsibility (https://www.u4e.eu/).

These activities of Central and Eastern European countries reflect well the changing political circumstances and challenges: The Alps-Adriatic Working Group was an attempt to cooperate at a regional level despite the division of Europe. Ceepus was intended to support the transformation process in Central and Eastern countries, Interreg was to enhance regional development for competitiveness and the initiative "Universities for Enlightment" finally, hints to the non-intended negative effects of globalisation and the transformation in East and West and indicates a reaction to threats to liberal democracy.

7.5 Conclusion

Cooperation between neighbouring-countries is hardly friction-free, especially so when it concerns a small language group in a dominant one, scattered settlement areas in the age of nationalism and a neighborhood deeply affected by fascism, national socialism and the cold war, in short by the "age of extremes" (Hobsbawn, 1994). However, a long common history and proximity has the advantage of insight.

The development of cooperation in higher education between Austria and Slovenia shows how this led to a friction-free and enriching partnership.

The start of the Slovenian-Austrian cooperation in higher education is a perfect example of the bipolar world order. Despite Austria's neutrality and Yugoslavia's non-allience both governments clearly related to each other as belonging to the other block. Austria tried hard to demarcate itself from communism and Yugoslavia feared ideological influencing. Although Austrian politicians invoked from time to time the country's role of a bridge builder between the East and West, the relevant governmental activities remained limited, also in higher education. However, Austria concluded more bilateral cultural and scientific agreements – the main governmental instrument for cooperation – than other Western European countries with Eastern European counterparts (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1990, p. 348), yet their implementation depended strongly on individual actors. This was also the case with regard to the Slovenian-Austrian cooperation in higher education. Individual activities of university teachers and regional cooperation preceded and paved the way to cooperation on the level of the central governments. Sometimes bilateral cooperation was extended to include other partners in Central and (South)Eastern Europe, especially after the break down of the bipolar world. After Slovenia's independence the existing treaties between Austria and Yugoslavia were adopted and amended to conform with the new political realities. Slovenia's participation in European Union mobility and research programme as well as in the Bologna Process has further enhanced partnerships of universities of both countries, cross-border mobility of students and academics as well as joint research activities. Participation in European programmes, in return, could build on long existing bilateral cooperation. Since the mid1990s higher education in both countries underwent a profound change insofar as new higher education institution have been established, private institutions have been allowed and new legal regulations have come into force. Institutional autonomy has been strengthened and universities are to be competitive and perform in international rankings. Effects of these changes on bilateral and multilateral cooperation have emerged, but they are not yet sufficiently researched and clear.

In the eleventh/twelfth century when the first universities were founded in the Western World, neither Slovenia nor Austria had one and these states not even existed. Hence, had we been born then, Pavel and I would not have become academics. However, already then, we would have been born in neighbouring domains or even in the same because due to the scattered landed properties at that time this is difficult to assess. The centuries that followed would have seen us once in the same and then in a different polity. Maybe a sense of the arbitrary nature of borders has enhanced our friendship and our common inclination towards cooperation, more than towards competition in higher education.

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Chapter 8
Higher Education in Two Countries from ex-Yugoslav Federation: 30 Years of Constitutional Embracement

Aleksa Bjeliš

Abstract In most of the countries that belonged to the ex-Warsaw Pact and ex-Yugoslav Federation the transition from authoritarian to democratic systems, 30 years ago, has been accompanied by a specific, and almost common, legislative change related to the area of higher education. As a rule, the constitutions of these countries have been then enriched by articles guaranteeing, or at least stressing the importance, of academic freedom and university autonomy. On the contrary in the constitutions of countries from *Old Europe* with long democratic traditions such issues are rather rarely present. In last 30 years the higher educational institutions and policy makers from transitional countries passed through the demanding process of reforms aiming to bring them closer to the international standards. Was the mentioned constitutional protection the advantage or the drawback in this never lasting endeavour? The present paper contains some personal reflections on this topic, focusing particularly to constitutional inputs and their consequences in Croatia and Slovenia, two countries that were parts of Yugoslav Federation before its dissolution.

Keywords Constitutional reforms · Higher education · Slovenia · Croatia

8.1 Introduction

On 22. December 1990 National Assembly of Croatia adopted the new Constitution. Its article 67 stated that "the autonomy of universities shall be guaranteed" and that "universities shall independently decide on their organisation and operation, in compliance with law".[1]

[1] The reference (Constitute, 2021) contains the texts of all constitutions mentioned throughout this text.

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The university autonomy is then for the first time mentioned in Croatian constitutional legislation, or, more precisely, in the legislations of state entities to which Croatia belonged in its modern history. Thus, this is not the heritage of the previous geopolitical space, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), today usually called Western Balkan, South-East Europe, or simply Region.[2] Still, the same or very similar formulation successively appeared in the constitutions of almost all new states, former federal units of SFRY. Slovenian Constitution, the next in the row, was adopted on 23 December 1991, after a long preparatory period of comprehensive debates in academic circles (Zgaga, 2007, 2017, 2021). It mentioned the university autonomy in a somewhat different wording. Its article 58 states that "state universities and state institutions of higher education shall be autonomous", while "the manner of their financing shall be regulated by law". The constitutions of, then Macedonia, today Northern Macedonia (1991), Serbia (2006)[3] and Montenegro (2007) all guarantee the autonomy to universities, more or less in the same wording as the Croatian and Slovenian constitutions.[4]

The establishment of such unanimous agreement and harmony with almost identical basic proclamations on the future of universities in the states which were just passing through the dramatic disruption of the political structure to which they belonged, and which afterwards passed through a half of decade of cruel wars with losses of thousands lives and sufferings of millions of people, could look like an extraordinary bright moment in these murky times. Despite of all sorts of damages, at the beginning of the long period in which these damages should have to be remedied, and in front of complex and sharp political, social, and economic challenges, as for higher education (HE) the attitude of new states was univocal: *the autonomy of universities shall be granted, or at least, guaranteed.*[5]

In the present paper I consider this peculiar and singular historical moment within the wider framework, starting from two queries.

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[2] All these terms are today pejorative in the Croatian political and public space as far as Croatia is meant as a part. The substitute usually used for SFRY is *former state.*

[3] After the disruption of SFRY in early 1990s Serbia remained under an authoritarian regime, a combination of communism and radical nationalism led by Slobodan Milošević (Vladisavljević, 2008). In this period the position of higher education was additionally worsened after a series of legislative changes towards the elimination of university autonomy, and oppressive measures against professors who criticized the regime, that provoked a resolute reaction of academic community (Savić, 1997). The constitutional provisions guaranteeing academic values were adopted only few years after the fall of Milošević in 2000.

[4] Only in two post-Yugoslav constitutions the university autonomy is not mentioned at all. Both were written, or supervised, by external jurists. First one is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, written as the annex to the Dayton agreement signed in December 1995 by the heads of world powers, and presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. Second is the constitution of Kosovo, written during the strong involvement of United Nations in searching the solutions of a long-standing conflict between Kosovo and Serbia.

[5] Still, this does not mean that there were no substantial differences among states regarding the circumstances and prerequisites that lead to such apparent univocality. We shall come back to this point later in the discussion of effects of constitutional impacts in the further development of HE in Croatia and Slovenia.

Firstly, such constitutional treatment of universities was not localized to the ex-Yugoslav space but appeared as a novelty in almost all countries that started with the political and economic transformations[6] (Bjeliš, 2020) after the fall of Berlin Wall and disappearance of Eastern Block at the end of twentieth century. What were the reasons and motivations for such step at this important turning point in the recent European history, and how did it comply with the existing juridical and political practices in other European countries with developed democratic systems? Further on, did this constitutional guarantee contribute to the main strategic aim of the former countries, namely, to improve the position of their HEs and research and developments (R&D) within the European Higher Educational Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA), conceived roughly at the same time, after Magna Charta Universitatum from 1988 and Bologna declaration from 1999, and shaped by a series of further decisions of EU?

This brings us to the second aspect. Taking the hat of a witness, and afterwards of an active practitioner, I will try to link the new constitutional inputs with the processes that took place in my native Croatia, and to compare them, as a permanent outside observer, with analogous processes in neighbouring Slovenia. What were the consequences of the constitutional protection of university autonomy in each case? Were they *a priori* and unquestionably an advantage for universities? Did they strengthen their internal configurations and their position in transitional societies? Or were there opposite signs which would warn us that the whole issue is more complex than the first sight could suggest? In this respect the personal insight presented here is far from being comprehensive and is equally far from the rigor needed for such demanding and multi-layered subject.

The question to which extent was the university autonomy as a constitutional subject present in the wider European juridical practice is shortly touched in the next section. In the third section I briefly invoke some elementary historical elements, particularly the position of universities in various epochs. Turning to the period after 1990, I start in the fourth section from some relevant comprehensive data and general indicators, consider the performances of group of transitional countries and of other European countries, and come to some conclusions on the position of transitional countries in EHEA and ERA. The fifth section is an attempt to apprehend the influence of constitutional provisions and subsequent decisions of the constitutional courts onto the Croatian and Slovenian universities. This includes, not only their relationship with political authorities, but also the newly established intramural relations and ways of behaviour. Finally, the last sixth section contains few concluding remarks.

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[6] The usual term used for this process is *transition*. Although, due to the complexity of these transformations from one, and due to the wider historical content of the term from the other side, it opens further questions (Zgaga, 2007, 2016), I use it here pragmatically as a shorthand one, designating all countries who belonged to the Warsaw Pact and SFRY before 1989.

8.2 University Autonomy and Academic Freedom in the Constitutions Worldwide

How are the subjects related to university autonomy and academic freedom presented in constitutions in general? The rule emerging from the fast browsing through the constitutions in vigour is, up to rare exceptions, simple. In countries with long democratic traditions constitutions do not consider them or, rather exceptionally, consider some specific aspects, mostly aiming to regulate obligation of political authorities towards HE and R&D. Quite on contrary, in constitutions of transitional countries the academic freedom issues appear in a declarative manner, as guaranties, but without specifying concrete means and duties (see also Beiter et al., 2016; Karran & Beiter, 2020).

The typical examples from the first group are constitutions of almost all "old" members of European Union,[7] Norway, Switzerland,[8] U.S.A.,[9] Canada, etc.

The second group comprises, besides already mentioned ex-SFRY countries that emerged from the "self-managerial" socialism, the countries that belonged to the "people's democratic" regimes of previous Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union. All of them experienced the transition from these regimes to multi-party democracies that begun with the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, and the climax of Yugoslav crisis in the next years. Simultaneously, all these countries were involved in the lingering and painful transformation of their economies from the state-planning to the free-market ones. Both processes, especially the latter, initiated traumatic changes of social and cultural values, comprising the perception of education and knowledge in general. Still, despite of such turbulent circumstances, practically all new constitutions guaranteed, like in the SFRY case, the university autonomy, and the freedom of creative work, or at least announced them as the subjects of legislation at lower level (Constitute, 2021).[10]

Although evidently superfluous, and far from having the rigour of juristic expertise, the above short inspection indicates that ex-SFRY states were just the segment

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[7] The partial exceptions are constitutions of Austria, Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

[8] In the Swiss Constitution, together with the basic declaration that "freedom of research and teaching is guaranteed", the relatively new provision which is, as many others, the result of the referendum from 2006, describes in detail the duties and responsibilities of Confederation and Cantons in the foundation and funding of universities, the Federal Institutes of Technology in particular.

[9] Aside from general provisions on human rights, equivalent to those of *Déclaration des droits de l'homme at du citoyen* from 1789 which is still integral part of actual French Constitution, the U. S. Constitution does not cover the educational subjects, which are, through the 14th Amendment in particular, relegated to legislations of States.

[10] More precisely, university autonomy and academic freedom is declared explicitly in the constitutions of eight states (Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania). The remaining eight constitutions (those of Azerbeijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine) contain only the protection of academic freedom. The latter is formulated in various wordings, usually as the freedom of scientific research, or simply as the freedom of creative work or expression, or even simpler, as the freedom of creativity.

fully fitting the general attitude, present in all states that were in the process of discarding totalitarian heritages. By granting to the people modern democratic systems with free elections among unlimited number of political parties, in short, the democratic freedom, new constitutions also granted to their universities academic freedom and, one way or another, recognized their autonomous position in new national states.[11]

On contrary, in the states with democratic system present for centuries, or at least for decades, and with democratic habits deeply rooted in societies, the equally well rooted practices of academic freedom and autonomous positions of universities and other institutions devoted to scientific research most often were not constitutionally protected at all. Simultaneously, the projections of both, political and academic, circles responsible for the development of HE and R&D in transitional countries, were aimed to achieve the performances of countries with the developed democracy. Briefly, the old democratic countries were in this respect the benchmark for the transitional countries.

However, we have just seen that, as for the initial constitutional stage, such benchmarking was not present. Instead, the rule of thumb appears to be as: stronger is the democracy in a country, less protected are universities in the constitution. Counterintuitive as this can sound, being also against the usual way of linking juridical provisions to the reality (Beiter et al., 2016),[12] this rule is rooted in the deeper historical context of both groups of countries, as will be argued in the next section.

8.3 Historical View: Autonomy as a Grace or as a Common Value

A thorough answer to the question "why, in the contrast to the constitutions of countries starting with the democratization, constitutions of countries with established and stable democracy do not protect universities?" would certainly deserve a more serious and deep survey (Noorda, 2020). In that sense few sentences that follow are not more than a hopefully plausible improvisation. Detailed recent analyses of the position of academic values in European countries are given in references Karran and Beiter (2020) and Matei (2020).

Starting from the developed democracies with long traditions, one could say that academic freedom and university autonomy are as organic values already so deeply inwrought into societal tissue that there is no need to protect them declaratory. The concrete regulations that determine obligations and duties, particularly those of the

[11] All states emerged from the Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact, and SFRY are national states, i.e. states in which a single nation is recognized as the constitutional holder of the state sovereignty. The only exception is Bosnia and Hezegovina in which the sovereignty is attributed to three nations (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) organized in a specific complex political configuration as provided by the Dayton Agreement.

[12] In the juridical jargon the term is *legislative optimism*.

political authorities, in ensuring the functioning of HE and R&D are then usually the matter of laws at lower levels. Rarely, like in the case of Switzerland (fifth footnote), such issues are, here as the articles approved by popular votes, present in the constitution.

On the other hand, in the communistic political systems academic freedom and university autonomy were programmatically suspended and replaced by the combination of state (and Party) control and protection. The main purpose of such attitude was to ensure qualified professionals of all profiles necessary for the fast industrialization as the prerequisite for the success in the rivalry with capitalistic adversaries. Ideologically, that was the key tool in the development of the new society that should gradually approach the ultimate ideological aim, an absolute and ideal social and human wellbeing (Bjeliš, 2018).

Suspended after the revolutions and/or installations of communist regimes, the basic academic values for almost half century (or more in USSR) remained present only as fading elements of collective memory, either as the already earlier achieved national accomplishments, or as the unrealized targets of the rapprochements that had been under way. Also, universities were always recognized as unavoidable segments of any national heritage, being as such important symbols of national identity. It was then not surprising that academic values were among the top items of national recoveries that succeeded, or preceded, the collapses of Soviet Union and its satellites, and of SFRY. Their inclusion into the constitutions already at the transitional stage of the formation of new states could be recognized as an attempt, not only to recover these values, but also to ensure for them a safe harbour in front of the menacing rough see of political and economic turbulences, then already visible on the horizon.[13] Thus, such constitutional treatment could sound as some kind of a grant, a guarantee that from 1990 on the higher education and research will be the matter of a careful long-standing policy (Bjeliš, 2020).

Looking at the rich and almost 1000 years long history of European universities (Le Goff, 1957; Rüegg, 1993), it is plausible to link declarative grants giving autonomous position to universities to the analogous customs from the Middle Ages when divine monarchs issued charters, and donated rights, privileges, together with lands or other concrete endowments. Today such charters are precious treasures, historical artifacts by which old universities proudly confirm their roots and traditions. As for the actual positions of these universities, today, after the long history of democratization of societies, their autonomy, as well as the academic freedom of their staff and students, are widely recognized as self-evident principles, like basic human rights which had similar historical evolution.

[13] The counter example, which indicates that such constitutional approaches were primarily linked to national recoveries, and not to the transformation from the socialist economic planning to the free market economy, is the present Chinese political system. Regarding the position of universities and their autonomy, the formulations in the Chinese constitution do not differ from the those usually present in the constitutions of "people democracies", irrespectively to the deep economic reforms undertaken in China in last few decades.

Modern constitutions however are not solemn charters. Democratically elected parliaments and heads of states and governments possess no divine prerogatives. The nostalgia for lang syne and the good will for an equally distant future built into the transitional constitutions as substitutes of this solemnity could be efficient providing that they are followed by pertinent and permanent policies as responses to the actual demands of both societies and their universities. Shortly, *practice must follow suit* (Bergan et al., 2020). For such policies there should exist conditions within universities, as well as within the society and the economy, from which university autonomy and academic freedom genuinely emerges. Transitions from old to new political and economic principles could be of help in this direction but are by no means sufficient prerequisites. In this respect, and in this specific historical moment, the constitutional initiatives had a meaning of an encouraging novelty, and as such were a starting point of a potentially promising venture.

Certainly, after a rather long period of such practice in transitional states, there are enough experiences and facts for stock taking analyses. What is the global position of HE and R&D of these states? The further discussion will be limited to two questions. The first is present from the beginning: who is to be engaged in following up of constitutional guidelines and using new constitutional principles as tools in concrete programmes and policies? The second, inevitable after 30 years, is: were these policies successful, i.e. did they reduce or increase the gap between the developed and transitional parts of Europe?

8.4 Thirty Transitional Years: Where Are Universities of Transitional Europe?

Let us now concentrate to the latter question relegating the former to the next section. Not going into the analysis of concrete policies and situations in almost 20 transitional countries, which is far beyond the present scope, we shall only consider their performances in the HE and R&D, together with those of countries from Old Europe.

More concretely, we shall correlate two indicators, the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the *R&D Intensity* (Eurostat, 2019), i.e. the total expenditure on R&D measured as the percentage of GDP. The former measures the wealth of the country, while the latter is the measure of readiness of its political authorities to invest into research activities, which are the key element for the academic creativity and for free and critically oriented studies at universities and are on the other hand also the generator of national technological and cultural prosperity.

Firstly, note that Transitional Europe and Old Europe have comparable numbers of inhabitants (about 350 and 420 million respectively), and universities too (about 2800 and 3100 respectively). Looking at the GDPs of European countries in 2019 (IMF, 2021), the indicative, and relevant for further discussion, is the division of the Continent into three groups od countries. Western and Northern Europe is covered

by the richest countries with the GDP above 40,000 US$. Mediterranean countries members of EU (except France which is in the first group), Portugal, and eight most developed Central European transitional countries[14] which are members of EU from 2004, have the GDP between 15,000 and 40,000 US$. The third group with the GDP below 15,000 US$ comprises the remaining transitional countries from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, including three members of EU.[15,16]

The next point is related to the long-term strategies and ensuing policies related to the national economic and societal development. The relevant and most frequently used measure in this respect is the *R&D Intensity* (Eurostat, 2019), the total expenditure on R&D measured as the percentage of GDP.

As for the R&D Intensities in 2109, European countries are again distributed into three groups. In the first group are countries with R&D Intensities above 1.5%. Among them are four EU countries and Switzerland which have the R&D intensity above 3%, the elusive 2020 target, proposed 10 years ago in the key strategical document on *smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth of EU* (EU, 2010).[17] The second group comprises countries with R&D intensities between 1.0% and 1.5%, while the countries in the third group have R&D intensities below 1.0%.

The geographical distributions of countries due to their GDPs and due their R&D intensities are thus almost identical. Only few states are moved from one group to another.[18,19] The same correlation is present in other relevant indicators, like the number of researchers per one million inhabitants (World Bank, 2021b), or the amount of investment per researcher (UNESCO, 2020). Equally significant is the distribution of the national R&D investments by the sectors. The proportion of investments from the private business sector and from the state budget, which indicates to what extent the scientific work is linked to the technological development and new products, is highest, 2:1 or more, in countries from the first group, and

[14] Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Letonia, and Estonia; among these states Slovenia leads with the GDP of 25,992 US$, while Poland is last with 15,601 US$.

[15] Romania are Bulgaria are members of EU from 2007. Croatia, member of EU from 2013, with the GDP of 14,853 US$, is closest to the second group.

[16] Among the states which are not members of EU Russian Federation has the highest GDP (11,601 US$), while Ukraine with 3,707 US$ has the lowest European GDP.

[17] In the interval 2010–2018 the R&D Intensity for EU raised from 1.97% to 2.18%. For comparison, the R&D Intensity of the main global competitors of EU, USA and China is 2.84% (same in 2009) and 2.17% (1.5% in 2009) respectively. Two top countries are Israel (5.0%) and South Korea (4.81%) (World Bank, 2021a). The World R&D Intensity is about 1.7% (UNESCO, 2020).

[18] The most remarkable among them is the jump of three transitional states (Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Hungary) into the group with highest R&D intensities.

[19] The R&D investments in some of the states which are shifted to the lower groups, and have relatively large GDPs, are still among the highest in Europe, as measured by amounts per inhabitant or per researcher. Such examples are Luxemburg and Ireland, two countries with highest European GDPs, more than 115,000 US$ and more than 80,000 US$ respectively.

decreases towards inverse values, 1:2 or less, in countries from the third group (UNESCO, 2020).[20]

The mentioned data indicate that the lagging of transitional part of Europe behind the developed "old" Europe was not smoothed in recent decades. The HE and R&D policies of transitional countries are thus as a rule in discrepancy, and rarely in accordance, with initial constitutional propositions. To prevent the further deepening of this lagging, EU commission launched within the Horizon 2020 strategy the programmes aimed to smooth it by an additional competitive funding of R&D in less developed European countries, and by stimulating the strengthening of collaborations between research groups from developed and less developed countries.

Some transitional countries have indeed significantly raised the participation of such funding in their R&D intensities, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Latvia with the percentages above 30% being the most successful among them (UNESCO, 2020). However, 10 years after launching these programmes the total picture again reveals the weaknesses of Transitional Europe. Although the primary purpose of EU funds was to encourage just transitional countries to implant the more demanding standards of research methodologies and efficiency, all of them (members of EU and others) won from them roughly not more than 2% scientific projects. For comparison, more than 85% projects were realized by research groups from the "old" EU countries. The rest is allocated to other eligible countries (Israel, Switzerland, Norway, Turkey, etc.) (Papazoglou, 2017).

It is important to note that for the developed countries with high R&D investments the percentage of funding coming from such programmes is quite symbolic (few per cent) and does not substitute the domestic sources. The purpose of this external funding is mainly to stimulate researchers to take part in the international competition, making so their output more visible internationally.

For transitional countries this should be equally true. External sources cannot compensate the modest and sporadic domestic financing and, even more, the lack of strategical approach to R&D often hidden behind it. The vindication of such deficiencies can be recognized through excessive praises by political authorities, accompanied by intensive media promotions, of rare examples of domestic research groups that succeeded to cover a major part of their expenses from international funding. Still, such examples are just exceptions that confirm the rule, that is the absence of systematic domestic support to R&D and HE (Bjeliš, 2018).

Finally, the various statistics measuring the national aggregated scientific outputs would lead to the similar categorization of European countries. The direct (and oversimplified) illustrations are rankings which are, despite many, mostly academic, concerns about their distorted and incomplete methodologies, used as a quick assessment to the HE and R&D performances of universities. Their summarized message is that among 500 top world universities, and among 200 top European universities, not more than a dozen are universities from transitional European

[20] Slovenia is here again the most successful among the transitional country and is placed as the fourth among all European countries.

countries. This means that one world-class university is accessible to about 2 million inhabitants in Old Europe, and to about 30 million inhabitants in Transitional Europe.

All above highlights suggest that the omnipresent gap between Old and Transitional Europe remained persistent in last three decades (OECD, 2020). The constitutional protection of academic values seemingly neither helped no harmed the development of HE and R&D in transitional countries. It did not generate an overall accelerated improvement in these segments as it was originally desired.

How, on the other hand, the constitutional regulations influence the intramural life in universities, particularly their internal organization and governance? The next section brings two examples.

8.5 University Autonomy; Divisible Category?

In the above discussion I used summarized performances of transitional countries and situated them into the wider European framework, not opening the underlying aspects: what were the policies and concrete decisions and steps of relevant national actors in these countries, and to what extent their activities were relied to the constitutional provisions considered in the first two sections. Given the format of this text and the capacities of its author, such comprehensive elaboration would be certainly too demanding. I therefore limit further elaborations only to two countries, Croatia, and Slovenia.

Slovenia and Croatia were the most developed republics in SFRY. Croatia lagged after Slovenia about 5 to 10 years, depending on the subject. The starting positions of their HEs and universities were at the beginning of transitional period in many respects common. At first glance they remain similar after 20 years of common presence in the Bologna Process, EHEA, EU,[21] etc. Even the EUA scorecard on university autonomy from 2016 situate them comparably, both being in the lower part of the list, and each being ahead in two dimensions among four (EUA, 2016). The view from inside gives however a more structured perspective, showing significant differences, caused, as argued below, just by different follow-ups of constitutional changes in 1990s in two countries. The details follow.

Both countries inherited fragmentated universities, the well-known specificity of ex-SFRY states, conceived in the so-called socialistic self-managerial system inaugurated soon after the cleavage of SFRY from the Soviet bloc in 1948 (Banac, 1984; Zgaga, 2011; Bjeliš, 2015). How did they deal with this fragmentation? Did they in the last three decades transform their universities towards European standards and practices? The fact is that in two states, Slovenia and Croatia, attempts in this direction were marked by important, even decisive, interventions of constitutional courts. Let us briefly depict each case.

[21] Slovenia and Croatia are the members of EU from 2004 and 2013, respectively.

Croatia. The provisions on autonomy and self-governance of university, as guaranteed by the Constitution, have been more widely elaborated in two successive Croatian acts on HE and research, issued in 1993 and 2003. The autonomy encompassed five points: freedom of creative work, study programmes, staff appointments, criteria for student admission, and internal organisation.

Regarding the most intriguing fifth point, the frequent initial questions from 1993 on were: how to situate universities with respect to external, mainly political, bodies, what is the legal status of university units (faculties, departments, etc.) with respect to the university, and, finally, what are the limits of the university autonomy with respect to both, external counterpart institutions and internal units. To resolve such controversies the Croatian Constitutional Court made two interventions which had far-reaching implications for Croatian HE system.

In the first intervention (CC Croatia, 1999) the Court offered its interpretation of the Constitution on all above questions. While in the answers to first and third question the autonomy of HE institutions and their accountability with respect to the external bodies were interpreted in the way congruent to the standard European practice, the elaboration of the second question was rather specific. Namely, the Court pointed out "*that university autonomy encompasses the entire university, i.e. another higher education institution within the university system, the autonomy of each member of the university, i.e. each faculty or other body within a certain university system, as well as the autonomy of all employees within a certain scientific discipline …*".

Although this interpretation still left the space for legislative solutions by which universities could be unique legal entities, the balance of power within academia[22] together with the indifference of political actors resulted in the new compromising law (Law, 2003), still in force, allowing all possibilities. As the result, and again due to a given balance of power, all universities founded before 1990 retained until now a low level of organizational integration with their units. The latter remained legal entities having a high level of independence in practically all academic and managerial issues.[23]

Putting aside the theme of legal entities itself, these episodes gradually inaugurated new practice, in fact new rules of play, within the "magic triangle" of holders of influence and power on the national playground. Namely, two tops of the triangle, the governmental bodies and universities, started to relegate various conflicting questions to the third one, comprising not only the Constitutional Court as the only

[22] Which was mapped also to the Constitutional Court due to the presence of academic juridical experts in both.

[23] The last legislative attempt, the provision in the Law from 2003 by which the legal integration of universities shall be finished by the end of 2007, was stopped by the second intervention of the Constitutional Court from 2006 (CC Croatia, 2006), stating that such proposition "*does not comply with the principle of the rule of law*" and that it contains the unclear and undefined notion of "*legal integration of universities*". The Court also pointed out that this provision "... *violates the constitutionally guaranteed university autonomy, as it hinders universities independently to regulate their internal organisation with respect to the legal character of their integral parts*".

instance that may interpret the Constitution, but also the national juridical system itself, comprising other courts at lower levels. This led to the gradual change of attitude of responsible actors inside universities, particularly inside University of Zagreb, the largest in Croatia. More and more topics of strictly academic nature, including those related to other four mentioned points of autonomy, became issues of juridical procedures.[24] Note that, being of the same strength as the Constitution, the decisions of the Constitution Court are irrefutable, while academic decisions in their substance are not. Thus, the juridical constitutional firmness more and more replaced the academic introspection, although, paradoxically, the latter was still firmly protected by this same Constitution (Bjeliš, 2020).

Such practice inevitably endangered the reputation of universities in society. It also led to a serious violation of their internal coherence. Instead of being strong academic communities permanently open to critical debates, universities have more and more reduced themselves to agglomerates of small research groups individually trying to ensure the conditions necessary for their research and educational activities. Consequently, universities as entities were not able to fulfil the role of generators of societal and technological development, but instead preferred to conform themselves to lethargy and retrograde trends which often characterize transitional countries. Consequently, they are today more and more vulnerable and apt for internal confrontations and crises, as the actual situation at the University of Zagreb illustrates.

Slovenia. In contrast to the Croatian, the Slovenian case had an important introductory stage which started few years before the dissolution of SFRY. Namely, few years before the collapse of SFRY Slovenian academic circles opened the thorough and intense debate about the state of the HE system. It was initiated by the federal political project from mid-80s of the last century, attempting to change the existing educational system by introducing the vertical professional orientation already from the secondary schools straight to the studies. This would inevitably lead to an additional disintegration of already strongly fragmented universities.[25] The counter-concept inaugurated in the Slovenian debate was that of horizontal integration of studies and research, i.e. of organizational strengthening of university. Although slowed down in 1991, this initiative has been revived soon after during the initial stages of the formation of the new state and its legislation. It certainly contributed

[24] The decision of the Constitutional Court in recent years dealt e.g. with rules of academic promotions, tuition fees, student assessment to studies, salaries of professors and rectors, conditions for the retirement of professors, the relationship between the university and vocational study programmes and between corresponding levels in the national qualification framework, even the prerogatives of national and university ethical councils, including the interventions into few concrete personal intra-university ethical procedures under way.

[25] Such debates were in various forms opened in other federal republics as well, including Croatia. The debate in Croatia however was not focused on universities, but mainly on the position of secondary schools, strongly and unsuccessfully opposing the elimination of gymnasiums that were inherited already from the Austro-Hungarian times, and enabled a general preparation of pupils for future studies. Gymnasiums were re-established everywhere immediately after the formation of new post-Yugoslav states.

positively to the whole process of implementation of Bologna process and EHEA principles in years that followed (Zgaga, 2017, 2021).

The same is true regarding the process of reconstruction of Slovenian HE institutions, which nevertheless, like in Croatia, still generated the conflicts that led to the interventions of the Constitutional Court. However, seemingly not without the impact of the public understanding of the matter already formed in the mentioned decade-long debate, the position of the Slovenian Constitutional Court was just opposite in comparison with the Croatian case. In 1998 it issued the interpretation (CC Slovenia, 1998) of the constitutional article on the university autonomy stating that universities are effectively unique legal entities, empowered to freely decide what will be their internal organization (Igličar, 2005; Prašnikar & Tomaževič, 2015). In practice this implied that faculties and other university units ceased to be legal entities (Zgaga, 2011). This juridical input enabled to Slovenian universities the steady rapprochement to usual European HE standards, without further considerable involvements of the Constitutional Court.[26,27]

To sum up, although the contents of constitutional declarations were the same in both countries, different interpretations of these declarations by the respective constitutional courts that followed afterwards in each country led to changes with visibly different consequences on their universities. There are nevertheless elements that indicate that different positions of constitutional courts were not accidental. The Slovenian constitutional provisions on academic values, in contrast to Croatian, were rooted in rather long and thorough preparations that included a considerable part of academic community. That certainly contributed to the wider and deeper public understanding of university autonomy and the contemporary global trends regarding the governance and performances of best European universities, recognized as benchmarks during the process of implementation of European HE standards and practices in both countries.

The analogous process in Croatia involved only tiny layers of governing structures in HE institutions (universities and faculties) and political bodies. The conflict of faculties and the university[28] was thus rather localized, with the Constitutional Court acting as a part of this localized milieu. The series of decisions by the same court which followed in last more than 20 years acted as the inhibiting factor in the development of academic way of life in Croatian universities. The initiatives for changes from both, political and academic, sides were as a rule canalized through

[26] Recently the Slovenian Constitutional Court issued the decision with the instruction that the actual Act on Higher Education should unambiguously state that universities are mere legal entities in the Slovenian HE system (CC Slovenia, 2021). This decision was motivated by the demand of Slovenian Audit Court to clarify some aspects of financial, administrative and audit procedures that involves universities and their institutional units.

[27] To my best knowledge, in other ex-Yugoslav states constitutional courts did not intervene into the issue of legal entities. Like Croatian universities, Serbian and Bosnian & Hercegovian universities still inherit the self-managerial model, while Montenegrin and North Macedonian universities made some shifts towards their legal integration.

[28] … which was, *hélas*, devoid of the fundamental Kantonian meaning (Kant, 1798).

remaining narrow passages, not fully obstructed by such juridical decisions and their messages. That was by no means the case with Slovenian universities.

8.6 Concluding Remarks

Let us conclude with brief comments on the local and the wider global significance of constitutional guaranties of university values.

The constitutional articles are as a rule brief. As such they were often perceived as nonbinding, being simply ignored in many pertinent situations in which decisive political programmes and steps were initiated. When this was not a case, equally often they were not understood without ambiguities (Noorda, 2020; Bergan et al., 2020), so that additional interpretative instances were inevitable. However, even when formulated by constitutional courts as highest juridical authorities, they were not interpreted uniquely, as we have seen in the previous section.

One could say that in realistic situations relationship between *de jure* protection of university autonomy and academic freedom, and *de facto* circumstances (Karran et al, 2022) in which universities realize their mission and duties, can be neither foreseen, nor measured and interpreted by simple general indicators. From the practitioner's point of view, I would prefer more empirical and in-depth attitude paying attention to specificities that often have decisive impacts on the conditions in a concrete academic milieu.

Particularly subtle in this respect is the issue of academic freedom. As a multifaceted term, it is to be carefully structured in each survey (Matei, 2020; Noorda, 2020; Karran et al, 2022). As for the present discussion, three elements look appropriate: *creativity*, *criticality*, and *cooperativity*, linked to the research, studies, and participation in the functioning of the community, respectively. Again, each of them can be negatively affected in different ways and with different intensities in given specific circumstances. As for the Croatian case from the previous section, the most sensitively endangered appears to be the third, social or collective dimension of individual academic freedom.[29] It is directly related to the realization of the university as an autonomous entity, or, in the words of recent ***Magna Charta Universitatum 2020*** (MCO, 2020): *Academic freedom is the lifeblood for universities; open enquiry and dialogue their nourishment.*

Deterioration of elements of individual freedom, as well as of the autonomy as a collective institutional virtue, opens the way towards the crisis of the university.[30] Further on, although evidently being involved in an actual and concrete university crisis characterized by all already stressed elements, I still consider it as a local one,

[29] Quite generally, the creativity, i.e. the individual effort to protect conditions for successful research is the primary value any scientist tries to protect. Next in line is robustness of teachers and students in inconvenient conditions.

[30] In other words, there is no crisis of infected lifeblood *per se*. Infected lifeblood inevitably causes an organic crisis, crisis of the body.

and not as a part of some wider crisis. In other words, with all possible other neuralgic points in other countries, and with their specificities considered, some of them being pointed out in Matei (2020), the whole European HE space still does not seem to show signs of general crisis, including the partial "crisis of academic freedom" as suggested in the above reference. Just for this reason, it seems reasonable to spot such neuralgic points and undertake efficient steps towards solving the problems in a constructive, but decisive, way.

Coming back to the global aspects elaborated in the first part of the text, the ensuing impression is that constitutional provisions did not visibly contribute to the faster development of HE and R&D in European transitional states in the last 30 years. As data from fourth section show, the lagging behind the developed European countries remains deep and warning, irrespectively to the initial constitutional enthusiasms. It seems that the diminishing of this gap will not be possible without changing the attitude by establishing new prerequisites. Firstly, it would be useful to have constitutions amended with concrete commitments for both, political and academic sides. Secondly, the governments would have to show by concrete decisions that HE and R&D are their top strategical priorities. Thirdly, the national policies would have to be coordinated at the European level. Particularly it is necessary that EU establishes the strategy with commitments that would be obligatory for national governments,[31] aiming to harmonize the Continent, as well as to prevent the lagging of European HE and R&D in the global competition, particularly in the competition with leading American and South-East Asian rivals.

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[31] Historically the EU policy in the HE and R&D sectors was always the mixture of recommendations and targeted competitive and aiding funding aimed to encourage adequate shifts in national policies. HE and R&D are not regulated through strict and obligatory rules and commitments of member countries, as this is the case with other sectors like finances, market competition, juridical system, human rights, agriculture, environment, security of borders, etc.

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Part II
Global Challenges to Higher Education Reforms

Chapter 9
Actors and Actorhood in Higher Education Regionalisms

Meng-Hsuan Chou

Abstract Around the world, 'higher education regionalism' has become one accepted way to organise policy cooperation and reform efforts in the higher education sector. Higher education regionalism can manifest in two forms: *intra*-regional (dominant) and *inter*-regional (less common). Using the case of 'European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region' (SHARE), I identify the actors and their roles in inter-regional higher education policy cooperation. My intention is to engage with Pavel Zgaga's research on the external dimension of the Bologna Process, particularly how actorhood of the Bologna Process is organisationally constructed and received by the SHARE partners. I conclude with some personal reflections about Pavel Zgaga's knowledge exchange in Southeast Asia.

Keywords Higher education regionalism · External dimension of the Bologna Process · ASEAN · European Union

9.1 Introduction

How higher education and its policy reforms are organised is a central topic for scholars interested in the transformation of state-society relations. In the context of contemporary globalisation, the emergence of a macro-regional governance layer, involving established regional organisational entities and an evolving network of transnational policy actors, has become one accepted way to organise cooperation and reform in this sector. Pauline Ravinet and I refer to this phenomenon as 'higher education regionalism' (Chou & Ravinet, 2015, 2016). While many examples of higher education regionalisms exist around the world, Europe's Bologna Process is one of the most prominent example. In this chapter, I situate Pavel Zgaga's

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scholarship on the external dimension of the Bologna Process in my research on higher education regionalism. Specifically, I intend to explore how actorhood of the Bologna Process is organisationally structured and perceived outside of Europe. Here, I define actorhood broadly to refer to the actors involved in the works of higher education regionalism and their overall agency (as representatives of their countries, organisations/associations, or universities), and the external acknowledgement of Bologna Process as a recognised way to organise higher education regionalism.

To do so, I begin with Zgaga's work on Bologna Process's external dimension before proceeding with an overview of my higher education regionalism research agenda to identify how we conceptualise the external dimension in our respective research, as well as the research questions we have in common. Next, I turn to an instance of higher education *inter*-regionalism—'European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN[1] Region' (SHARE)—to explore how the actorhood of Bologna Process's external dimension is constructed by identifying the actors (who are they?), their roles (what hats do they wear?), and observable effects of higher education inter-regionalism (what are the impacts?). I conclude this chapter with personal reflections about Zgaga's knowledge exchange in Southeast Asia.

9.2 Pavel Zgaga and the External Dimension of Bologna Process

Pavel Zgaga is a prolific scholar and my entry into his scholarship was via the *external dimension* of the Bologna Process, 'a term which began to be used in the early years of the BP [Bologna Process] and referred to issues about the articulation of possible relationships between the then emerging EHEA [European Higher Education Area] and the surrounding world' (Zgaga, 2019: 450). In the main, whereas the 'internal dimension' referred to those activities concerning the completion of the European Higher Education Area, the 'external dimension' addressed those between Bologna and non-Bologna member states and institutions; but Zgaga (2011: 4) reminded us that 'The borderline between the "internal" and "external" dimensions was unclear'. As an insider involved in developing the Global Strategy of the Bologna Process, Zgaga was the rapporteur overseeing discussions concerning ways in which the European Higher Education Area would be 'open and attractive to other parts of the world' through sharing of 'experiences with non-European countries' (Zgaga, 2006: i). As a scholar, he provided a more reflective perspective of these developments at multiple timepoints following the implementation of the Global Strategy. In this section, I review his key publications concerning the

[1] ASEAN refers to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which currently has ten member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

external dimension of the Bologna Process (Zgaga, 2006, 2011, 2012, 2019), giving particular attention to key debates and how these debates evolved over time. To do so, I begin with a brief overview of the Global Strategy's key policy areas and guiding principles.

The 2006 report 'Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting' set out the first parameters within which discussions concerning the external dimension emerged (Zgaga, 2006).[2] Tracing the 'history of the "external dimension" idea', the report identified four distinct 'horizons, agendas and approaches in which the "external dimension" appears in Bologna documents' (Zgaga, 2006: 32–33): (1) 'an information (didactic) approach' (presenting and explaining the European Higher Education Area 'correctly' to 'other world regions'); (2) 'a competitiveness and attractiveness agenda' (attracting international students and faculty to Europe); (3) 'a partnership and cooperation agenda' (collaborating with non-European higher education partners in non-commercial activities that promote 'academic values'); and (4) 'a dialogic approach' (exchanging good practices, experience, and ideas with representatives of other world regions with the aim to develop 'concrete mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of "partnership and cooperation agenda"').

These 'horizons, agendas and approaches' would later be translated into the five core policy areas and three guiding principles of the Bologna Process's Global Strategy. Zgaga (2011: 3) succinctly summarised the five core policy areas as 'improving information, enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education, strengthening cooperation, intensifying policy dialogue and furthering the recognition of qualifications'. What set the Global Strategy apart from other approaches in regional policy cooperation in the higher education domain, and, indeed, made it *European*, were its three guiding principles. First, 'European heritage and values' were to steer the implementation of the Global Strategy, specifically the centrality of 'institutional autonomy', 'academic freedom', 'democracy, human rights and the rule of law' in all aspects concerning higher education (Zgaga, 2011: 10). Second, the participation of all stakeholders was envisaged as integral to the implementation of the Global Strategy. Here, 'an atmosphere of trust' was highlighted as a key ingredient. Third, the Strategy was based on the principle of 'inclusive geographical scope' and welcomed diversity in engagement; partnership was thus *not* exclusive.

The adoption of the Global Strategy appears to suggest that the policy actors involved have largely addressed the question 'What is the purpose of the external dimension and how can it be best implemented?', but Zgaga informed us that this was far from settled. Early on, the preoccupation with identifying the purpose of the external dimension could be seen in several questions posed in the 2006 report:

[2] The report is substantive (more than 200 pages) and should be considered a historical document in the development of the Bologna Process. In typical Zgaga-style, the report is presented as a history of ideas (in this case, the 'external dimension') from an insider who has been deeply involved in its telling and re-telling. Various quotes from speakers at organised events concerning the external dimension brings to life the highly provocative questions that participants in Europe asked when considering engaging non-Bologna stakeholders around the world.

'Should the Bologna reforms be extended to other parts of the world?', 'Is the Bologna Process overshadowed by Euro-centrism?', and 'the "external dimension"—does it matter and why does it matter?' (Zgaga, 2006: 12, 14, 97). The extent to which Bologna policy actors gave weight to the features of *attractiveness*, *competitiveness*, and *openness*, along with the role that 'cooperation' would play in enhancing these features, in the design of activities for implementing the Global Strategy indicated their overall position concerning the purpose of the external dimension. The assessments Zgaga (2011, 2012, 2019) made in 2011 and 2019, however, revealed the overall tensions embedded in the implementation of the Global Strategy.

Reporting in 2011, Zgaga (2011, 2012: 219) identified two sets of activities from the Global Strategy's five policy areas that had the highest frequency (about 50% of all participating member states): 'first, publishing brochures and setting up special websites (policy area 1: improving information); second, bilateral and multilateral contacts and agreements between the EHEA and non-EHEA countries (policy area 4: policy dialogue)'. Contextualising these findings, Zgaga (2012: 220) pointed out that this was largely a ministerial view of the developments, rather than a comprehensive one that included other stakeholders such as the European Commission (i.e., macro-level developments), and higher education institutions (micro-level activities). What this early assessment tells us about the actorhood of the external dimension of the Bologna Process is that the official reporting reflected a state-centric view of these developments, with the ministries being the policy actors whose views were represented.

Assessing the impact of the Bologna Process in a global setting in 2019, Zgaga began by describing the embedded tensions that have come to differentiate two opposing implementation 'cultures' of the Global Strategy. Familiar to most scholars studying higher education regionalism in Europe, these 'cultures' have been expressed in several ways: the 'UNESCO approach vs. WTO approach' (Zgaga, 2019: 454), 'cooperation vs. competition' (Zgaga, 2019: 456), and the 'Europe of knowledge vs. Europe of the euro' (Zgaga, 2009). What these opposing 'cultures' champion are distinct policy frames—i.e., problem definition, value judgement, and solution: a more utilitarian market-driven frame (e.g., 'Europe of the euro') that emphasises trade liberalisation, or a more culturally-grounded and non-market frame ('Europe of knowledge') that highlights the significance of academic values and institutional autonomy in the modernisation of European higher education. The extent to which these two opposing 'cultures' have played out or reconciled remains an ongoing development.

As part of his assessment, Zgaga (2019: 457-459) 'looked out' to developments outside of Europe and identified the 'echoes' of the Bologna Process around the world. What he found would be of interest to researchers examining global diffusion: differences abound between the Bologna philosophy and regional higher education policy cooperation elsewhere. Indeed, while some regional policy actors expressed interests in the Bologna Process and its approaches, they also pointed to the significance of local institutions and practices that provided very little traction to implementing the Bologna 'model'. This led him to ask, 'Is it possible at all to

talk about the "BP global model" as a model that could be enforced across the globe?' (Zgaga, 2019: 460). Concluding that 'a more complex approach is needed to clarify these issues. It is not just about "looking *out*", Zgaga (2019: 46) argued for the European Higher Education Area to be included in these assessments. As I shall discuss next, Zgaga and I shared the same outlook; for me, it was the starting point for developing and carrying out my higher education regionalism research agenda.

9.3 Higher Education Regionalism and the External Dimension of the Bologna Process

Scanning the globe, one quickly realises that Europe's Bologna Process is one regional initiative among many in the higher education sector. For instance, there has been consistent efforts in building common higher education areas in Africa through the African Union's (AU) harmonisation strategy, sub-regional initiatives of the Southern African Development Community, and activities of the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education. Looking towards Latin America, we find the mechanisms of Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur) for programme accreditation (MEXA) and mobility scheme (MARCA). Similarly, in Asia, there is the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme, as well as the many initiatives from the ASEAN University Network (AUN). In recent years, China has also taken the lead in establishing higher education alliances through multiple initiatives such as the Asian University Association (AUA) and the University Alliance of the Silk Road (UASR). What these initiatives have in common are emphases on mobility (student, faculty), some form of credit transfer, and participating institutions and countries' ambition to be dominant/prominent in the global higher education landscape. Pauline Ravinet and I identified these initiatives as manifestations of higher education regionalism (specifically, *intra*-regionalism), which we defined as referring to:

> [A] political project of region creation involving at least some state authority (national, supranational, international), who in turn designates and delineates the world's geographical region to which such activities extend, in the higher education policy sector (Chou & Ravinet, 2015: 368).

We derived this definition after reviewing what has been written on higher education regionalism in the political science literature and in higher education studies—two distinct sets of literature that have much to say about this phenomenon, but rarely engage each other in a fruitful conversation on the subject. From political science, we learned from scholars who examined regions, 'new regionalism', and European integration (Caporaso & Choi, 2002; Fawcett & Gandois, 2010; Hettne, 2005; Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000; Mattli, 2012; Warleigh-Lack, 2014; Warleigh-Lack & Van Langenhove, 2010). From higher education studies, we obtained insights from scholars who are serious about the impact that the re-composition of

space, scales, and power have on past, current, and the future state of higher education (Gomes et al., 2012; Jayasuriya & Robertson, 2010; Knight, 2012, 2013).

The lessons from our review led us to these three positions concerning the study of higher education regionalism:

- *It must be comparative*. Studying higher education regionalism means comparing varieties of higher education regionalisms to consider the sector's apparent isomorphism. This corresponds directly to Zgaga's reference of 'echoes' of the Bologna Process around the world.
- *It must be sector-based*. Studying higher education regionalism is to be serious about the particular dynamics of higher education and how they interact with the wider multi-purpose regional organisation (EU, ASEAN, AU, etc.) and national needs. For us, integrating the multi-layered local context and developments are crucial in examining the evolution of initiatives and policy cooperation, and we saw the policy sector as an entry point to this investigation.
- *It must be differentiated.* Studying higher education regionalism means to distinguish between intra-regional initiatives (within one geographical region) and inter-regional initiatives (between at least two geographical regions). The latter is where my higher education regionalism research agenda overlaps with Zgaga's research on the 'external dimension' of the Bologna Process.

With these points of departure, we proposed a heuristic framework to study higher education regionalism along these three dimensions:

1. *Constellation of actors* central and active in these processes: this means identifying the individual and collective actors involved and mapping their interaction patterns. Focussing on the actors allow us to see whether they wear multiple institutional hats, and represent different interests and positions depending on the audience setting. It would be particularly interesting to delineate how they navigate between different geographical higher education arena over time.
2. *Institutional arrangements* adopted, abandoned, and debated: this refers to identifying the institutional form and rules and the instruments considered, accepted, or rejected. We anticipate that institutional forms would vary across the world's geographical regions, particularly if these institutional arrangements are embedded within the regional multipurpose organisation (e.g., EU, ASEAN, AU).
3. *Ideas and principles* embedded and operationalised: this points to identifying the paradigms, policy ideas, and programmatic ideas guiding the instances of higher education regionalisms (see Chou & Ravinet, 2017).

Our higher education regionalism research agenda embraces an inductive method of enquiry, and requires intensive fieldwork with key actors involved in their regional, national, and institutional homes. In the next section, I will turn to a case of higher education inter-regionalism, involving the EU and ASEAN, to look at how the 'external dimension' of the Bologna Process has been viewed in Southeast Asia.

9.4 Higher Education Inter-Regionalism: The Case of SHARE

The SHARE initiative is an instance of higher education inter-regionalism, involving policy cooperation between two distinct regional entities: EU and ASEAN. Designed and promoted as 'European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region', we may approach SHARE as a case of Bologna Process's external dimension, as the ASEAN partners did when it was launched in 2015. The European Commission funds the SHARE initiative, originally for the period 2015–2019 with €10 million; the contract officially concluded on 30 June 2020, but was extended for a further period (February 2021 to the end of 2022) with €5.175 million from the EU and €175,000 co-financing from the British Council (SHARE, 2021a). SHARE's primary objective is to 'strengthen regional cooperation [within ASEAN, and between ASEAN and the EU], enhance the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students' (SHARE, 2021b). To do so, the SHARE initiative is organised to implement three Result Areas (see Table 9.1). The 2020–2022 work programme is divided into two sets of activities. First, those continuing and building on existing Result Areas (e.g., quality assurance, qualifications framework, credentials recognition and portability). Second, initiatives reflecting universities' mission to train graduates ready for the labour market (e.g., outcome based pedagogy, graduate employability) and response to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., virtual exchange, collaborative online international learning) (Table 9.1).

A consortium of six European organisations operating transnationally leads SHARE's day-to-day implementation: British Council (operational lead), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Nuffic (the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education), Campus France (the French agency for the promotion of higher education, international student services, and international mobility), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the European University Association (EUA). SHARE's target groups and beneficiaries are all ASEAN-based entities. At the regional-level, these agencies are identified: ASEAN University Network (AUN), Task Forces for the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAFHE), ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Higher Education (SEAMEO RIHED). At the national-level, SHARE targets government departments active in the higher education sector, university managers and faculty, quality assurance agencies, student associations, and students (SHARE, 2021a).

By design, SHARE embodies similar tensions and ambiguities of implementing transnational initiatives such as Europe's Bologna Process, particularly issues concerning ownership (who owns it?) and promoted values (whose values?). These tensions are visible in the presentation of SHARE: it is 'an EU Grant funded project' and 'SHARE is a project of ASEAN' (SHARE, 2021a). At the same time, the consortium claims to be working on 'behalf of ASEAN and EU' (SHARE, 2021a).

Table 9.1 SHARE Result Areas and work programme (2015–2022) (SHARE, 2021a, b)

Main Result Areas (2015–2019)	
Result 1	Policy dialogues (British Council lead)
Result 2a	ASEAN qualifications reference frameworks (DAAD lead, ENQA and EUA)
Result 2b	ASEAN quality assurance (DAAD lead, ENQA and EUA)
Result 3a	ASEAN credit transfer system (ACTS) (Campus France lead)
Result 3b	ASEAN-EU credit transfer systems (AECTS) (Campus France lead)
Result 3c	ACTS and AECTS student mobility with scholarships (Nuffic lead)
Technical assistance and capacity building (2020–2022)	
'Developing ASEAN communities of practice for greater coordination, knowledge management, and monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)'	
'Strengthening of regional initiatives on quality assurance and accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes'	
'Supporting the implementation of national qualifications frameworks and the ASEAN qualifications reference framework (AQRF)'	
'Contributing to the ongoing work of the ASEAN quality assurance network (AQAN)'	
'Supporting the move to outcome based education (OBE) pedagogy'	
'Producing a study on "graduate employability in ASEAN" as part of a series of studies to support the master plan on ASEAN connectivity (MPAC) 2025'	
'Implementing digital modalities of internationalisation including virtual exchange and collaborative online international learning (COIL)'	
'Piloting digital credentials recognition and portability to enhance the ASEAN-Europe credit transfer system (AECTS) mechanism'	

The SHARE steering committee (referred to as stakeholders) consists of the ASEAN Secretariat (Education, Youth and Sports Division under the Socio-Cultural Community Department), the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED), and the EU Delegation in Jakarta. Setting aside the steering committee, the organisational set up of SHARE divides the policy actors geographically and by roles: the European consortium implements a range of activities (e.g., policy dialogues, quality assurance, qualifications framework) for ASEAN actors. The 'giver-receiver' dynamics could be interpreted in at least two ways. First, as equal partners (a horizontal exchange) 'sharing' their good practices. Second, hierarchically, as instructors offering lessons to participants. During our fieldwork, we found that ASEAN actors had the latter perspective when SHARE was launched. It was explained to us that there was contention because the ASEAN partners felt that there was a 'general lack of acknowledgement or awareness of existing efforts already made in South-East Asia on higher education coordination' (Chou & Ravinet, 2017: 156). In their view, they saw the dismissal of what has been achieved in the region as the overall approach the Bologna Process applied to its external dimension. The significance of this perspective should be emphasised and, I argue, it may be useful

to offer another 'history of the "external dimension" idea' than the one Zgaga provided to account for this viewpoint.

Since the late 1990s, inside and outside of the European Union (EU) institutional framework, European policy actors became increasingly interested in the external dimension of European cooperation. This interest emerged out of the dual recognition that there needed to be greater coherence between diverse EU measures across policy sectors ('horizontal management', see Peters, 2015, 2018), and that partnership with non-EU member states, particularly concerning implementation, was essential for policy success. While the Bologna Process is not a EU process, it is still a *European* process, and thus must be situated in the overall policy thinking at the time. Certainly, sectoral policy logic is likely to have its own dynamics, but political scientists have challenged the observation that a policy sector could be entirely insulated (see Gornitzka, 2010; Capano & Piattoni, 2011); for instance, the extent to which a sectoral policy objective could be achieved may rely on its overall synergy with prominent policy logics in other sectors (Chou, 2012). It was in the area of justice and home affairs, notably in the fields of asylum and migration, that the policy focus on the external dimension was most prominent for the EU. These developments have a long history in European integration (Chou, 2009). For EU member states, the removal of internal borders to ensure free movement also meant that the external borders needed to be strengthened to prevent the entry of unauthorised third country nationals. While the member states of the European Communities, as the EU was then known, attempted to strengthen their common external borders since the mid-1980s through the Schengen arrangement, it was only in 1999 when they explicitly did so: the Tampere European Council officially acknowledged the significance of the external dimension in these efforts (Boswell, 2003; Wolff et al., 2009).

What is relevant for our current discussion was the prevalent policy logic driving how the EU, consisting of the European Commission working closely with interested member states during earlier efforts, engaged external partners concerning border management. In the first wave, the European Commission, representing the EU, actively sought to interest source and transit countries in mobility partnerships whereby the latter would assist, *inter alia*, in the readmission of unauthorised migrants and failed asylum seekers. The prevailing policy understanding at the time was that the EU sought to 'outsource' its border management work to others through aid incentives and technical assistance. The latter was described as a sharing of experiences and practices from the EU to partner countries and was commonly invoked as a driving motivation. It is necessary to highlight how the Bologna Process used the same language when promoting its external dimension activities, suggesting that policy discourse is transferrable even though the intentions may be quite different. While the EU has successfully concluded mobility partnerships with several countries (Reslow & Vink, 2015), it has also failed when the invited partner state approached negotiations with caution and exploited the internal division among the participating member states (Chou & Gibert, 2012). It is therefore not surprising that the external dimension of EU policy work has come to be associated with the question 'What is in it for the EU?'—a question participating European

institutions and states, as well as invited partners, asked in light of their own desired outcomes. For the SHARE initiative, ASEAN participants responded with general caution, waiting to see what is on offer and could benefit their respective countries and institutions.

The general assessment of the SHARE initiative at the end of its first phase is that it has been successful. For instance, more than ten policy dialogues were initiated on diverse higher education topics (see SHARE, 2021c). Similarly, more than 500 scholarships were awarded to ASEAN[3] undergraduate students enrolled in the 32 universities that make up the SHARE network (SHARE, 2019). Of these, 400 scholarships were allocated for intra-ASEAN mobility, and 100 for studying in the EU. These scholarships offered a fully-funded semester exchange and recipient testimonials point to its transformative capacity (see SHARE, 2019). Writing a few years after the Bologna Process's Global Strategy was implemented, Zgaga (2012: 225) indicated that 'One of the key dilemmas from the outset has been the potential collision between "the national" and "the European" dimensions of higher education', especially because 'European higher education remains organised and financed at a national level'. The same could be said for higher education interregionalism in the case of SHARE: as long as activities and efforts to foster interregionalism are organised and financed by European partners, the emergence of the ASEAN dimension in this policy cooperation is going to be shaped by the European dimension.

9.5 Some Reflections: Pavel Zgaga in Southeast Asia

It may be fitting to conclude this tribute to the scholarship of Pavel Zgaga with some personal reflections. During 2016–2019, we were collaborators in the Jean Monnet Network 'Nexus of European Centres Abroad for Research on the European Higher Education Area' and had the opportunity to host each other in Ljubljana (October 2017) and Singapore (July 2019). Two exchanges stood out in my mind. First, in Ljubljana, Pavel was delighted to tell me about the presentation by a doctoral candidate he supervised on academic freedom in Singapore and Italy (Westa, 2017). Second, in Singapore, as he faced a local audience less familiar with European developments, but highly aware of higher education activities in Southeast Asia, Pavel lucidly elaborated 'European Higher Education Area and the world: 20 years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration'. His presentation described the emergence and evolution of the idea of higher education regionalism in Europe, and how the policy actors 'muddled through' both the contentious and ambiguous aspects of these developments. What impressed me was the genuine enthusiasm and sensitivity Pavel expressed in both instances. A lifelong curiosity is the hallmark of a

[3] EU funding regulations excluded students from Brunei and Singapore from receiving scholarships (SHARE, 2019: 9).

scholar, but awareness of and understanding for different practices and beliefs are the foundations for convincing scholarship. At the end of his visit to Singapore, Pavel told me about his travel plans for the future, Asia included. Several months later, the COVID-19 pandemic would transform the world.

As I write, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a seemingly contradicting transformation of higher education around the world: one characterised by limited physical mobility and frenzied pedagogical and research activities. The awareness of the new coronavirus since Winter 2019 saw governments channelling health security concerns into all policy sectors in attempts to prioritise human lives and safeguard national economies. In the higher education sector, we see governments buffering the long-recognised internationalisation pressures by closing national borders (and keeping them closed for months), suspending cross-border flights, and regulating crowd sizes and movement. For many universities, most traditional internationalisation activities came to a standstill as institutions sought to adhere to new health guidelines (masks, social distancing, classroom bubbles). At the same time, universities scrambled to offer courses online to all students, particularly international students in their home countries or those who were stranded en route to study destinations. The full extent of the pandemic's impact on higher education activities, particularly higher education regionalism, remains to be seen. The pandemic has, however, generated conversations in Southeast Asia about a longstanding issue in the world of higher education: the value of higher education.

Asia (South, East, Southeast) has long been the home of many international students studying abroad. As students normalise remote learning, questions concerning paying high tuition fees to study abroad are being asked, particularly when its known benefits such as networking and potential access to foreign labour markets are being curtailed or becoming increasingly unclear. For Asian countries that generally send their nationals to study abroad, and universities in Asia seeking to attract foreign faculty to their institutions, the pandemic offers opportunities to reconfigure the global higher education landscape through internationalisation. These states may work closely with universities to bring in young foreign academic talents facing hiring freezes elsewhere, or their own citizens working in foreign universities, to join their ranks. In so doing, these countries and universities internationalise their curriculum offerings for domestic students, convincing them to stay at home. Intra- and inter-regional alliances such as SHARE and the many higher education initiatives supported through China's Belt-and-Road (BRI) provide alternative pathways for these initiatives and internationalisation efforts (Cabanda et al., 2019; van der Wende et al., 2020). As the digital divide grows and becomes more visible, another perspective concerning the value of higher education has also emerged, specifically whether higher education is more valuable for those who have less or no access. These debates point to a set of shared concerns about the purpose of higher education today—topics that would certainly be of interest to a lifelong scholar such as Pavel.

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Chapter 10
Agents of Global Competition in the International Student Market

Janja Komljenovic

Abstract This chapter focuses on the agents of competition and cooperation in global higher education. More specifically, it tackles international student mobility and foregrounds the changing nature of competition between individuals, universities, and countries. It engages with Pavel Zgaga's seminal work on the role of universities in society, the nature of knowledge, globalisation, and European higher education and its internationalisation efforts. In his work, Zgaga foregrounds three key processes. First, a struggle between competition and cooperation among regions, countries, and institutions. Second, a struggle over various competing aims and approaches to student mobility supporting a variety of cultural, political or economic rationales. Finally, a struggle and power play between various actors. Zgaga analysed these dichotomies at the macro and meso policy level. My analysis complements his work at the micro level by investigating how policy is materialised and enacted at the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) annual conference and expo.

Keywords International student market · Global competition · Competition and cooperation · Higher education · Association of International Educators (NAFSA)

10.1 Introduction

Academic student mobility is an old phenomenon (Rüegg, 2004). It reflects the aims and objectives of higher education across time and space. In the recent decades, we note two significant changes. First, the number of internationally mobile students has grown considerably (Kaushal & Lanati, 2019). Second, its purpose has been increasingly framed in economic terms. In the case of Europe, while doing cultural

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and identity work, European mobility programmes also invoke an economic rationale at the same time (Zgaga, 2018). The economic dimension includes a student element, such as mobility contributing to the building of human capital in the knowledge economy, and hence being mobile increases opportunities for better jobs (Zgaga, 2018). It also includes a system element of turning higher education into a global industry (Verger et al., 2016), which is the focus of this chapter.

Competitive schemes aiming to attract fee-paying international students have noted a steep rise from the 1980s accompanied by international rankings and other market-making tools (Musselin, 2018). While some countries primarily support student mobility for cultural or political reasons, others openly frame it as an industrial sector (Beech, 2018). In the UK, universities contribute £13.4 billion in education exports to the British economy (HM Government, 2019). In the United States, international students contribute $24.7 billion to the economy (Institute of International Education, 2014). Furthermore, in Australia, international higher education is the fourth largest export sector earning £20.8 billion in 2019 (Ross, 2020). In the context of the Bologna process in Europe, higher education internationalisation was supported for competitiveness in the global knowledge economy, but also for the purpose of the partnership, cooperation and policy dialogue with other countries of the world (Zgaga, 2006). An essential part of European internationalisation more broadly is student mobility, more specifically.

International student mobility has become increasingly organised by various schemes and programmes (Kehm, 2005). Such a change from self-organised study abroad to structured and organised mobility together with a complex but increasingly economic set of mobility rationales (Zgaga, 2017), requires a cultural, social and political reframing of higher education. This is not an easy task and goes beyond the macro-level policy struggles and decisions. It takes work and investment at the micro-level (Janja Komljenovic & Robertson, 2016). Global events and education fairs are vital sites where such micro-level work occurs (Gębarowski, 2012). Such events are temporary spatial fixes and a good opportunity to study the evolving complexity of contrasting aims and strategies of universities, countries and private actors over the meaning and structure of international student mobility. An annual conference by the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) in the USA is the biggest global event for institutional actors of global student mobility; and is the empirical centre of this chapter.

Zgaga's notable contribution to internationalisation and globalisation of European higher education and beyond offers critical insights on macro-level policy work (Luc E. Weber & Zgaga, 2004; Zgaga, 2006, 2009). It foregrounds three key processes and dichotomies. First, a struggle between competition and cooperation among regions, countries, and institutions. Second, a struggle over various competing aims and approaches to student mobility supporting a variety of cultural, political, or economic rationales. Finally, a struggle and power play between various actors that include states, institutions, individuals and also private actors, policy entrepreneurs, philanthropists, non-governmental organisations and so on. Zgaga analysed these struggles at the policy level. My analysis complements his work at

the micro-level by investigating how macro and meso level policy is materialised and enacted at global events.

10.2 Meaning-Making and Global Events

NAFSA is a non-profit organisation from the USA established in 1948 with the aim for US universities to share experience and practices of working with international students. In time it grew in size and scope to the extent that it is now active in advocacy, public policy, networking, providing sector intelligence, organising regional and annual events, and offering online learning about the practices in international education (Association of International Educators, 2015). Its membership and audience grew from university administrators working in the international offices to include university top leadership, academics, individuals from private companies, non-governmental organisations, philanthropists, media and others. NAFSA's key event is its annual conference and expo.

NAFSA annual event is structured in two parallel and interwoven parts. First, the conference offers hundreds of sessions, panels, and lectures. Second, the expo offers an opportunity for diverse actors to exhibit their products, services, or activities. Participants attend both parts of the event and can constantly shift between the two. NAFSA is a good empirical case to study the changing nature of international student mobility for several reasons. It is the biggest event of such kind in the world. It attracts a diverse array of actors who come from numerous countries from all continents. These various actors have diverse aims and motivations that lead to competition and cooperation constellations. Finally, it is a good opportunity for actors to use multiple communication and representation possibilities to advance their strategies and goals.

International trade fairs are defined as specific types of events with an institutional setting that supports intense communication and information ecology, the 'global buzz' (Maskell et al., 2004, 2006). It consists of "five constitutive and interrelated components: (i) dedicated co-presence, (ii) intensive face-to-face interaction, (iii) manifold possibilities for observation, (iv) intersecting interpretative communities and (v) multiplex meetings and relationships" (Schuldt & Bathelt, 2011, p. 3). It brings together many different actors that include producers, users, experts, media, and other interested individuals or organisations from around the world. The institutional and spatial constellation of a fair allows sequent and simultaneous interaction between them. A multitude of relationships and personal contacts develop, which stimulate tight networks of information and knowledge flows. Visitors can meet at different places and in different ways – scheduled or accidental meetings, in hallways, hotel lobbies, hospitality suites, bars and so on. Trade fairs are also societal events that include leisure activities, performances, and after-fair events. Actors become linked in different ways, as business partners, colleagues, peers, friends, or community members. Resources and information can be transferred from one type of relationship to another or from one agent to another (Bathelt

& Schuldt, 2008; Schuldt et al., 2010). Processes during fairs can lead to unexpected knowledge, inspiration or reassurance (Borghini et al., 2006) as overall observation and communication allow actors to learn about products, other actors, practices and become aware of significant trends or gain knowledge about markets (Schuldt et al., 2010).

Seeing the NAFSA event as the global buzz brings into view its rich dynamic based on social relations and actors' capabilities and positionalities. In this respect, the cultural work of meaning-making of international higher education is being brokered and negotiated. Politically, different actors compete and struggle in who has the power to shape these meanings and values. Economically, new forms of market exchanges are being promoted and normalised along with the more traditional views of student mobility. These cultural, political and economic dimensions will be examined next.

10.3 Methodological Notes

In order to investigate the changing nature of competition over international students via the global buzz, a study was designed to analyse the NAFSA annual event 2014 that took place in San Diego, USA, between 25 and 30 May. The event brought together more than 10.000 participants. In the conference part, 281 sessions, workshops, seminars, poster fairs and colloquiums were held. In the expo part, 413 exhibitors were identified from 46 countries (NAFSA, 2014b). Important to note is that the analysis only uses data from 2014, and the dynamic after this year is not part of this study.

The study employed a range of data sources: interviews, field notes and additional conversations at the NAFSA 2014 event; and NAFSA web page (NAFSA, 2014a), web page of the 2014 annual event (NAFSA, 2015d), all available web pages of past events, which were events from 2011 to 2013 (NAFSA, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c), official catalogues of ten past NAFSA annual conferences that were sent by NAFSA secretariat, and NAFSA documents relating to the event (NAFSA, 2007). These texts were analysed to establish the context of the event and helped to identify key interviewees. Interviews with 21 participants were conducted, and additional informational conversations with three representatives from private companies, six representatives of states and two representatives from universities, were made. Interviewees were invited from a list of participants with the following criteria: were exhibitors as well as presenters at the event, were active in the sector for at least 2 years, came from different parts of the world and worked in various markets around higher education (for example, computer software companies, language schools, student recruitment, marketing support, pathway programme providers).

Interviews lasted between 25 and 45 min with interviewees from universities, public authorities, or university-based networks (five), private companies (14) and NAFSA (two). Some interviewees represented organisations exhibiting at the expo, and others were participants of the event without exhibiting. The interviews were

semi-structured, and the questions ranged over reasons for attending the event, aims and nature of the organisation, strategies used to advance their aims, relations with other actors (universities or companies), challenges of working in the higher education sector, nature of their products, competition, and general changes in the sectors as seen by participants. I also asked about their relations and communication with other participants at the event, what interviewees noticed about the dynamics of the event, and how they see themselves and other actors compared to others. Transcribed interviews, field notes, notes from conversations, and documents were then analysed for activities, themes, issues, and concerns. I was particularly attentive to actors' goals and strategies, their use of diverse communicative channels and the ways of relating with other actors at the event.

10.4 A Variety of Motivations and Strategies

NAFSA event is a space where the market and non-market discourses, actors, interactions, goods, and services co-exist and are intertwined. Participants come with very different motivation and aims, as well as different capabilities, strategies, and possibilities. Interviewees who represented universities said they came to meet their existing partner universities and potentially get more contacts with other universities. Interviewees who represented private companies, reported on attending the event to promote their companies and products or to sell their services. They see attending NAFSA event as a strategic way to gain respect and recognition within the higher education community. University interviewees reported receiving numerous invitations for meetings by private companies. They said they were open to such meetings to see what those companies offer and what is existing 'out there'. Meeting with companies is not their primary motivation to attend; however, the global buzz and coincidental encounters often contribute to new market relations between universities and companies, to which I return later.

A defining feature of student mobility is a discourse of quality, increasing access to education, global citizenship, intercultural learning, focusing on students, and contributing to greater social good. The private companies and their representatives who attended the NAFSA event framed their work, services or goods to align with these discourses. Profit-making, which was previously not supported in the sector, is now being framed as going hand in hand with social and societal goals. The idea that was promoted was that profits have to be made to be re-invested back into the sector for the public good. It is not just that there are two distinct discourses present at the same time – that of higher education and internationalisation for greater social good and the other of higher education and internationalisation to make profit – but there are actors who are framing them as two sides of the same coin. This framing of international higher education is reinforced by some universities. An interviewee said that since the public funding is reducing almost everywhere in the world, including in their country, universities need international students not just for social or societal purposes, but also because they need financial resources:

> Cultural benefits … is for me the driving force in doing this … but it's also money. I think what is happening, the competition is getting tougher especially in the last, well probably in the last 3 to 5 years, it [higher education] is becoming a lot more competitive so it's commercialising a lot more (Interview N11, representative of public university, small Western European country, interview conducted on 27.05.2014).

Zgaga's discussion on the difference between globalism and globalisation is perhaps useful here to understand why there is an acceptance and normalisation of the economic rationale and what might be its potential danger. Employing Beck's work (Beck, 2000), Zgaga argues that globalism as an ideology is supplanting globalisation as a process. Consequently, the belief in the market has trumped political struggle and action. This possibly endangers the aim of education to cater for 'the better world' and reduces the multiple purposes of higher education to the economic one (Zgaga, 2017; Zgaga & Fink-Hafner, 2020).

10.5 Universities and States as Competitive Agents

In the past, universities would come to NAFSA event on their own and later in networks. The motivation was primarily to share experience and to network for cooperation. As the economic rationale of student mobility grew (Kehm, 2005) and the share of internationally mobile students became a competitive indicator for countries in the knowledge economy (Geddie, 2015), this resulted in a change of participation and organisation of NAFSA event. Consequently, countries got involved financially, organisationally and representationally in attending the NAFSA expo. Often it is not just those parts of government or state agencies responsible for education but those responsible for trade or international affairs. In addition, regional authorities started attending as well, such as the EU and Education USA. In NAFSA event 2014, the biggest exhibition booths belonged to country representations that were in most cases organised and financially supported by national agencies. Universities from respective countries participated in their national booth. This brought a notable change in what is being promoted, branded and 'sold'. It is not anymore just higher education institutions but about the national higher education space and the national culture.

The expo allows targeted displaying, which can be indicative of changing economic and political relations. For example, Sweden, which used to share a booth with other Scandinavian countries in the past, started to have its own booth when the government decided to charge tuition fees for international students. This changed how Sweden represents itself at the NAFSA event and how it has intensified its promotional activities due to the national aim of attracting more international students for financial purposes.

This rescaling of the governance, representation and promotion has cultural, economic and political elements at work. Culturally, it means rescaling what counts as the higher education sector. It is not anymore about universities, but about national and regional cultures at large. In addition, an important part of the cultural element

is meaning making. The question here is what work does this rescaling do for the idea of higher education. Actors who have entered the field and work at different scales contribute to the remaking of the meaning. For example, the British Council organised a meeting just before the NAFSA event, which was entitled 'market briefing' and was organised for the British participants of the NAFSA event. British Council presented data on 'market shares' in international higher education, which referred to the percentage of international students per country of study. The idea was that countries compete in taking the biggest possible share of globally mobile students. The meeting aimed to support the UK participants of NAFSA to increase the British global share. In this sense, it is clear that some countries and universities are marketising their higher education systems and take the international higher education sector as a global industry.

States do not support only their universities to attend the NAFSA exhibition, but some subsidise private companies too (for example, Spain). Some of them include their national higher education systems into more extensive national promotional campaigns showcasing the country as a space in which to invest together with other sectors like tourism (for example, New Zealand). Countries and universities in this way cooperate in valuing higher education as an economic sector with different services or products as commodities. Also, private companies provide expertise and solutions (products and services) to support the national strategies. The fact that ministries of foreign affairs and trade got involved means that higher education is seen as an economic sector and also relevant for countries' international relations.

On the other hand, sometimes universities feel the need for investing in distinction too. For example, one university from a small Western European country had a separate booth from its national representation because it felt that the national representation tended to promote the country destination as a fun place, full of parties and leisure activities for students. However, this university aimed to attract top students and staff and form relationships with the best universities around the world. It thus wanted to portray the image of being a more 'serious' academic institution. This is representative of diverse motivations and identities that are present in competing over international students.

What is being promoted from universities and countries is a brand, image, reputation, culture, and symbolic value. NAFSA event reveals how actors frame value in monetary form, but also in social, situational, appreciative, technical, and use forms. Similar complex interplay was also found at events in other sectors that are intensive in cultural and symbolic values, such as book fairs (Moeran, 2011). National space, culture and image is something that helps to bring value. For example, the 'Britishness' or 'German-ness' can be something that can be well capitalised by British or German universities and the national campaign in general. These symbolic values get used in different ways by respective universities to form partnerships with other universities and actors and to attract international students.

10.6 Social Relations at NAFSA

I now move to study the nuts and bolts of enacting policy on the ground. All of the interviewees reported that the most important benefit of attending the NAFSA event is relationship building and networking. They work on this through planned appointments and coincidental meetings, formal and informal encounters, during the day and evenings, at parties and other social opportunities. The interviewees reported that being present in person helps build relationships, be it business or other types of partnership. The global buzz allows participants to place themselves strategically and to construct attention aligned with their resources. These are of various kind. The financial resources for, example, enable actors to pay for hosting a party or hand out gifts. The human resources work in the sense of congenial personalities who are good speakers, nice to be around and can portray an attractive image. Achieving aims highly depends on the delicateness of personal relations and social links and ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Therefore, actors who are better able to invest in people and resources for establishing social and personal relations are more capable of advancing their goals and are consequently more powerful. Through these personal relations, actors work to (re)define the meaning and value of higher education – framing commodities and constructing markets. They strategically compete and advance their goals as allowed by the structure of power relations and capabilities.

Participants are using multiple social opportunities for their presence. The institutional setting of the NAFSA event and the global buzz allows intensive communicative processes and opportunities for meetings of different kinds (business, promotion, leisure or other) without the need to exhibit and openly showcase one's products or services. For example, an interviewee from a private company reported that she does not have an exhibition booth and does not have time to attend the conference sessions. Her agenda is fully scheduled with dozens of meetings every day, which are combined with attending receptions and parties. Her strategy was to have face to face meetings, nourish existing and establish new contacts, do social networking, and promote herself. This is not an unusual strategy at the event. Thus, social encounters are multiple, overlapping and slightly hidden as not everything is part of the exhibition and the public eye. In this respect, actors are social entrepreneurs who use any available means of the global buzz – multiple opportunities for encounters and using their networks of strong and weak ties to connect with others (Granovetter, 1973).

Furthermore, mobility of staff does essential work in blurring the boundaries of the sector. There were numerous examples of individuals working for private companies who previously worked for universities or state agencies such as the British Council or DAAD from Germany. This not only affects such companies' capacity, which is not the topic of this chapter, but also the workings of the global buzz. Those people are known among universities as insiders to the higher education sector and now represent private companies. This creates trust and eases relationship building (J. Komljenovic, 2019). The higher education community is seen as closed, and

when one of the 'members' steps out and is now representing someone external, the same person embodies both identities. Such moves do cultural work in re-shifting perceptions; and consequently practices of the sector – a finding also reported by Ball (Ball, 2007, 2012) and Leys (Leys, 2003).

Besides the NAFSA official opening event, many actors organise their own receptions, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and parties. Interestingly, the most famous parties were hosted by countries as actors. Turkey and Brazil organised the two most notable parties. These two parties were already famous from previous years, and there was a rumour among thousands of participants that these parties are 'places to be'. Turkey and Brazil were aware of this reputation and worked hard to keep it by intensive promotion. The rumour and the buzz attracted people to their exhibition booths as they were handing out stickers to people, which acted as invitations. On the one hand, people were chatting with representatives at those booths, and consequently, information about those countries and their higher education initiatives got widely shared. On the other hand, this was a snowball promotion of their parties as people were wearing stickers on their name tags. The stickers often acted as a conversation starter among individuals. It was not uncommon that a conversation among strangers started with 'I see you are going to the Turkish party'. Not everybody could attend these parties as space is somewhat restricted (venues normally cannot host 10.000 people). Consequently, people rushed to those expo booths to collect the stickers before organisers ran out of them.

At those parties, there were VIP spaces to which access was further restricted. They would be reserved either for important partners or influential individuals depending on the organiser's aims and strategic goals. These VIP guests were either representative of universities, state or regional authorities or companies. Other countries organised events too. For example, DAAD from Germany had a different approach in cooperation with the Austrian and Swiss national agencies. Their reception was not much of a spectacle in comparison to other big parties. It was also aimed at hosting existing partners and not attracting the attention of the wider audience. These are all different forms in which various aims and strategies analysed by Zgaga at the macro level were enacted at the micro-level at the event.

10.7 Private Actors at NAFSA and Resectoralising Higher Education

With the expansion of the economic view of student mobility, as well as marketising higher education more broadly, private actors not only entered the higher education sector but became key agents (Komljenovic, 2019; Robertson & Komljenovic, 2016). The NAFSA event gave opportunities to private actors for expanding their markets and normalising their products and services. The social relations and opportunities of the global buzz allow multiple possibilities for market innovation and intentional and non-intentional learning.

Private companies aimed to extend their markets at the NAFSA event. The global buzz of the event allows many possibilities for actors to strategically frame and reframe themselves as market actors and/or marketising agencies in line with their goals and motivations. The most common trend is that private companies tend to frame themselves as experts in the higher education field. With becoming recognised and appreciated in the sector, they can then sell advice, information, solution, and products. They do this in several ways: i. how they present themselves at the exhibition (the booths give the image of them being knowledgeable about what is going on and able to cater for advice and solve problems), ii. they present at the conference sessions providing information about the sector or solutions to problems, iii. They use universities to communicate to other universities about their products and services, iv. they use epistemic communities of universities to start recognising companies as actors working in the sector. For example, one of the interviewees says:

> for me it is really important that people see me as a colleague and not as a provider of services in a weird way … So that is part of why I present. I feel like it helps to have me be part of the community (Interview N16, representative of a private company, interview conducted on 27.05.2014).

Private companies also use the conference part of the NAFSA event to present at sessions and make themselves seen as experts in the field – such is an example of IDP presenting 'International Student Buyer Behaviour Research 2013'. These actors are not directly selling their services when they present. Instead, they are framing their contribution as 'knowledge sharing' or 'contributing to the sector'. These presentations offer solutions and advice. The suggested advice is often reflecting services or products that presenting companies sell to universities. Selling in such indirect ways helps to form economic relation, but in a non-intrusive and non-threatening way, which is and is politically benign. The cultural process of meaning-making and valuing at work here is a social process in which actors struggle for recognition.

Often universities themselves invite companies to present products. Such was an example of a company called Terra Dotta that makes and sells software for universities. Two friends who were students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill created a solution for their university's study abroad office and created the company about 25 years before the event. Their university later invited them to present this solution at the NAFSA event as part of this university's sharing of its practice. This was a sort of launch of their product to the bigger audience and the beginning of their business (Interview N3, Brandon Lee from Terra Dotta, interview conducted on 27.05.2014). The company, in time, sophisticated its original product, created other products, and expanded its market to work with universities around the world.

Actors are also using institutional setting created by NAFSA, such as the classification of exhibitors in the catalogue. For example, companies selling different services or products are classified as doing research or as doing intercultural publications or programmes. Thus, they strategically communicate the image that they

do not just sell services but are also doing cultural work or creating and sharing knowledge.

Another noticeable trend in how private companies act as marketising agencies is that they become members of NAFSA structures (such as committees), which again helps them gain credibility and reputation. They also offer webinars or other educational materials through the NAFSA platform. Some interviewees expressed this as their specific strategy to get their position into the sector and thus rework its boundary. They see NAFSA, which practitioners historically formed from universities, as an organisation that universities still trust and thus a lucrative platform to be seen in and be part of. This also helps them to negotiate contacts with potential clients. One of the interviewees reported that someone from one of the universities set up a business meeting at the NAFSA event because he saw her at one of the webinars on the NAFSA platform.

We see from above that the three markets framings (commodities, agents and encounters) are all very much social processes (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010). They are particularly relevant for the higher education sector. Interviewees from private companies consistently reported that higher education is a particular sector. It is a closed community; universities trust each other and share advice, word of mouth travels fast. They are sceptical towards private actor or 'outsiders'. Therefore, reworking the boundaries of the sector, becoming embedded in the social networks, and gaining trust are key market-making processes in higher education (J. Komljenovic, 2019).

10.8 Conclusion

At the beginning of this article, I argued that Zgaga's work on higher education internationalisation and European policy foregrounds three key dichotomies and struggles. Those tackle competition versus cooperation, economic versus other rationales for student mobility, and the power struggles between various actors over practices, norms and meanings. My analysis of the NAFSA event complements his work by revealing that policy enactment at global events frames the internationalisation of higher education in increasingly competitive ways. Multiple consequences work relationally across scales and actors. They include:

(i) creating new tasks that universities are incorporating in their administration (promote, market and brand themselves),
(ii) un-bundling universities operation (a lot of these tasks are outsourced to private companies or done in partnership with them),
(iii) creating new relations in the sector (potential students are in a relationship with private companies, e.g., recruitment agents or online platforms, for considering where to study and not with universities; or students rely on private companies for study support),
(iv) creating new products and services to support those markets and new commodities, thus creating many new financial opportunities for different actors,

(v) tying higher education to national and regional cultures in new economic ways.

These processes are for sure connected to globalisation and the neoliberal project (even though not only those), but the agency lies with the multiplex of actors, including new ones that managed to penetrate the sector strategically.

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Chapter 11
The Diffusion of Higher Education Reforms from the Global North. The Case of Sub-Saharan Africa

Sintayehu Kassaye Alemu

Abstract Globalization has caused various reforms in higher education. The reforms that originated from the Global North have been diffused into the rest of the world – the Global South – in different ways. Sub-Saharan African higher education has also undergone reforms. Historically, colonialism and the 'external dimension' of the Bologna Process have played an important role in the reforms of higher education in Africa. This chapter addresses the reform processes in Africa in respect to the interplay between internal and external influences. The main argument is that the colonially incepted higher education institutions in sub-Sahara African have been adopting higher education reforms that have worsened the underdevelopment of higher education in Africa.

Keywords Higher education reforms · Sub-Saharan Africa · Policy diffusion · External dimension of the Bologna Process

11.1 Introduction

Since the second half of the twentieth century, Western national governments have been making significant reforms to their public sectors including higher education. Fullan and Scott (2009) describe the decades after the Second World War as characterized by major "change forces" that have affected the public sectors including higher education, including resource scarcity, information technology, global warming, political divisions, and 'exit of baby boomers.' Castells (2001) has linked the change forces to the period of industrialization and the subsequent developments. The rise of knowledge society and the economic sectors' demand for massive and specialized labor force have necessitated new mode of production, services,

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relations, and distribution systems. This has had profound effects on higher education. Higher education institutions, particularly research universities, underwent rapid and complex transformation in their mission, function, structure, enrollment, funding, management, and so on. Higher education naturally received high priority as instrument of economic growth. Higher education institutions were perceived as tools of socio-economic development and political transformation to fulfill the role of training professionals, promoting access, extending the frontiers of knowledge, and serving national economy. These change forces have brought "radical and fundamental change to the traditional structure and social perception of higher education and its mission" (Zgaga et al., 2015:14). Higher education institutions and universities entered into the economic principles of social and private rate of return and began to calculate education cost effectiveness and cost benefit analysis (Teixeira & Dill, 2011). Western globalization and neoliberal lines provide many things including curriculum, system, and academic staff, in which host institutions fail under "neocolonialism" or new form of coloniality that marginalizes local academic dimensions (Altbach, 2011). The changes and developments accentuated unequal competition, a scenario in which higher education institutions in developing countries were not fully prepared and competent.

African higher education has been impacted by these developments in the Global North. Even though each higher education system in Africa has its own peculiarities, it has been unable to escape from the policies and reforms diffused from the Global North. Since the colonial period, higher education in Africa did not rupture its umbilical cord that had been established with colonial powers. The relationships that had been established during the colonial period continued after the so-called 'post-colonial' period through aids (technical and financial) and diffusion of reforms and policies. Colonial metropolitan higher education institutions have opened branch campuses in Africa that had become the footings for the modern higher education systems in many countries of Africa. From these perspectives, higher education in Africa has established historical relations with the outside world. In the 'post-colonial' times, the Bologna Process, individual European states, national, regional, and international organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, EU, OECD, UNO, AU, and SIDA have been playing significant role in the process of aid and reform diffusion and policy transfer into Africa.

Decolonization did little to weaken the economic and epistemic hegemonies of the western world in Africa. After political independence, particularly the Structural Adjustment Programs have negatively impacted both African economies and the higher education institutions. Higher education in Africa also suffered from the so-called "best practice" catchphrase of policy copying and 'policy advise' without sufficiently contextualizing this advice to the needs, interests, and values of the African society. Internal socio-economic, cultural, and political problems are also strong enough to undermine higher education development in Africa. External and internal problems forced African scholars to succumb to the brain drain of migration to better conditions at home or abroad. Euro-American academic paradigms overwhelmingly continue to shape African scholarships, preoccupations, and perspectives.

11.2 African Higher Education: Colonial Influences

Around 55 independent countries make the continent of Africa. In 2013, the population of Africa was estimated 1.033 billion people. It is projected to be 1.2 billion and 2 billion by 2025 and 2050, respectively (AFIDEP, 2012). Agriculture is the major economic sector of the region that employs 60% of the region's workforce (Teklu, 2008; Cloete et al., 2015). By 2004, higher education institutions that fulfill the criteria of a university on the African continent were no more than 300 (Damtew & Altbach, 2004; Teklu, 2008). By 2015, Africa has created nearly 2000 public and private higher education institutions (MacGregor, 2016).

Even though, higher education systems in Africa exhibited differentiation in many respects, they have been caught in dependence trap (Assie-Lumumba, 2006) and followed path dependency (de Vries & Álvarez-Mendiola, 2015) in their expansion and development. Dependency theory, according to Assie-Lumumba (2006), refers to the intention of the centre to maintain continued and sustained development at the expense of the periphery. According to Altbach (1977), there are three major types of dependency namely, 'normal' dependency, 'centre-periphery' dependency, and 'neo-colonial' dependency. The 'normal' dependency situation is a form of historical relations where industrial countries are ahead of the developing world in the socio-economic, political and military domains. Hence, it is also ahead in education particularly in research, publication, and educational facilities. Due to this fact, the industrial world is 'aiding' the developing countries. 'Centre-periphery' dependency relations exist between and within countries. The 'centres' are the best furnished higher education systems, mainly situated in the industrialized world, that have controlled the distribution of wealth and knowledge. The 'peripheries' are dependents of the centre for resources. In the 'neo-colonial' dependency relations, the industrial world consciously imposes policies to maintain its influence on the developing countries. The expansion and development of higher education in Africa depend on the financial and technical assistance and policy support from the Global North. From this perspective, African academic and political leaders and policy makers have limited power to produce and implement indigenous policies; they rather accept and adopt policy advice from the industrial world through technical advisers, experts of international organizations and aid agents (Assie-Lumumba, 2006; Mazuri, 1975).

Almost all African universities have adopted the Western model of modern university. The pattern of development of modern universities in Africa was modeled after the British or French universities. During the colonial period, higher education institutions in Africa were established as branch campuses of universities in the colonial country. For instance, in 1922, Uganda Technical School, (the later Uganda Technical College) was established. In 1949, the college had become a branch of the University College of the University of London. The college had become the only college providing university education in East Africa until the early 1950s. In 1956, the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi, Kenya. The absence of any local university in Tanzania, until 1961, has led to the establishment of the University

College of Dar es Salaam as a college of the University of London with 14 students. In 1963, the University of East Africa was created constituting colleges in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Kampala (Nyaigotti-Chacha, 2004). The University of East Africa offered programs and degrees from the University of London until 1966. The dissolution of the University of East Africa in 1970 led to the birth of the first three autonomous public universities: Universities of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Makerere, and Nairobi in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya respectively (Sanga, 2012).

> The history of the modern African University, as it is now known, can be traced back to the period between 1930 and 1960, when the few African western-educated elite, who saw European education as a strong tool to fight against colonialism, demanded the creation of European systems of education in Africa firmly believing that anything that was good for the Europeans was also good for the Africans. Most of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa eventually had universities created (Mohamedbhai, 2008:2).

Because of these historical dependencies of varying degrees and intensity, higher education institutions in Africa share common and interconnected challenges. The common challenges include financial austerity and lack of capacity to diversify funding sources; shortage of qualified faculty and poor faculty development; poor, unstable, and ineffective governance; and problems of quality, equity, and relevance in curriculum. Frail research productivity, innovation, facilities, and brain drain are other common problems higher education in Africa shares. Higher education systems in Africa also face poor physical facilities and infrastructure (Sy Habib, 2003; Damtew & Altbach, 2004; Sichone, 2006; Teichler, 2004; Knight, 2013). The unequal competition caused by globalization and internationalization has further complicated the challenges of higher education in Africa (Sy Habib, 2003; Altbach, 2004).

Most modern African higher education has been given threefold challenging responsibility. First, at independence, African universities were viewed as human capital producing industries that could replace the colonial personnel. In this regard, there was a need to expand the higher education system, both in numbers and in academic fields. Second, the 'new' universities in Africa were expected to adopt the best of the past tradition of academia and research for universal knowledge and truth to respond to the real problems, needs, and aspirations of the new nations (Eshiwani, 1999). Third, universities in Africa were seen as the driving forces for African economic development. However, apart from providing high level manpower for both the public and private sector, it is hard to find concrete examples of universities in Africa playing a leading role in the development of the economies of their countries (Altbach & Peterson, 1999).

The reasons for these intricate challenges and inefficiencies are both external and internal to the African countries. Externally, the colonial economic policy had based Africa on primary economic activities (as raw material exporter). Moreover, national, regional, and international aid providers and technical experts had influenced reforms and policy paradigms through aids and policy advice. The higher education sector has experienced uncoordinated expansion amid decaying

infrastructure, deteriorating working conditions, low staff morale, worsening academic quality standards, staggering budgetary deficits, all compounded with phenomenal enrolment increases and the continuing devastating impacts of the historic brain drain phenomenon (Sawyerr, 2004). All these were partly consequences of financial neglect of higher education in the 1980s and 1990s. This neglect of universities in Africa was the result of World Bank's polices in the region which were based on the assumption that higher education in sub-Saharan Africa played no significant role on social equity, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Higher education in Africa was seen as a costly luxury (Hinchliffe, 1985; Psacharopoulos, 1981). Consequently, the World Bank had proposed the closure of universities in Africa (Woodhall, 2003).

The external pressures and influences of the colonial and 'post-colonial' periods have resulted in economic underdevelopment in Africa. Higher education was no exception. The economic underdevelopment had triggered political instability. Hence, internally, Africa is suffering from wars, lack of democracy, financial austerity, instable and inefficient governance, and unsuitable reforms and policies.

Universities in Africa have been struggling to perform their basic functions amidst all these internal and external challenges. They are ineffective and alienated from their society because they were not designed to be indigenous. With varying degrees of intensity, most of the challenges have persisted into the twenty-first century with adverse effects on higher education. This has been further complicated by the phenomena of globalization such as massification, equity and access, brain drain and so on.

Research, which is one of the principal missions of universities and an important factor for development, remained at low level in most universities in Africa, inter alia, due to lack of funds and facilities. Poor research productivity and quality, and lack of relevance have reduced the ability of universities to contribute to the development of the region. All these sustained the dependency of Africa on the Global North. Consequently, African higher education remained peripheral and in vicious circle of underdevelopment.

With much delay higher education has been identified and recognized as a significant driver in facilitating Africa's development process (NEPAD, 2005). However, higher education in Africa has been grappling over the decades to respond to increasing demands with meager resources, inadequate capacity, and a history of neglect. The sector has also suffered from inadequate funding, weak, unstable, and inefficient governance and leadership, low quality of academic programs, and stifled academic freedom (Mohamedbhai, 2003; Sawyerr, 2004). These challenges require urgent intervention if the sector is to play a meaningful role in the development of society. Moreover, the colonial models are outdated and no longer valid in a rapidly changing and globalized world. Hence, universities in Africa must strive to create new paradigms in order to respond to the numerous socioeconomic challenges of the twenty-first century (Altbach & Peterson, 1999).

11.3 African Higher Education Reforms: The Influences of the Bologna Process

It is impossible to discuss reforms of higher education in Africa without looking into reforms of higher education in Europe. European higher education has been undergoing more substantial change than any region. Since the 1990s, European higher education systems have carried out political reforms that has largely shouldered on two key developments of the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and European Union's Lisbon Strategy of 2000. The general objective[1] of the Bologna Declaration is to make the European higher education systems more competitive and attractive; while the Lisbon Strategy is seeking "to reform the continent's still fragmented higher education systems into a more powerful and more integrated, knowledge-based economy" (Enders et al., 2011:1). Following consecutive communiqués, European higher education reformed study programs into three-cycle 'bachelor-master-doctorate' structure. Comparability concerns necessitated common quality assurance and accreditation frameworks and mutual degree recognition. The higher education reform has resulted in 'silent revolution' towards more convergence in Europe (Enders et al., 2011).

Even though, the founding signatories of the Bologna Declaration committed to an "Europeanization" of European higher education systems, the Bologna Process has an extended impact on higher education reform in countries and regions as far as Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa. The Bologna Process emerged not only as a recognition and mobility vehicle within and between EHEA member states, but also as a model for change in other countries and regions of the world from which lessons can be learned, templates borrowed and ideas exchanged (Scott, 2012). Through the Bologna Process external dimension, national, regional, and international agents, the higher education reforms have been diffused from Europe to the rest of the world. After many centuries of colonial imposition, a new "Euromodel" has emerged to influence higher education systems around the world through cross-border "cooperation," "partnership" and "exchange". The pattern of the Bologna process beyond Europe has taken place in two distinct ways: Some countries piloted aspects of the Bologna tools such as the Diploma Supplement and the harmonization of quality assessment procedures on an 'a-la carte' basis, while others adopted it wholesale in restructuring their higher education in terms of the three-cycle Bologna model (Clark, 2007; EACEA, 2015).

Since the twentieth century, the European experience of the Bologna Process is beginning to emerge on the radars of education reformers in the African region as a potential model for reform and increased regional cooperation (Alemu, 2019). The

[1] Generally, the Bologna Process was intended to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Specifically, it had the objective of adopting a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; establishing a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); promoting the mobility of students and researchers; ensuring European cooperation in quality assurance; and introducing a European dimension into higher education (Emnet et al., 2015).

Bologna model has been considered in terms of curriculum reform, quality assurance and accreditation, mobility, recognition and joint degrees, professional master's degrees and doctoral programs. Following the footsteps of Europe and its reforms, in recent years, higher education in Africa has undergone unprecedented transformation, including phenomenal expansion of the sector in terms of numbers and diversity of institutions and academic programs, rapid growth in enrolments, development of quality assurance frameworks, and enhancement of institutional governance, among other things (Jowi et al., n.d.). For instance, the ex-French colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia focused on developing curricula for new Licence, Master, Doctorat (LMD) style of programs in a range of academic disciplines (Crosier & Parverva, 2013). In July 2007, a conference was convened in the Democratic Republic of Congo to discuss about the future of Universities in Africa. The conference finally decided to adopt the Bologna Process. The conference discussed ways in which universities in Africa can learn lessons from the Bologna process to build cooperative international relationships (Clark, 2007). Many higher education systems in Africa, Ethiopia included, have introduced European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), modular teaching system, and a three-year bachelor and two-year master's programs.

The African Union had advocated the adoption of the Bologna Process in Africa. In 2016, the African Union published the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 (CESA 16–25). A new form of continental collaborative initiative has emerged around the challenges of promoting higher education harmonization and standardization and quality assurance in Africa. The strategy states that 'harmonized education and training systems are essential for the realization of Intra Africa mobility and academic integration through regional cooperation (Zygierewicz, 2019:3).

11.3.1 Harmonization Strategy in Africa

Harmonization refers to the coordination of educational programs that have agreements on minimum academic standards and ensure equivalence and comparability of qualifications between countries and within higher education system. It might include synchronizing of credit systems, quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation, recognition of qualifications, quality control, and language uniformity (Emnet, 2013). The general purpose of harmonization is to facilitate comparability and compatibility of qualifications across the regional higher education arena and to enrich and broaden employability. Such harmonization purpose requires the establishment of regional regulatory mechanisms and the creation of common values, and above all resources (Hoosen et al., 2009).

The African Union (AU) has developed a framework to harmonize the higher educational system in the continent. Woldetensae (2009:3), on the basis of the AU policy document, partly describes harmonization as

> the agreement, synchronization and coordination of higher education provision…whilst developing and agreeing to minimum standards and ensuring equivalency and comparability of qualifications between and within countries…to enhance quality across the sector and facilitate processes that lead higher education systems to be able to inter-operate more effectively to the benefit of development.

Even though Africa had started higher education cooperation since the 1960s, it has been since 2007 that the main issues of harmonization of higher education in Africa have been initiated. Historically, in the 1960s, Africans have tried to establish collaboration and cooperation forums for their higher education systems. Some of these initiatives include the 1960 Regional Conference of University Leaders in Khartoum (Sudan) and its subsequent document on inter-African cooperation in higher education development. The 1961 and 1962 Addis Ababa and Madagascar conferences of African ministers of education respectively had produced a 20-year higher education development plan for Africa. In 1967 African ministers of education and university leaders met in Rabat (Morocco), and eventually led to the establishment of the Association of African Universities (AAU). The 1969 conference of university leaders in Kinshasa (Congo) and the 1972 workshop in Accra (Ghana) discussed the formation of an African University (Lulat, 2003). The other initiative was the Arusha (Tanzania) Convention adopted in 1981. The Convention provides a legal framework for the recognition of studies and degrees of higher education in Africa. It was intended to promote cooperation among the higher education of African countries. It adopted criteria that guarantee the comparability of credits, subjects of study and certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other qualifications (UNESCO, 1981). But none of these initiatives have produced concrete result towards harmonization.

In 2007, the African Union Commission had developed the African Higher Education Harmonization Strategy to facilitate mutual recognition of academic qualifications and enhance intra-African academic mobility. The African Higher Education Harmonization Strategy document was endorsed by the third Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) in 2007. African higher education ministers also started meeting every 2 years to evaluate the progress of the harmonization process (AUC, 2007). The Mombasa (Kenya) Communiqué of 2009 or the COMEDAF IV urged the implementation of African Quality Rating Mechanisms. It also endorsed the adoption of a database of all agencies and institutions working on education in Africa to speed up operationalization of an African Cluster of Education Development. The Abuja (Nigeria) Communiqué of 2012 or COMEDAF V discussed the implementation process of the harmonization strategy, including the formation of the Pan-African University (Emnet et al., 2015). Six principles are considered as the ideological foundations for the Higher Education Harmonization Strategy of Africa. This includes making the process African-driven; establishing true and mutual partnership among key players; enhancing appropriate infrastructural and financial support; involving the mobilization of all stakeholders (Government, institutions, civil society, and the private sector); improving national educational systems and programs; and developing quality in each country. Even though the African Higher Education Harmonization Strategy document clearly

stipulates the principles of the process, there is no indication as to how these principles should be operationalized (AUC, 2007).

The process and document terminologies used in the Higher Education Harmonization Strategy of Africa are similar to that of the Bologna Process. The strategy has been conceived and prepared after the Organization of African Unity had become African Union, following the example of the European Union. Following the example of the Bologna Process, different communiqués were also carried out in Africa. However, unlike in Africa, Europe tried to harmonize and integrate academic standards after the formation of the European Union and on a better ground of experiences.

11.3.2 Quality Assurance Mechanism and Accreditation in Africa

The Association of African Universities launched the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) in 2009. The idea of quality assurance, academic evaluations and the basic mechanisms and benchmarks were copied from the Bologna Process. African experience in quality assurance initiatives took place along colonial and geographical lines. For instance, the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) quality assurance mechanism had been established by the francophone countries. The Inter-University Council for East Africa, which aims to ensure quality and to start promoting quality assurance systems in public and private higher education institutions, was established by the five East African countries. The Regional Qualification Framework of Southern African Development Community (SADC) came up with guidelines that set minimum standards for quality assurance in the region through the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA). The Association of Arab Universities and the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) set quality criteria for North African countries (Woldetensae, 2013; Westerheijden et al., 2010).

The AUC decided to establish a Continental Accreditation Agency for Higher Education to harmonize sub-regional and national quality standards toward a continent-wide framework (Woldetensae, 2013). To facilitate self-evaluation by institutions and programs, the African Quality Rating Mechanism and Accreditation (AQRM) system was introduced. It is designed to allow institutions to benchmark progress in quality development in higher education provision and research to achieve international standards that make them competitive in the global knowledge market (Woldetensae, 2009). Institutional quality standards focus on issues of governance and management, infrastructure, finances, research, publication, innovation, and societal engagement. Program-level standards, on the other hand, focus on program planning and management, curriculum development, and teaching and learning. Less than half of the African countries have established national quality assurance mechanisms (Shabani, 2013). However, most of them are not yet

operational because of lack of adequate funding, expertise, and institutional competence to realize.

11.4 Conclusion

Even though African higher education adopted basic reforms from the Global North, the North-South knowledge disparity has continued to prevail and even widened following the ineffectiveness of the reforms, unfair and unequal competition caused by globalization and internationalization.

The diffusion and effectiveness of reforms in the African higher education can be better understood in terms of path dependency. The historical genesis of creation, expansion and development have shaped the rules, regulations, decisions, and reform performances of the African higher education institutions. Consequently, higher education in Africa has continued to experience the ripple effects of the Bologna Process as evidenced by incremental and piecemeal reforms and policy initiatives to foster integration and harmonization with the goal of establishing a Pan-African University Space similar to the European Higher Education Area (Hahn & Dametew, 2013; Knight, 2012, 2013; Oanda, 2013). Although efforts of structural reforms to realize regional integration and harmonization of higher education systems in Africa were made; in reality, however, the effectiveness of change and reforms remains glacial due to complex challenges such as poor expertise, lack of policy contextualization, financial austerity, lack of commitment, and dependency. Africa has remained peripheral and dependent on the knowledge of the Global North and continues to experience marginalization because it is still lagging far behind in terms of public expenditure on research and development.

With the renewed recognition in the late 1990s and early 2000s of the role of higher education in Africa's development, there were calls to revitalize the sector through various initiatives, including international partnerships (Sawyerr, 2004). However, international partnerships and cooperation should be fair, balanced, and free from conditions or obligations if they are to serve development of African higher education institutions. The partnership arrangements should rectify the distortions and asymmetries embedded within the traditional 'problem-solving' and 'donor-recipient' approaches to international development (Gaillard, 1994; Velho, 2002). Majavu (2009) pessimistically concluded that as long as the international donors and actors continue to impose their interests on Africa through aid and 'policy advice', a socially responsible and autonomous African university will forever be "an elusive dream". African higher education institutions should be careful and vigilant of the politics of partnership, aid, and dependency. They should Africanize their higher education in terms of their own priorities, philosophy, culture, plan, policy, and action. Peripheral universities better avoid the pitfall of cloning the Western practices and wanting to become another Cambridge or University of California (Altbach & Peterson, 1999). They should be indigenized in many respects without totally rapturing their engagement in internationalization (Zgaga et al., 2015:14).

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Chapter 12
Reforms in Quality Assurance: A Response to Recent Challenges in a Transforming Higher Education Sector

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić

Abstract Higher education has been acknowledged by the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals as one of the drivers of change in a knowledge society. Yet, the sector is undergoing unprecedented changes and faces serious challenges. The chapter addresses these challenges in Europe and beyond: increasing demand (and inequality); different forms of diversification; digitalization and flexible learning pathways; internationalization in a world of growing populism; a return to basic values of higher education and, more recently, how to adapt to a global pandemic. The central role of quality assurance is emphasized and innovative developments in quality assurance in Europe and beyond are reviewed as a response to the demands of these increasing challenges.

Keywords Quality assurance · Higher education reforms · Diversification · Digitalization · Internationalization

12.1 Introduction

It is a great privilege to contribute to the Festschrift for Pavel Zgaga, a colleague and friend I have had recurrent encounters with during a time span of over quarter of a century. He never stopped being a key actor in shaping higher education developments in Europe and beyond, as a politician at national level, a policymaker at European level and just as significantly as a researcher and professor, inspiring and supporting a whole new generation of young thinkers.

We first interacted in Ljubljana in the mid-1990s while he was Vice-Minister for Higher Education of the newly independent Slovenia[1] and subsequently in the

[1] At the second joint meeting of the ENIC-NARIC networks, in 1995.

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different phases of the elaboration and adoption of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC). Zgaga was instrumental in the preparation of the text but in particular brilliantly co-chaired the Diplomatic Conference held at the Gulbenkian Foundation on April 11, 1997 together with his colleague, Secretary of State for Higher Education of Portugal, Pedro Lourtie, contributing to its successful adoption after skillfully handling the hundreds of amendments which were introduced over two days. Little did we know at that moment to what extent the LRC will have an impact on qualifications recognition practices in Europe and will guide developments in other parts of the world leading to the adoption of a Global Recognition Convention in 2019.

Zgaga was also a key figure in the creation of the European Higher Education Area, based on the 1999 Bologna Declaration, of which he was a signatory on behalf of the Slovenian government. He continued being a valued expert and one of the champions of the process which was rightly viewed as a unique regional higher education reform, embracing 49 countries. In addition to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and closely linked to them, one of the core objectives of the Bologna Declaration was the "*Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*".[2] The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched in 2010 at a conference, which we both attended. It was organized in Budapest and Vienna, with a train taking us from East to West, symbolically illustrating the unification of Europe. Yet, by that time, according to Zgaga (2011a) the European idea had already lost its momentum.

When we last met, by chance, in Madrid, both on our way by train to Toledo for the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the LRC in 2012, invited to speak as *grands témoins*, in the train ride we compared notes on what each of us would say. I said I would recall the very beginnings, the enthusiasm of Europe after the Fall of the Berlin Wall which brought together the Council of Europe and UNESCO to work together. Zgaga reflected that this suits him well as he will be critical of the present, the Euro crisis besetting the Europe of 2012, with its repercussions on higher education, echoing his comments mentioned in the previous paragraph.

This introduction would not be complete without giving a tribute to Zgaga's work not only as an actor in European reforms of higher education but also as a researcher and professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Ljubljana, in particular in the framework of Ljubljana University's Center for Educational Policy Studies which had an impact on educational theory, especially on educational reforms in the Western Balkans. I was fortunate to be part of a workshop titled "The Future of (European) Higher Education", held in Ankaran, a small Slovenian town by the sea. It was memorable by the themes discussed ranging from the diversification of higher education, globalization and internationalization, global higher education areas, university rankings, university autonomy, topics which continue to be

[2] The Bologna Declaration, 1999, proclaimed as one of its objectives "Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies".

at the forefront of higher education debates to this day, although in changed contexts. The greatest value of the gathering, however, was its relaxed atmosphere conducive to animated debates within a smaller group of young but knowledgeable, dynamic, and inspired researchers, mostly Zgaga's students or followers. With his knowledge and capacity, he inspired, supported, and guided them, focusing on comparative analyses of higher education systems in Europe, and in Southeast Europe or the Western Balkans, a focus of Zgaga's interests as well. Ten years later, these young people are researchers and academics at prestigious European and US universities, including the Editor of this volume.

Almost 10 years later, European higher education, including the Western Balkans, and higher education more globally are facing even greater crises: an internationalization threatened by nationalistic and populist trends; a breach of university autonomy in a number of countries; the impact of Brexit on universities and student exchanges and programmes; and more recently geo-political moves with a greater influence of China. Finally, the disruptions caused to higher education by the Covid-19 pandemic are yet again altering the nature of higher education cooperation and exchanges crossing borders.

12.2 Global Trends in Higher Education[3]

Pavel Zgaga, while being one of the actors within the Bologna Process, was also one of its respected and objective critics, among others of its the so-called external or global dimension making clear distinctions between competition, cooperation and partnerships (Zgaga, 2011a, b). Within this framework, this paper will focus on global trends in quality assurance, as a response to some of the trends in higher education transformations world-wide.

At the beginning of the millennium, higher education institutions have been called upon to innovate in their provision of learning to embrace ever larger numbers of students, and a greater diversity of learners, through different modes of delivery. The demand for higher education has continued to grow, especially in the global south, with estimates of global enrolments rising from 221 million in 2017 (UNESCO, 2018) to close to 600 million in 2040 (Calderon, 2018). Providing inclusive, equitable higher education for all in a lifelong perspective has also been one of the targets of the 2015 UN Sustainable Developments Goals, acknowledging higher education as an important element of development.

Will higher education continue being a driver of change in a knowledge society? The SDG 4 target is to ensure "equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" by 2030. Generally, a greater insistence on social equity and justice in higher education and

[3] Parts of this article are derived from a more comprehesive text "A New Generation of External Quality Assurance, Dynamics of Change and Innovative Approaches" (Uvalić-Trumbić & Martin, 2020, UNESCO/IIEP, Paris, in print).

a reminder of the importance of values in higher education is increasingly being highlighted by the global academic community within a crisis of trust in public institutions.

To what extent have these aspirations been attained? Although statistics demonstrate that the global higher education enrolment ratio (GER)[4] has increased to 38 per cent globally (UNESCO, 2018), up from 19 per cent in 2000, regional and national disparities persist. While the GER has increased in low and middle income countries among the richest percentile of the population, less than one percent of the poorest quintile are enrolled in higher education (UNESCO, 2017/2018). Furthermore, a very low number of countries around the world have in place policies to promote equitable access to higher education (Salmi, 2018).

Diversification of provision is one of the means to respond to widening access to higher education supported by some governments. These trends include privatization of higher education (especially in Africa) that some consider the fastest growing sector of higher education (Altbach et al., 2009). Other examples are internationalization of higher education, including cross-border provision (also called transnational education or franchises) when institutions and programmes, not only students, researchers, and staff cross borders[5] and competency-based education which takes into account prior learning and is based on students' mastery of knowledge rather than relying on time-based learning structures which revolve around credit hours and grades. Alternative ways of access to learning and flexible learning pathways are becoming the new norm and open and distance learning (ODL) becomes a prominent part of the diversification of higher education but also an important vector of internationalization, inclusion and widening access. ODL in different forms has come to the forefront during the Covid-19 pandemic when higher education institutions (HEIs) were forced to go online. Demographic and economic factors further exacerbate this diversification, with rapidly ageing populations and labour market requirements for new skills and competences. New shorter courses are becoming more common and digital certificates and badges are now being more widely accepted in the context of both new skills and competences needed by employers and the digitization of higher education.

Both massification and diversification of learning require quality provision. Hence, quality assurance is under constant pressure to change and adapt, not least, in the abrupt changes higher education had to face in times of emergency, demonstrated by the latest Covid-19 pandemic.

[4] GER is the percentage of the age cohort 18–22 enrolled in higher education.

[5] "Cross-border higher education includes higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programmed, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders" (UNESCO, 2005).

12.3 Internationalizing Quality Assurance: Emergence of a Global Model

The Bologna Process in Europe was an inspirational model for other world regions, with a noted trend towards the creation of regional higher education spaces. Regional higher education spaces gave a prominent place to quality assurance, in Europe through the development of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (2005, 2015) which would motivate the development of African Standards and Guidelines (2019). In Asia-Pacific, despite the fact that a formal regional higher education space, comparable to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) did not materialize, a regional approach to quality assurance was achieved by the strengthening of the Asia-Pacific QA network (APQN). In a recent survey, APQN leadership called fort the revision of the 2008 Chiba Principles – guidelines defining quality assurance in Asia-Pacific. The revision of these Principles is intended to take account the many changes in QA that have taken place in the past decade in the region.[6] In Latin America quality assurance is an important part and the ENLACES portal, as a transparency tool which collects information on institutional initiatives: commitments to quality assurance and accreditation, academic mobility, curriculum development, and lifelong learning.

The internationalization of quality assurance was also supported by international organizations and the 2005 UNESCO/OECD *Guidelines for Quality Provision in cross-border higher education,* laid down principles for linking qualifications recognition and quality assurance, greater stakeholder inclusion and cooperation, and partnerships between quality assurance processes of the sending and receiving countries, emphasizing the notion of cultural differences. Two years later, The Guidelines were included as part of the Global Strategy of the Bologna Process in the 2007 London Communiqué.[7]

Although a certain diversity of approaches and implementation modalities chosen by countries around the world are noted, several analysts have concluded on the emergence of a global model. Wells (2014) notes the convergence in approaches to QA. He states that QA practitioners are responding to a similar model of 'good practices' while implementation of these practices varies, in the diversified higher education landscape. And Salmi (2015, 2018) calls this a "quiet quality assurance revolution".

Lewis (2016, p. 47) identifies the five basic elements of this global model, as follows: a set of regulations and standards are produced by the QA agency; a

[6] In 2008, APQN released "Higher Education Quality Assurance Principles for the Asia Pacific Region" (Chiba Principles). (…). Ten years has passed and many changes have taken place during the decade: the prosperity of lifelong learning, the development of online learning (MOOCs), and the students' learning methods and others have laid new demands on education quality. Therefore, the Chiba Principles should also keep pace with the changes in higher education and make new revisions.

[7] http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2007_London_Communique_English_588697.pdf

self-evaluation report is prepared by the institution; a peer-group is appointed for the review of the institution or programme and reviews the self-evaluation report; a site visit by the peer group takes place; a report is published and in some cases the decision.

12.4 Student-Centered Approaches: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Despite the existence of a global generic model of quality assurance, to respond to criticism and to adapt to the constant transformation of the higher education sector, a number of new and more innovative approaches started being developed. As the focus of quality assurance shifts to teaching and learning, QA adopts more student-centered approaches. A student-centered approach places the student-learner at the heart of the of the teaching and learning process which is particularly significant for a greater diversity of learners. They are often discipline-based, setting student learning outcomes for certain professions, but can also be generic.

This approach was given international visibility by the OECD through the *Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes* (AHELO) project (2010–2012). It was discontinued in 2013 due to a lack of funding and disagreement about methodology. In Europe, the Tuning Academy launched a similar European project, *Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes* (CALOHEE) aimed at offering a Europe-wide framework to measure student achievements in a comparative way, across a range of disciplines.[8]

The assessment of learning outcomes and its links to national qualifications frameworks as a means of quality assurance gained a central place in Europe, as a core of the Bologna process and are integrated into the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines.[9] A number of countries around the world have introduced student learning outcomes in their QA approaches and they are relevant for a range of alternative and new providers and a greater diversity of learners in a lifelong learning perspective.

The Netherlands and Flanders Accreditation Organization (NVAO) offers a good example of including the assessment of learning outcomes in the EQA procedure for the assessments of study programmes. It includes a three-fold focus on learning outcomes: whether the programme's intended learning outcomes align with the

[8] https://www.calohee.eu/

[9] The EHEA Bucharest Communique (2012) reinforced this approach by the Ministers' commitment:

> To consolidate the EHEA, meaningful implementation of learning outcomes is needed. The development, understanding and practical use of learning outcomes is crucial to the success of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, recognition, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance – all of which are interdependent.

relevant qualifications framework and correlate with international requirements of the discipline and/or professional field; whether teaching and learning ensure that students are able to achieve the intended learning outcomes and whether the programme has an adequate system of student assessment which demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are realized (NVAO, 2016).

Outcomes-based assessments in QA represent a significant paradigm shift in quality assurance practice from inputs to outputs that responds to needs of innovation, comparability, recognition of qualifications and employability. They can be used for diverse purposes and different kinds of assessments.

12.5 Quality Assurance of Internationalization

More focused approaches to quality assessments are being developed to respond to priorities in higher education. Internationalization is one of them, promoted not only by institutional strategies but also by governmental policies aimed at attracting international students and academic staff. Internationalization is often reduced to student mobility which has grown substantially from 2 million in 2000 to over 4.8 million international students in 2016 (UNESCO, 2018). But internationalization goes far beyond mobility and includes developing international and inter-cultural curricula, providing teaching in a foreign language, organizing support for integration of foreign students on campus, or internationalization at home. Some question whether university rankings contribute to internationalization of higher education by creating an international pool of scholars (Economist, 2018). Zgaga gives the example of misconceptions of internationalization from the perspective of a small country: the Minister of Northern Macedonia inviting the Shanghai Jiao Tong Rankings to rank universities in this country (Zgaga, 2011a, b).

Geo-political factors are challenging the development of internationalization strategies, such as populism and nationalism and some researchers assert that the era of higher education internationalization as we have known it over a good number of years might no longer be the same (Altbach & de Wit, 2018). Two examples come from Hungary: the move of the Central European University from Budapest to Vienna in 2018, a prestigious international institution that has educated generations of students from Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and the recent news of the opening of a branch campus of Fudan University from Shanghai in Budapest, as the first cross-border institution from China placed in a European country. Both moves are consequences of Hungary's political decisions that are in conflict with proclaimed European values in higher education. Unfortunately, they are not isolated cases, as political decisions increasingly challenge university autonomy.

Overcoming such national challenges possibly lie in the recent European internationalisation project, the launch of the "European University" initiative in 2017, supported by the Bologna Process Ministers in 2018 as an integral and significant activity of the EHEA and financed by the EU Commission in its pilot phase. Two calls for pilot projects were launched resulting in 41 transnational university

alliances with 279 higher education institutions from 32 countries, as reported by the EUA[10] . One of the criteria for setting up the aliances was that they include HEIs from both the centre and the periphery of Europe.[11] Several universities from Slovenia and Croatia and one from Serbia are participating as members of these alliances.

Several international, regional and national organizations have developed internationalization assessment methodologies. The International Association of Universities, for instance, has instituted an IAU Learning Badge as part of its programme on International Strategic Services (IAS).

Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network, APQN has piloted a Quality Label with the overall objective to "support, develop, improve and enhance international excellence in HEIs and programs in this region (and) ...assess the internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific Region".[12] The Quality Label has developed a methodology for assessment and has been piloted at an institution in India, focused on internationalizing its curricula, its teaching and learning strategies and the support to foreign students.

Another example comes from the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). ECA has elaborated a *Guide to Assessing Internationalisation* which analyses the different aspects that contribute to internationalization in higher education. The Guide offers a basis for the deliverance of a *Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation* (CeQuInt), which focuses on the impact internationalization has on teaching and learning. The methodology is based on international and intercultural learning outcomes.

As a response to the European Universities NVAO, on behalf of the Flemish Community, is developing and coordinating a *European Approch for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (EUniQ).*[13] The concept of the EUniQ is to develop a framework to externally evaluate the respective alliances by one corresponding and suitable quality assurance agency instead of being subjected to multiple burdensome national procedures. This approach is presently being pilot-tested with some of the alliances. Higher education and quality assurance being national prerogatives, it is not yet clear how this approach will develop in the future but, if successful, it may provide innovative and lighter QA models to alleviate the costly and bureaucratic procedures presently in place.

[10] https://eua.eu/resources/news/535-european-universities-initiative-24-new-alliances-selected.html

[11] Universities from Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia are now part of these Alliances.

[12] https://www.apqn.org/apqr/ql/quality-label

[13] NVAO webiste: https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq

12.6 Quality Assurance and Open and Distance Learning

In order to meet demands for access, equity and inclusion in higher education, in the context of the overarching 2015 Sustainable Developments Goals but also increasingly of European policy guidelines (e.g., EHEA 2020 Rome Communiqué), providers are compelled to diversify. There has been a shift away from a traditional model of higher education provided and funded only by the state to one provided also by alternative, non-traditional providers. Private higher education, online and distance learning, cross-border education, digital shorter courses, competency-based education and a range of increasingly accepted flexible learning pathways are some examples of this diversification.

Among alternative providers, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is certainly the most prominent one and its evolution and diversity of modes constantly draws the attention of a wide range of stakeholders.

Stimulated by the lifelong learning perspective, according to which learning can take place anywhere and anytime, ODL has been developing fast. It has existed for many years and enrolls an increasing number of students. In the US alone, distance education enrolments have grown by 5.6 per cent from autumn 2015 to 2016 (Babson Report, 2018). And growth of enrolments is even faster in the developing world. Despite the perceptions prevailing in certain countries that ODL is of lower quality than face-to-face learning, it plays a crucial role in providing access to education for millions of people globally, particularly in the developing world (WENR, 2018).

Although distance education and open universities have existed for years, three main triggers caused a renewed attention to distance education and hence how to assess the quality of its provision.

The first one was the release by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) of some 100 of their courses free and online – the Open Courseware in 2001. This sparked an *Open Educational Resources* (OER) movement throughout the world. UNESCO coined the term in 2002 (UNESCO, 2002) and from a community of interest it grew into government led policy discussion culminating in an international commitment to OER by 193 governments in 2019 (UNESCO, 2018).

The second one was a decade later with new forms of e-learning, Massive *open online courses* (MOOCs). They started in North America (i.e., Canada and US), provided by online platforms such as Coursera and Udacity (commercial and for-profit), and edX (public and non-profit), the latter originating from MIT and Harvard. From North America, this movement will spread to Europe by the creation, a few years later, of the European MOOC Consortium consisting of FutureLearn, France Université Numérique, OpenupEd, Miriadix and EduOpen (EMC).

The third one was the abrupt and forced move to online learning during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic when remote learning became the new, sometimes the only mode of learning for millions of students worldwide.

Despite its growth and evolution, quality assurance of open and distance learning is a long-debated issue. A global study of quality models for ODL was carried out in 2015 by the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE). It recommended that e-learning quality "should be mainstreamed into traditional internal quality assurance" but also that quality assurance should address the emergence of non-traditional educational providers and digital learning (Ossiannilsson et al., 2015).

The European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) has been particularly proactive in developing, in close cooperation with ENQA, tools for assessing the quality of ODL such as the e-Xcellence[14] label which provides benchmarks, indicators and guidelines for strategic management, curriculum design, course design, course delivery, staff support and student support (Ubachs & Mulder, 2012). With the increase of shorter courses leading to microcredentials, the European Commission is in the process of developing a Micro Credential Framework proposing the award of academic credit based on student learning outcomes and qualifications frameworks.[15]

Many contest ODL as legitimate, considering it of lower quality than face-to face learning. Others recognize ODL as viable but insist that traditional QA practices should be applied to ODL. A great number of traditional HEIs have included blended learning as an integral part of their teaching and learning and the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated that blended learning may become the preferred mode of learning for a much larger proportion of learners around the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic challenged quality assurance evaluations which could no longer be conducted in presential form but were carried on virtually. In addition, by being forced to move online, often overnight and without adequate capacity-building, both the teaching staff and students needed adjustments with serious impacts on quality. Some lessons were learned.[16]

A multitude of webinars discussions concluded that challenges faced during the 2020–2021 disruption can offer a new opportunity for QA to be more open to innovation and change. It may well develop lighter approaches which will be less process-oriented, more efficient and will increasingly use the potential of online tools.

[14] E-xcellence Manual (2016).

[15] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/590161-EPP-1-2017-1-DE-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD

[16] See EQAF 2020, session on 'External quality assurance in times of emergency (https://eua.eu/events/72:2020-european-quality-assurance-forum.html).

12.7 QA of Digital Shorter Courses

Within the shift of focus to student-centered learning, student learning outcomes and development of skills and competences, an increase in shorter courses is on the rise as they are better adapted to acquiring skills and competences needed by the labour market. While a convergence of qualifications and quality assurance in higher education has been achieved internationally, a clear divergence in recognizing and assessing skills and competences acquired through shorter courses is noted (Van Damme, 2018). Such courses, often provided through the internet as massive open online courses (MOOCs) have spread and sometimes lead to certificates, more widely labelled as 'microcredentials'.

The term itself is confusing and often misleading as it refers to a very wide range of certificates as a result of different routes to learning. Thus, open badges, nano-degrees and MicroMasters, all fall under the generic umbrella of microcredentials, despite being outcomes of courses of different content, duration, and quality. Microcredentials and the terms used are often provided by the leading MOOC platforms. Thus, in the U.S. the Udacity platform uses "nano-degrees", the Ed-X "MicroMasters"[17] while Coursera uses "specializations".

In Europe, the European MOOCs Consortium[18] launched a Common Microcredentials Framework (CMF)[19] in 2019, accepting 'microcredentials' as a generic term within which microcredential courses are required to ensure the earning of academic credit. This way, the courses must be developed within the university's National Qualifications Frameworks and in line with the European Qualification Framework (EQF), which facilitates that qualifications be understandable across different countries and systems.

The term 'microcredentials' is more widely used in Europe, while authors in the US write about the proliferation of different Non Degree Credentials (NDCs), stemming from changing labour market needs, noting that in 2016, as many as 27 per cent adults in the United States were holders of an NDC. Based on a typology and conceptual framework for NDCs, the following elements for a quality framework for NDCs are suggested: Credential design; Competencies; Market Processes; Outcomes. The accumulation of competencies represented by credentials are expected to generate outcomes of value, typically in terms of the educational, employment, and social advancement of individuals, employers, and society (Van Noy, 2019).

[17] e.g. the MIT provides a series of MicroMaster online courses for a semester that can lead to a graduate degree.

[18] Consisting of European MOOC platforms: FutureLearn, France Université Numérique (FUN), OpenupED, Miriadax, EduOpen.

[19] Launch of CMF, accessible at https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/content/emc-launches-common-microcredential-framework

The lack of reliable quality assurance systems for digital credentialing is recognized on the global level as a serious threat to their credibility in addition to setting constrains on the flexibility of traditional degrees (UNESCO, 2018).

Some raise the question whether the traditional norms of quality assurance and accreditation can be effective for shorter term learning experiences resulting in microcredentials (van der Hijden, 2019). Van der Hijden proposes nine quality review types that could be adapted for this particular purpose: self-assessment; peer-review; benchmarking; external evaluation and audits; provider appreciation; employer appreciation; professional appreciation; crowd assessment and comparative assessment of learning outcomes.

Most recent discussions in Europe, supported, by the European Commission, are striving to develop a more systematic approach to shorter courses and microcredentials and their quality assurance and accreditation.

It is clear that microcredentials issued as a validation of shorter-term learning experiences are part of the new higher education trends globally and are likely to be on the rise. In terms of external quality assurance and accreditation processes, they are probably to be included in the assessment of student learning outcomes and linked to qualifications frameworks (and level descriptors).[20] Therefore, as quality assurance adapts to new developments, especially to more flexible learning pathways, it may find ways to use these particular tools for assessing quality of shorter learning experiences or develop a lighter different approach focused on the course itself.

12.8 Quality Assurance and Social Engagement

The 2015 SDGs, in the context of equity and inclusion, reaffirmed the principle of higher education as a public good and rekindled an issue of significance for the higher education sector, that of societal engagement. In Europe, the 2018 Paris Communiqué and previous policy documents called for reinforcing fundamental values such as social engagement, through political dialogue and cooperation.

Hazelkorn defines social engagement as "engaging in learning beyond the campus walls, discovery which is useful beyond the academic community, and service that directly benefits the public". She underlines that this implies a greater equality of access to learners – of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and talent, especially as people live longer and change jobs more often – and helps regain trust in public institutions (Hazelkorn, 2020). It is likely that quality assurance will develop approaches that will evaluate social engagement of HEIs. Some already exist. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has included monitoring societal engagement and impact in its audit manual. It monitors the existence of societal engagement and

[20] See UNESCO 2015, *Levelling and recognizing learning outcomes*, *the use of level descriptors in the twenty-first century*, Paris.

strategies for reaching those goals; it evaluates management support system to this effect and takes into account information based on the HEI's analysis of its operational environment to set the direction for its activities.

12.9 Conclusion

This paper tried to address the way quality assurance and accreditation have evolved in an effort to adapt to change by addressing transformations in higher education globally. It focuses on:

– the internationalization of quality assurance and the creation of a global quality assurance model;
– the paradigm shift of quality assurance from inputs to outputs with a focus on the assessment of student learning outcomes and their links to national qualifications frameworks;
– the evolution of open and distance learning and the developing quality assurance approaches to its new forms, shorter courses and digital credentials, and innovations to meet disruption such as Covid-19;
– evaluating the societal engagement of higher education institutions as an imperative to reinforce higher education as a public good, widen equality of access to all types of learners and rebuild trust in public institutions.

The global transformations in higher education inspiring changes in quality assurance are linked to Zgaga's contribution to policy and research relating to higher education reform, whether at the national level in Slovenia, sub-regional level in the Western Balkans, or European and international level as one of the champions of the Bologna process and its global dimension.

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Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić Following her service as Secretary-General of the Association of Universities of Yugoslavia, Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić began a 20-year career in UNESCO, working in its European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) in Bucharest before moving to Paris to lead its global work on higher education reform, innovation and quality assurance as Chief of Section for Higher Education. She has facilitated numerous international collaborative projects (e.g. the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross- border Higher Education, the UNESCO/World Bank Capacity-Building for Quality Assurance Initiative) and served as Executive Secretary to the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education. She is now member of the Advisory Council of CHEA's (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, USA) International Quality Group; member of the International Advisory Board of the Shanghai Jiao Tong Rankings of World Universities (ARWU) and consultant to UNESCO.

Chapter 13
Higher Education in Europe in the Context of Global Developments

Barbara M. Kehm

Abstract This chapter analyses how global issues and problems in higher education are reflected in the European higher education systems. The chapter starts from the premise that almost all forms of thinking and doing research about higher education are close to politics. But saying something about how global problems in higher education are reflected in the European higher education systems requires a selection or examples. After briefly defining globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education and clarifying how these three concepts are related to each other, the chapter focuses on six examples: migration, academic freedom, increasing marketization, competition and rankings, cooperation in higher education, and last but not least, higher education in times of the Corona pandemic.

Keywords Globalization · Global developments · European higher education · Marketization · Academic freedom

13.1 Introduction

Talking about Higher Education in Europe in the context of global developments is certainly no easy task. However, I want to start by briefly referring to my experiences of being a section editor in the International Encyclopaedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions which was recently published by Springer and to which Pavel Zgaga contributed as well (Teixeira & Shin, 2020). The ambition of the editors was to provide an account of the situation of the higher education systems in all 180 or so countries of the world. I have been involved in this project as the section editor for the "Western" countries covering all of geographical and geopolitical Europe as far East as the Ural plus the USA and Canada. For me that did not only imply to recruit authors for about 50 countries, edit their manuscripts, and take care that they would write about those topics which the editors had selected for

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the country reports. Actually, the most difficult task for me was to decide about the political and geo-political questions. Here a few examples: How should I deal with the island of Cyprus split into a Turkish and Greek part? Should I allow Kosovo, a region which is only recognised as a country or nation by some members of the United Nations and the European Union, an independent contribution? How could I persuade my Belgian author not just to write about Flanders but also about Wallonia, and my British author not just to write about England but also about Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland? And if I would allow two contributions for Belgium would that mean that the Basques and Catalans in Spain would demand their own articles? And finally, how should I decide whether the higher education system of Vatican City should belong into the encyclopaedia or rather all of the Holy Sea. I guess, you can imagine what problems I was faced with. With these few examples I want to demonstrate that almost all forms of thinking and doing research about higher education are close to politics. And therefore, I will not get around outing myself here and there. And if anyone knows this it is Pavel.

Thus, saying something about global and European developments in higher education necessarily requires a selection or working with examples. In the following I will do this. In my next section I will briefly say something about definitions of globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation which have been widely accepted in the field of higher education research. This is followed by six examples which I will use to clarify how these three concepts are related to each other. My examples are migration, academic freedom, increasing marketization, competition and rankings, cooperation in higher education, and last but not least my final example will be about the topic that is currently influencing our thinking about higher education very much: Higher education in times of the Corona pandemic. At the end of my chapter, I will draw some conclusions.

13.2 Globalisation and Europeanisation in Higher Education

Research on internationalisation in higher education has quite a long tradition in the field of higher education research (since about the mid-1960s). At first, this research saw internationalisation in higher education predominantly as mobility of students, a bit later also of teaching staff. In the meantime, dimensions of internationalisation in higher education have multiplied and, apart from student and staff mobility, now also comprise issues of international knowledge transfer, international research cooperation, internationalisation of curricula and internationalisation "at home" (see, for example, Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Teichler, 2007). The most renowned researchers who have specialised on issues of internationalisation in higher education are Jane Knight, Phil Altbach, Hans de Wit and Ulrich Teichler. Europeanisation is recognised as a regional variant of internationalisation. And while internationalisation is characterised by cross-border activities which nevertheless continue to recognise the existence of borders, globalisation is connected to the disintegration of borders and to a number of aspects linked to market

steering and commercial activities. The majority of universities tend to prefer to look at their activities in these respects as forms of internationalisation. However, there are also some universities which consider themselves as 'global players' and actors on a global market for higher education. The differences are striking. While German universities engage in internationalisation to increase the quality of their provision and contribute to the public good, Australian universities find themselves as actors on a global market being accountable for how much they contribute to the national GDP by attracting and educating international fee-paying students.

These very rough definitions of the terms internationalisation, Europeanisation and globalisation should suffice for now so that I can come to some selected examples.

13.2.1 Migration

Migration has become a global problem. Different countries have taken different decisions how to deal with refugees. To erect walls seems to be a favourite solution in some countries. And this is something quite different from the German Chancellor Merkel's courageous "we will manage this!" although not all Germans agreed with this. Building walls to keep refugees out of one's country is also different from fishing refugees out of the Mediterranean Sea. Unfortunately, no agreement at EU level has been reached until now how to jointly deal with migrants and the effects of migration. But how is this related to universities.

There are many refugees whose age structure as well as educational and qualification level would allow them to begin or continue university studies in the receiving country. In Germany many higher education institutions have provided exemplary support to enable integration and take-up of studies and this without extra funding. At the same time many companies have stated frequently that they are highly interested to find well qualified persons. In this respect schools, vocational education and training system and higher education institutions can provide support to prepare and qualify refugees for their entrance into the world of work of the receiving country.

In Europe universities claim to have been international since their beginnings in the Medieval Ages so that internationality is quasi-inherent in learning and teaching and doing research at universities. Of course, this is not quite true. Universities were indeed very international in the Medieval Ages but became very national in the course of the emergence of nation states. Only after World War II did they re-internationalise, so to say. But I see this claim also as sort of an obligation or responsibility of universities to take care and put this claim into practice. And by this I mean not just simply attract only those international students who can afford to pay high fees as I experienced in the UK. Until today British university leaders and higher education policy makers are wondering how Germany can afford not to demand tuition fees, neither for domestic nor for international students. This is essentially related how policy makers see the role of universities and consequently

how universities see their students. For example, whether students are regarded as a source for institutional income generation (as cash cows, as it has been termed) or whether students are regarded as a valuable asset for the quality of teaching and learning.

In short, higher education institutions can make an important and essential contribution to the integration of refugees and in the framework of their third mission activities can also help those refugees who do not want to take up university studies.

13.2.2 Academic Freedom

Another global phenomenon is the endangerment or suppression of academic freedom. This does not happen in all world regions or countries. But prominent examples are the threat to the Central European University in Budapest and what has been and still is happening in Turkey. But I see other dangers to academic freedom as well, in particular in the country that claims to be the freest of all. Just think of the phenomenon of "fake news" and the derogatory talk of policy makers about "experts". In the UK anxiety has been growing for some years about threats to academic freedom that arise from the intolerance of alternative views and recently also about universities' growing dependence upon income from full fee-paying Chinese students which has led to failures by universities to protect Chinese students from interventions by their own government. Basically, academic freedom is under threat everywhere where there is populism, disregard of truth and loss of respect in the political discourse.

In addition, there are many more subtle forms of suppression. The practices of new public management have contributed to practices of micro-management of academics at universities which can be regarded as restrictions of academic freedom. Due to these phenomena and practices a whole profession is cast into a negative light which is actually obligated to find the truth and to speak truth to power. Not much research has been carried out so far on this but here is one example.

Referring to Hirsch (1997) and Stensaker and Gornitzka (2009) distinguish between normative/cognitive and rational/instrumental forms of trust in European higher education. They argue that over the last 20 years or a bit longer the normative/cognitive forms of trust have been replaced by rational/instrumental forms. The reasons for this development are identified to be a growing international and even global interaction of higher education institutions which is mostly no longer based on the normative forms of trust which develop over time and through longstanding familiarity of the actors involved with each other. Furthermore, expansion of higher education systems as well as increased international cooperation have contributed to a growing number of institutional actors and detailed information is not always available for normative trust to develop.

Within national systems of higher education, expansion has led governments to expect from their higher education institutions to do more with less funding. Starting

in the 1980s, the funding crisis evolved into a legitimation crisis and a growing distrust of governments and stakeholders in the quality and efficiency of higher education institutions could be observed coupled with the new call for evidence-based political decision-making. Instruments to monitor and control efficient spending of public money and the quality of activities and services have been developed in order to re-establish trust but this time the instruments were increasingly metrics based. The new forms of trust that developed were less normative, i.e., the result of interaction and growing familiarity over time, but rather instrumental, i.e. a result of data and information gathered. Thus, universities were made accountable for their performance and increasingly benchmarked against each other. On the one hand more autonomy was granted to the institutions to allocate their budgets, recruit staff, select their students, decide about the number of programmes and departments but on the other hand results were monitored on the basis of externally set standards. In this way the traditional, normative trust relationships between higher education institutions and public authorities have been reshaped by basing them on rational/instrumental forms of trust. In addition, external stakeholders have become legitimate actors in the "trust-creating business" (Stensaker & Gornitzka, 2009:132; Kehm, 2014) and external agencies have become involved in the setting of standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance. Trust in its rational/instrumental form is thus established through accountability and stakeholder control and has become a multi-actor and multi-dimensional issue in the governance of higher education. These developments have expanded into administrative and managerial control of academic work as well, frequently impinging on academic freedom. I will stop here and come to my next example which is closely related to what I have said so far.

13.2.3 Increasing Marketization

The transformation of higher education systems towards an increased market behaviour is clearly more progressed in some countries than it is in Germany, a country in which higher education institutions still receive 85 to 90 percent of their budget from the state and in which students at public institutions do not have to pay tuition fees. But stronger marketization of higher education also tends to be a global development. Essentially there are two clearly opposing views with regard to marketization and tuition fees.

One view sees students as customers, who are expected to invest into their education because a degree gives them advantages later on in the form of better jobs and higher income. That saves money for the state and makes higher education institutions behave in an entrepreneurial manner by simply selling degrees to students who can pay for them. At the same time this changes the relationship of the students to their higher education institution. As customers they come to buy a degree including a guarantee of quality for the product "degree". In the meantime, such behaviour is widespread in the UK, especially at the Master level. Universities tend to prefer to

give their study places to fully paying international (i.e., non-EU) students than to train and educate their domestic youth at this level. And because the international students pay a very high price it is the responsibility of the teachers that they achieve their degree, preferably with a good grade. Otherwise, international students might sue the university because the product bought does not fulfil their expectations.

The other view, dominant in Germany, sees higher education institutions as public institutions which contribute to the "public good" through their teaching and research. To supply scientific knowledge for society and economy and to contribute through their teaching towards the development of a highly qualified knowledge society is in this view regarded as a task of the state which adequately funds its universities. International students are regarded as not only contributing to a better quality of teaching and learning because there is more diversity but also as a long-term investment once they have acquired leading positions in their home countries. It is hoped that these students then will prefer German companies for investments and trade. To summarise: Whereas the first view sees education and training as a private good into which students should invest privately (market-liberal view), the second view sees education and training as a public good for which the state is responsible (a social view).

In his book about the entrepreneurial university which was published in 1998 (Clark, 1998), Burton Clark has painted a positive picture of the entrepreneurial university. In the meantime, British universities have gone clearly beyond Clark's ideas. The Higher Education Funding Council has been abolished in England and a new regulator, the Office for Students, was created. This Office for Students is supposed to represent the interests of students as customers and to this end has imposed comprehensive conditions on the universities. The basis for controlling the universities in this respect is the annual Student Satisfaction. Those universities which get a relatively lower number of points than the average experience massive losses in terms of student applications because results are published. Political decision-makers have announced that the government will even condone bankruptcy of public higher education institutions. At the same time the conditions for establishing private higher education institutions have been lightened in order to increase competition. These developments have contributed to a political and administrative separation of systems of funding teaching and learning on the one hand and research on the other hand (cf. Shattock & Horvath, 2019).

Management of universities – at least in the so-called Russell Group of research universities – expects every professor to at least bring in as much money from third party research funding and teaching international (full-paying) students as his or her annual salary is worth. Internally complex systems to account for workload have been created which determine the amount of time and the costs for defined academic tasks. Other tasks are defined through a lump sum number of hours per year and some tasks are not recognised at all as part of academic work, for example, checking one's emails and answering them, writing reviews and recommendations. Of course, such practices do not only define the price and value of academic work but they also determine and standardise what academic work consists of and what is not taken into account.

The quest for research competitiveness in global markets and for better positions in league tables which has been strengthened by higher education policy in many countries has contributed to the transformation of many higher education institutions into a business. That tends to force institutions to behave market-like and generate as much money for institutional income as possible in order to secure their survival. But at the same time universities are confronted with demands of widening access and mitigate the negative effects of class societies. So, what we are looking at is a clear mission overload.

13.2.4 Competition and Rankings

In higher education research much has been written and published about the topics of competition and rankings (for example, Erkkilä, 2013; Hazelkorn, 2011; Salmi, 2009; Shin et al., 2011; Yudkevich et al., 2016). And I could also say quite a bit about these topics. The surprising early history of the Shanghai Jiao Tong or ARWU Rankings (since 2004) has triggered a true tsunami of university rankings. Hazelkorn (2011) has identified about 11 global rankings and more than 70 national ones. Many of these are carried out by weeklies and journals. This has triggered a major competition among universities for "excellence" or "world-class" status, a competition for reputation from which universities hope to gain advantages. At the same time higher education institutions have to adopt the logic of metrics which are used in rankings so that they can produce the required numbers and data. My colleague William Locke once has formulated the issue to the point, namely that rankings seduce and coerce at the same time (Locke, 2011).

It is quite clear that rankings do not measure quality, although they pretend to do just that. Many rankings are based on reputation surveys and actually distribute reputation, but they count what can be measured instead of measuring what counts. Many have criticised the methodological problems of rankings and their English language bias. Still, many experts assume that rankings are here to stay and that it would be better to contribute to the improvement of their methodology rather than to reject or ignore them altogether. In the framework of debates about university rankings I have always asked myself three questions (Kehm, 2013). What do rankings actually measure? Whom do rankings serve? And for whom are rankings important? These questions I want to answer briefly in the following.

What do rankings actually measure? Hazelkorn (2011) has argued that that there is "no such thing as an objective ranking" (p. 49). Each choice of indicator and each weighting reflects value judgements and there are a lot of biases; for example, impact factors favour natural sciences and medicine to the disadvantage of the humanities and social sciences and there is a bias in favour of English language publications which in turn produces a regional bias. That means that a university located in a non-English speaking country and without a medical faculty will never be in any of the top position of a ranking. In addition, the use of proxies leads to the fact that these proxies often do not have any logical relationship to the statements

about quality and performance which are made on the basis of such proxies. Furthermore, there is a problem with the weighting of different indicators and each ranking moves different indicators into the foreground. Finally, most rankings emphasize research performance while deducing from that statements about the quality and performance of the institution as a whole.

Whom do rankings serve and for whom are they important? It is quite interesting to observe that rankings are seen with significant scepticism among academics and only a very small percentage of students or student beginners (at least in Europe; this is different in the USA and in Asia) makes a high-ranking position the basis for their choice of university. In contrast to this rankings are very popular among weeklies and journals, among politicians and among institutional leaders. Journals use university rankings to increase their sold copies. That is a simple business calculation. Institutional leaders are interested in having their institution in a top position because of the reputation function. Morphew and Swanson (2011: 191) have argued that reputation is one of the most important organisational goods (or to speak with Bourdieu, a form of cultural capital), difficult to gain and easy to lose. In particular, reputation contributes to maintaining and augmenting advantages, a so-called Matthew effect. But there are disadvantages as well. The seeming rationality to work towards improving one's ranking position is not quite as rational at second glance. Diversity of institutional types slowly disappears because all institutions are striving for the same good and adapt their organisational behaviour accordingly. In higher education research we speak about this as a form of 'mimetic isomorphism' or imitation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In contrast to this institutional diversity makes a lot more sense because the student body has become more diverse and heterogeneous as well compared to 60 or 70 years ago.

But I think the considerable interest of policy makers in university rankings is particularly interesting. Perhaps some of you know that the Excellence Initiative which was established in Germany in 2006 (and has been imitated by many countries around the world) was justified politically with the need to identify "lighthouses" which would have the potential to become German "Harvards", meaning elite institutions which could become global players. Similarly, the funding of the U-Multirank Project by the European Commission was based on the goal to get European universities into more prominent positions in the global rankings and have a larger number of "world-class universities" located in Europe. But there were other issues involved as well in that decision. Having "world-class universities" in Europe (and not just in England and perhaps in Switzerland) was supposed to serve as proof of the competitiveness and innovative capacity of national economies and Europe as a whole. We are dealing here with a shift of the symbolic meaning of university rankings which I have characterised elsewhere as "postmodern" (Kehm, 2019). In the meantime, there are also quite tangible financial effects. National rankings or excellence initiatives offer a form of complexity reduction and thus can be used politically as legitimation for the allocation of funding. National scholarship programmes for study abroad are – at least in some countries – only awarded to students who want to study at a highly ranked university. And last but not least, rankings produce winners and losers among higher education institutions, while it

should be the task of national governments to be responsible for the higher education system as a whole and provide all institutions with the opportunity to fulfil their tasks in teaching and research as good as possible.

I could say much more about this topic, but I will stop here to come to my last example, namely the forms of higher education cooperation in Europe.

13.2.5 European Forms of Higher Education Cooperation

In contrast to some of the examples introduced previously, European support for higher education is predominantly characterised by cooperation rather than competition. The promotion of networks to support mobility and learning from each other is regarded nowadays as an example of good practice in other regions of the world (for example, in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia). For sure, there are still elements of competition included in the European support programmes but they are predominantly targeted to strengthen cooperation within Europe and competition of European higher education institutions with institutions outside Europe (Marquand, 2018).

What began with the ERASMUS Programme to support mobility of European students consists today of a broad panoply of opportunities for cooperation in a multitude of contexts. And with ERASMUS+ non-European higher education institutions can participate as well.

The most recent initiative of the EU is the programme "European Higher Education Institutions" which was established in autumn 2018. In the framework of this programme about 20 border-crossing networks of institutions are supported with the aim to offer students a degree which has been acquired through a combination of study phases at universities located in several EU member states. At the same time the programme wants to strengthen the emergence of a European education area and contribute to the international competitiveness of European higher education institutions. The networks are supposed to develop a joint mission and strategy which supports cooperation at a variety of organisational levels and areas (e.g., research, teaching, management, administration, and academic staff) and thus goes beyond existing models of institutional cooperation in higher education.

13.2.6 Higher Education in Times of the Corona Pandemic

This contribution would not be complete if there were no mention of the effects of the Corona pandemic on universities not just in Europe but worldwide. First national studies and surveys have shown that there has been a considerable push towards further digitalisation when universities were forced to switch to online teaching. Students have clearly stated that they enjoyed the flexibility of learning and studying wherever and whenever they wanted but seriously missed the personal contacts

with teachers and fellow students (Loerz et al., 2020). Global studies on these issues are in the making (e.g., Netswera et al., 2021).

The Corona pandemic has also brought to light – once again – the existing differences in access to necessary resources starting from owning computers or laptops and required software and reaching to the existence of stable internet and adequate working places at home. These issues do not mark differences between countries but also between regions within countries.

Apart from the push towards further digitalization and related IT security issues, the Corona pandemic has also influenced the governance of higher education institutions. Much closer cooperation has developed with local authorities, dominantly health authorities. In addition, stricter control, and oversight of the movement of people on campus has changed institutional governance arrangements. Transparency and legitimation of decision-making processes as well as more and more regular information of all institutional members were and still are required. How this will influence the traditional academic decision-making processes in the framework of committees and democratic self-governance in the long run remains to be seen. Currently the emerging issues are being discussed in a variety of academic circles, but solid studies are in the making.

13.3 Conclusions

A few years ago, I wrote a contribution to a book edited by Paul Gibbs and Ronald Barnett which was entitled "Thinking about Higher Education" (Gibbs & Barnett, 2014). This book is certainly worthwhile reading because it tries to develop a number of alternative ideas which role universities can and should play in and for society. Outside of possible institutional constraints the book wants to offer "opportunities to engage critically with what could be" (p. 1). In addition, some thoughts about a possible re-conceptualisation are being offered in which way higher education institutions could and perhaps should contribute to the well-being of individuals in society, i.e., to develop possible utopias. Not an easy task but clearly embedded in the tradition of the critical intellectual. In my contribution (Kehm, 2014) I have argued that the neo-liberal market logic has by now also entered higher education, that this development is not shared by everybody, and that the self-understanding of higher education institutions continues to be strongly influenced by the idea that they are societal institutions and produce a public good. What is lacking is a utopia, a widely shared idea of the university which has emerged from a broad public debate.

The American sociologist Joseph Ben-David has once said that the German university, i.e., the Humboldtian idea of the university with its focus on the individual academic was the best university model for the nineteenth century and that the American idea of the research university with its focus on the institution was the best university model for the twentieth century (Ben-David, 1977). That begs the question what is the best idea of the university for the twenty-first century. There is no lack of proposals. The American university leaders Derek Bok (1982) and Clark

Kerr (1963/2001) have developed the idea of the "multi-versity". Burton Clark (1998) developed the idea of the "entrepreneurial university" and Enders et al. (2005) the idea of the "network university". In my opinion it is worthwhile to discuss these proposals more in-depth and more broadly.

Because of time constraints I cannot go into more detail here. But I share Marginson's belief that European universities should think more about how to contribute "to the global public good even beyond Europe" (Marginson, 2009, p. 316). The goal in this shouldn't be – as was formulated in the Lisbon summit conclusions of the Council of Europe in 2000 – "to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive knowledge driven economy in the world" but rather to make Europe "the most creative, innovative and globally engaged higher education region in the world" (Marginson, 2009, p. 318).

I have offered here a rather critical position to most of the examples chosen. I do in fact believe that academics speaking in public have the task to reflect critically on society and observable developments. And it is one of the merits of Pavel Zgaga's work that he has tried to do just this, often successfully. In thinking about global and European higher education developments it is impossible to avoid a normative and value related debate. Just like Pavel, we shouldn't be afraid of doing this.

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Part III
Social Dimension in Higher Education and Democracy

Chapter 14
Unpacking the Social Dimension of Universities

Peter Scott

Abstract Emphasis on the 'social dimension' of higher education in Europe has featured prominently in successive communiqués following the regular ministerial meetings in the Bologna process, although this high-level policy commitment to widening participation and social inclusion has not always been followed up by significant concrete actions. Nevertheless, this emphasis on the 'social dimension' continues to be seen as one of the characteristics used to distinguish European universities from universities in more marketised higher education systems, such as the United States. There has been a reluctance to unpack on detail what it means, except perhaps as an implicit assumption that free, or low, tuition is a precondition of widening the social base of universities. In a wider sense the label 'the social dimensions' also suggests a contrast to the economic contribution that universities make, in regional development and science-led innovation, although disentangling the social and economic dimensions of modern higher education systems is a difficult task. There is a number of aspects of the 'social dimension' – including the role universities play in preserving and developing cultural values (largely through the humanities), their direct interventions in the development of policy and more broadly social change (through the social sciences), their political, and moral, responsibilities to widen access to underrepresented social groups and their key place in civil society (and the open society).

Keywords Social dimension of higher education · Preserving cultural values · Social change · Access to underrepresented social groups · Civil society

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14.1 Introduction

The ‘social dimension’ has become something of a catch-phrase in higher education in the past two decades, most explicitly in Europe since its first appearance in the communiqué following the 2001 Prague meeting of Education Ministers to review progress on the recently established Bologna process (Eurostat, 2009). But the phrase, or label, has a number of distinct meanings.

The first, and most common, meaning is simply to denote national and institutional efforts to widen participation in higher education and to develop fair access policies. In Europe these efforts and policies are largely denominated in terms of social class – in other words young people from low-income families and deprived communities. Other under-represented groups are embraced within these efforts and policies, although not with the same emphasis. These groups include:

- The disabled, who in most jurisdictions are protected by wider anti-discrimination laws. In recent years the focus on physical disability has been expanded to include wider considerations of mental health (although here the impact has been as much on continuing success as initial access).
- Women. Although women now represent a majority of higher education students in almost every European country, they continue to be under-represented in some key disciplines and at some levels.
- Ethnic minorities. There are wide differences in participation among with these minorities and some enjoy high levels of participation in universities – for example, Britons of Asian heritage in UK medical schools. But in general they remain under-represented in aggregate and are often concentrated in lower-status institutions.
- In recent years refugees and immigrants have also become beneficiaries of widening participation and fair access.

This European focus on social class is in contrast to the focus on race in similar policies in the United States, for historical reasons that are well understood.

The second, as much implied as directly stated, meaning of the phrase implies a contrast between higher education in Europe where it is largely tuition-free, with the important exceptions of England (but not the wider United Kingdom) where students now pay high fees and also some central and eastern European countries where private institutions have flourished, with the more market oriented systems in other world regions where students are often charged substantial tuition fees. When the ‘social dimension’ is used in this second sense the assumption is that free (or low) tuition is a necessary precondition of successful efforts to widen participation. Used on this second sense, the ‘social dimension’ may also be a code that contrasts wider geopolitical differences between countries that have developed, or maintained, welfare states with high levels of social expenditure and countries that have maintained, or adopted, neoliberal economic and social policies focused on the ‘liberalisation’ of the market and so-called ‘rolling back of the State’.

The third meaning of the 'social dimension' is to indicate the wider social responsibilities of universities. These responsibilities have many dimensions – educational and intellectual, in terms of promoting critical enquiry and open science; political and/or democratic, in terms of accountability to the public and their elected representatives; economic, in terms of the direct role played by universities in creating employment, developing new technologies and educating key professional workers and also their indirect role as centres of innovation, experimentation and creativity; cultural, in terms again of their direct contribution through the provision or art galleries and museums and sponsorship of other cultural events and also their indirect contribution as expressed in the cultural tastes and demands of publics who are increasingly graduates; as well, of course, social in terms the responsibilities that universities have for reducing, and removing, barriers to participation among those living in socially deprived communities or who are disadvantaged in others ways (for example, age, gender or disability) – on other words, the widening participation and fair access policy agenda. In addition universities have important responsibilities for promoting social inclusion as the leading institutions within wider educational systems.

There are also other dimensions of these wider responsibilities. Examples include the responsibilities universities have in terms of their impact on urban spaces, planning and transport, and even their aesthetic responsibilities in terms of their stewardship and construction of well designed buildings. Since the advent of mass higher education universities have become key elements within many city-scapes, in addition to the central place they have always occupied in smaller urban communities that developed around them. Finally, in recent years more attention has been focused on the responsibilities of universities in the context of sustainable development, often with direct references to the United Nations Sustainability Goals. Unpacked the social responsibilities of universities comprise a long list.

In this chapter all three meanings of the 'social dimension' of higher education will be discussed – first, widening participation in and fair access to universities that is the focus of so many communiqués, strategies, initiatives and research reports; secondly, the restricted code used to distinguish between public and largely tuition-free higher education systems and more marketised systems in which students are charged substantial fees; and, finally, the wider meaning of the social responsibilities of universities in the multiple contexts that have just been briefly listed. At the heart of this chapter is a question – is there a necessary connection between these these three meanings of the 'social dimension' of universities? Or, to express the same question more sharply, are public and tuition-free higher education systems more likely than market-oriented high-fee systems to discharge their social responsibilities in both the first sense of success in widening participation and promoting fair access and also the third sense of the wider social responsibilities of universities? My conclusion, which inevitably will be contested, is a tentative 'yes' to these questions.

14.2 Widening Participation and Fair Access

The drive to widen participation to higher education has undoubtedly captured the policy agenda. Every successive communiqué of the regular meetings of Ministers of Education within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to review progress towards implementing the Bologna process has highlighted the social dimension, and with increasing emphasis but not necessarily more detailed and precise definition (EHEA, 2020; Dovigo, 2020). A focus on social inclusion, and the responsibilities of universities to promote it by opening their doors to under-represented social groups, can also be found in most national higher education strategy across Europe – and indeed the world.

The same emphasis can be observed at the level of individual universities which have often developed detailed programmes – to raise aspirations among individuals by reaching out to them; to make good any deficits in terms of their academic preparation by providing summer schools, 'bridging' and mentoring activities; to make adjustments to entry standards to reflect educational and wider social disadvantage (in those systems and institutions that are able to select their students); and by reducing drop-out among so-called 'access' students to supporting their efforts to succeed to the same degree as traditional students. In other words, at the policy level, there is almost no dissent from the need to widen participation and make access to university fairer. The direct responsibility of universities to promote social inclusion in their local, regional and national (and indeed international) communities is almost universally accepted.

However, this near-unanimity at the policy level has not necessarily been reflected in practical results. Overall there remains a gulf in participation rates across different social groups. In most European countries young people from the most socially advantaged quintile are between three and four times more likely to study at university than those from the most socially deprived quintile. This gulf has narrowed since the advent of mass expansion between the 1960s and 1990s – but not by much. There still remains a social divide between the profiles of students in universities and higher professional schools, where formal dual or binary systems have been maintained, and between different types of university in unified systems, between elite universities and more recently established, and more socially inclusive but lower-status, institutions. Pavel Zgaga himself emphasised that expanding higher education did not address these inequalities of access (2015). Too often perhaps it was assumed that expansion would lead to greater equity.

The reason for this gap between the unanimity and insistence of the policy focus on widening participation across different countries with different types of higher education system and the sometimes-limited progress towards that goal are various.

One reason is simply that, despite the prominence attached to the social dimension as a policy goal at the European level, only limited action has been taken at a European level, with the exception of the funding of a small number of research programmes. This is in contrast to the actions that have taken in other policy areas within the wider Bologna process such as harmonising course structures across

Europe, in effect the adoption of a two-cycle Bachelors and Masters pattern now supplemented by a third cycle, the doctoral level, and taking active steps to promote a 'quality culture'. Any substantial concrete measures to widen participation and promote social inclusion remain firmly within the competence of member states (Kooij, 2015; Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). The result is a predictable pattern – in Scandinavia (and, to a more limited extent, the UK) widening participation policies are well developed; in many other countries they are less well developed; and in some they are almost entirely absent. Weedon and Riddell conclude: 'Whilst some countries monitor the impact of their widening access measures many do not, which suggests that widening access to higher education is not a high priority in many European countries' (Weedon & Riddell, 2016).

However, there are other more structural reasons for this gap between policy aspirations and performance, not just in Europe but more widely. One is the familiar critique of mass higher education. In its simplest form this critique argues that mass access has predominantly benefitted the 'middle class', broadly defined, and in effect has created a two-speed system – near-universal access for the socially advantaged and continuing restrictions on access for the more socially deprived. In this extreme form the argument is difficult to sustain. It ignores the transformation of social structures over the past half-century, a prominent feature of which has been the emergence of a much larger and more heterogeneous 'middle class', partly as a result of the extension of the higher education 'franchise' but largely as a result of occupational and cultural shifts.

In a more nuanced form, this critique of mass higher education has greater cogency. Although mass access has undoubtedly created more opportunities for more people from wider sections of society to participate in some form of higher education, it has been accompanied by greater differentiation – or, some would prefer, hierarchy – among institutions. In practice this differentiation of higher education, almost universally espoused as a desirable policy goal, has tended to sustain, and to some degree to legitimate, the stratification of the study body in terms of social class. New kinds of student from less socially advantaged backgrounds have tended to be concentrated in less prestigious sectors of the system, and institutions, leaving the student profile in elite universities relatively unchanged by mass access (even when these universities have substantially increased their student numbers).

The process of differentiation has been reinforced by another near-universal policy drive, for 'excellence'. This has been produced by the heightened sense of competition in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, and the centrality of higher education and research in this new global competition. One result has been the emergence of a new political discourse of 'world-class', or simply the 'best', universities, typically expressed in terms of performance in global university rankings and league tables but also stimulated by the growing popularity of 'branding' in universities. This may have made it more difficult to make progress towards greater fairness in university admissions and, more broadly, social inclusion. Selectivity, seen as a measure of 'excellence', is strongly aligned with student profiles weighted towards elite social groups. Efforts to make student profiles that are more representative of the wider population, and to make progress towards wider

participation, countervailing measures which also count towards the reputation and ranking of universities have so far met with limited success. A further complication is a tension between internationalisation, in effect if not intention elite exchanges and elite staff and student flows, which is also highly rated in global rankings, and efforts to promote social inclusion within local communities.

However, the main explanation for the gap between the intense policy focus on widening participation and social inclusion and the limited results that have so far been achieved is to be found not so much in the internal dynamics of higher education systems but the wider evolution of society and the economy. Put simply, in its efforts to widen its social base higher education has been trying to walk up a downward-moving escalator. Since the 1980s – in other words, when mass higher education first became established as the dominant form of post-secondary education – the twentieth-century trend towards greater equality of incomes, and therefore greater equality of life chances, has been thrown into reverse. Income inequality in many advanced societies, especially the US and the UK, is now approaching levels last seen more than a century ago on the eve of the First World War (Picketty, 2014). The reasons for this trend, such as the destruction of capital in two world wars and subsequent upheavals and the creation of welfare states to protect liberal democracies against political extremism (notably Communism), are fascinating but beyond the scope of this chapter.

The reversal of this trend towards equality is also the result of the deliberate adoption of what are usually described as neoliberal or free-market policies – reduced rates of taxation (especially on the wealthy); within that reduction a shift from direct taxes on income and wealth, which are progressive in their distributional effects, to indirect taxes on expenditure, which are neutral or regressive; and also the reduction of social expenditure, which provide a larger share of the income of the less well off. But the argument that this so-called neoliberal, or free-market, turn has been largely responsible for the difficulties encountered by efforts to promote social inclusion needs to be qualified. It may also have encouraged an erosion of traditional class-based cultures and habits of deference, which themselves were barriers to wider participation in higher education, although for some previously under-represented groups in higher education – for example, women, ethnic minorities and the disabled – another. and unconnected, trend, towards greater social liberalism, played a larger part in removing these barriers.

14.3 Free Higher Education – Or Fees?

It is at this point that another result of the neoliberal turn, the (proportional) decline of State expenditure on higher education and the shift to tuition fees, enters the argument – and brings us back to the internal dynamics of higher education systems and their impact on the success of efforts to widen participation and promote social inclusion. Although it is rarely stated in formal documents from the European Union, other European agencies or individual European countries an emphasis on

the social dimension is often assumed to be characteristic of European higher education, in contrast to the more market-oriented systems that prevail in north America and higher education systems in east Asia within the so-called Confucian cultural zone – almost a distinctively European 'model'.

In practice, as has already been suggested, the concept of the social dimension remains imprecisely defined, even in the most basic terms of identifying which social groups should be targets of efforts to widen participation. In some European countries a number of separate groups is identified; in others – for example, France and Sweden – the focus is on potential students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds without further elaboration. Identification of cultural and ethnic minorities is also a delicate question because it impacts on definitions of nationality and citizenship, which differ across Europe for historical reasons from universalistic 'republican' definitions of citizenship to narrower definitions based on an assumed common ethnic identity and shared cultural traditions (both of which present challenges, but very different ones, for widening participation for minorities). Yet despite this imprecision the idea of the social dimension remains a potent one in Europe (Usher, 2015). A clue to this potency is the belief that what is singular about the social dimension in a European context is that it is closely associated with the maintenance of public systems of higher education funded almost exclusively by State expenditure which either charge no, or very low, fees to students.

It is not within the scope of this article to point out the many qualifications that must be made to this assumed linkage between the social dimension and free higher education as distinctively European – the importance of private fee-charging institutions in some European countries, especially central and eastern Europe; the predominance of State institutions within the US mixed public-and-private higher education system(s); the importance of public universities in some key east Asian countries. The question remains – is free or low-tuition higher education provided predominantly in State or other public institutions a precondition of successful efforts to widen participation and promote greater social inclusion in universities? Or is it better to charge students, many of whom still come from economically and socially advantaged backgrounds, fees, a proportion of which can be recycled to target potential students from more socially deprived backgrounds?

The choice represented by these questions needs to be addressed in both empirical and philosophical terms. There is a large amount of research literature, although much is perhaps over-influenced by advocacy or defence of specific policies. There are so many variables that have to be taken into account and so many historical, cultural and administrative differences that like-for-like comparisons are difficult. Within the UK a clear-cut comparison should be possible because in England students are charged the highest tuition fees in any public higher education system in Europe, arguably in the world in terms of average fees, while Scotland has maintained the European 'standard' of free higher education, at any rate for students living in Scotland. But even in this apparently straightforward comparison these other differences have made it difficult to reach firm conclusions (Scott & McKendry, 2020).

In practice high fees, even when combined with generous loans, have a high potential to act as a disincentive to potential applicants from poor homes, unless decisive corrective action is taken. But the effect of treating higher education as a 'free' public service funded out of taxation, like schools, is to provide a universal benefit regardless of income. Given the existing socio-economic profile of students, in particular in elite universities, this leads to a subsidy for the 'middle class', especially in the absence of a progressive redistributive tax regime. But this is true of many public services. Why is higher education regarded in a different light?

The fact that higher education is not (yet) seen as a core public service may suggest the comparative failure of mass expansion to deliver more equitable access. Charging fees for the 'users' of higher education, unlike schools, also emphasises that it is regarded more as an individual, and positional good, than a public, and universal (even absolute), good, an emphasis that is hardly unexpected given the popularity of anti-statist free-market neoliberal ideology in some countries. These individual or positional goods are 'valued' in terms of rates of (economic) return as measured by graduate earnings. Of course, the same utilitarian model can be applied to State investment in higher education alongside individual 'contributions', or to the goals of public policy.

This is why considering the same choice between charging fees and providing 'free' higher education in more philosophical terms is perhaps more rewarding, and also more relevant to any claim that there is a European model of higher education in which social inclusion and free higher education are closely aligned. Put simply, providing free higher education suggests commitment to a communitarian set of values while charging high fees combined with targeted support for disadvantaged applicants suggests a belief in more individualistic values. To the extent that the European Union, and the wider European project, is regarded as embodying values of cohesion and solidarity free higher education is perhaps a natural expression of this more communitarian orientation. Such an association can only be suggestive and is difficult to identify in concrete empirical terms. Nevertheless, it is a plausible explanation of the reluctance of many countries in Europe to charge fees.

The same choice also reflects different beliefs about the ultimate goals of widening participation to higher education in order to promote social inclusion. For some it is essentially an ameliorative project, to remedy deficits potential applicants to university have because of shortcomings in their school education (or in the wider social and cultural capital to which they have access) so that they can compete on more equal terms with their more privileged peers. Here the emphasis is on equality of opportunity. According to a second view of widening participation and social inclusion the emphasis switches from social mobility to social equity, and from individual deficits to deeper structural patterns of deprivation and discrimination (Boliver & Powell, 2021). In a third view widening participation is a transformative project, aimed at reordering the purposes of higher education through the creation of a much wider and more inclusive social base among students and also reasserting the role played by universities in wider social transformations (Brennan, 2018). Here the emphasis is on social justice.

14.4 The Social Responsibilities of Universities

This contrast between focusing on social mobility (incremental and evolutionary policies to remedy individual deficits), social equity (more radical policies to address deeper structural inequality) or social justice (the radical transformation of higher education itself) brings us to the third element in the social dimension, the wider social responsibilities of universities. The sheer variety of these wider social responsibilities was emphasised earlier in this chapter. In summary these responsibilities are:

- Educational and intellectual: to foster critical enquiry, in particular through the humanities and social sciences; to promote open, disinterested and curiosity-driven science and scholarship; and to contribute to the vigorous intellectual life of an open society. These responsibilities are principally discharged through teaching and research, the core functions of the university.
- Social and cultural: to promote social inclusion and embody social and cultural diversity, in student recruitment and staff employment policies and practices; and to preserve, develop and challenge cultural and aesthetic traditions, by educating new generations of artists and offering secure spaces for cultural innovation and experimentation.
- Political: to contribute to the formation of responsible citizens; to be accountable to wider society (as expressed through democratic actions); to respond to the priorities established by democratic governments (local, regional and national), in particular in the education of professional workers and through scientific and technological research; to assist in the development of policy through informed advocacy and research; and to offer a base for alternative thinking.
- Ecological: to contribute to global sustainability goals, both by operating in as environmentally friendly way as possible and by developing a wider and deeper understanding of ecological issues through teaching and research both among their students and in the wider community.

Alongside these social responsibilities, and to some degree overlapping, sits the contribution of higher education to economic development. Economic growth, and increased productivity, leading to an increase in the wealth of individuals and nations are at the heart of the programmes and priorities of most Governments – at least for the present, although that might change if or when the impact of the ecological crisis is fully recognised. Investment in research and technology, and in developing expert professional and higher technical skills, is regarded as key to growth and productivity. Trends that tend to raise doubts about the validity of this belief, such as the growth of poorly paid and insecure jobs even in advanced societies and concerns about the over-production or under-employment of graduates, tend to be brushed aside. This belief remains unchallenged, and maybe unchallengeable, in terms of high politics. Recent decades are littered with ambitious goals and innovation strategies reflecting this belief.

Two results have flowed from the predominance of such thinking. The first is a policy preference for measuring the value of higher education systems, institutions, disciplines and graduates by attempting to determine rates-of-return in relatively narrow terms, i.e. increased earnings or faster growth. Leaving to one side the validity and accuracy of such calculations, this overall approach to measuring 'value' is not only reductionist; it is also discriminatory because restricted systems will often 'score' more highly than open systems, elite universities more highly than lower-status but more accessible institutions, graduates from privileged social backgrounds more highly than those from more deprived communities or minority ethnic and cultural groups, STEM (science, technology, engineering and medicine) disciplines more highly than those in the humanities and (most of the) social sciences. The second result is that the wider social responsibilities of higher education tend to be downgraded (Holford, 2014). The economic contribution of higher education is apparently straightforward to define and, supposedly, easy to measure. The social responsibilities of the university are varied and complex, and difficult to reduce to measurable goals.

In addition to this downgrading of the social responsibilities comparative neglect of their centrality makes it difficult to suggest an interpretative framework within which the connections between the different dimensions of these responsibilities can usefully be explored. One potential framework is based on an extension of the corporate/social responsibility reporting requirements now imposed on many organisations, both State and public and also market. In some countries these statements are also required of universities. In the UK, for example, universities are treated as charities, and must satisfy the conditions imposed on all charities. These conditions typically focus on good governance to ensure that organisations stay true to their charitable objectives, which has not always been easy to reconcile with the entrepreneurial orientation of, and quasi-commercial activities undertaken by, some universities. The practice of 'corporate responsibility' also covers matters such as fair employment, and adherence to various codes of best practice in areas such as the impact on the environment. But such a framework is too limited to cover the many dimensions of the social responsibilities of universities, not least because it does not cover their core educational and intellectual responsibilities but instead focuses on their organisation and impact.

Another possible framework is to meld together the economic impact of universities, as measured both by their immediate impact on employment and economic activity and their wider impact on productivity and technology, with their wider socio-cultural impact. This approach to link equity and growth is evident in a Bologna follow-up report following the Yerevan Education Ministers' Conference (Bologna Process/EHEA, 2015). This is what the now extensive literature on 'clever cities' attempts to do, and more popular representations of proliferating 'Silicon Valleys' around the world. According to this literature, and these representations, universities at the heart of these, usually urban and in spirit 'metropolitan' even cosmopolitan', centres of creativity, innovation and enterprise. Cultural experimentation (art and theatre), social liberalism (especially in the form of new gender and plural-cultural 'identity') and economic dynamism (in the context of new – often

digital – technologies) are blended together in this almost intoxicating vision of the future, and of the key role of the university within it.

However, even setting aside the strong 'populist' pushback against this essentially elitist vision, it encounters three objections. First, it is a very old vision, stretching back to the centuries (or even millennia) old view of the city as a centre of civilisation surrounded by more primitive people – barbarians or pagans (in its original meaning). Secondly, it is not at all clear that these different strands are as tightly woven together as this account suggests. Is it – empirically – correct to treat high-tech innovation and respect for gay rights, or experimental theatre and new kind of social and family relationships, as parts of the same movement? Finally, and most relevant to the theme of this chapter, it is not clear how widening participation and fair access to higher education fit in, except perhaps as a means to identify 'the best and the brightest' hidden among the poor. Conscripting what is an essence an anti-elitist project, the widening of higher education's social base as part of wider societal transformation, within an elitist vision of 'excellence' and 'innovation' does not appear to make good sense.

14.5 Conclusion

These three strands within the social dimension of higher education – widening participation and social inclusion; the distinctiveness of the European 'model'; and the wider social responsibilities of universities – are closely linked. The first is an almost unchallenged policy discourse, but implementation and progress have been unimpressive. Even within Europe efforts to make the student body more representative of wider society have achieved patchy results with only a few countries making widening participation a core priority. Clearly more effective action needs to be taken at the European level. Communiques that rhetorically reiterate the importance of the social dimension after Bologna 'summits' and a handful of research projects are not sufficient.

This is especially important if the claim is made, however tacitly, that there is a European 'model' of higher education, based on free tuition and public universities, which are prerequisites of successful efforts to promote fair access to higher education and greater social inclusion – the second strand within the 'social dimension'. There is a risk that free tuition and public universities will be seen not simply as necessary preconditions but sufficient conditions for the delivery of fairer access. Without both active programmes to promote fair access and wider national, sectoral and institutional commitment to rectifying the current bias in favour of the most advantaged social groups in admissions to higher education (and as a key priority not a mere aspiration), any European 'model' of higher education, supposedly superior to more highly stratified market systems in other parts of the world, lacks credibility.

With the third strand, the wider social responsibilities of universities, there is a similar ambiguity, even infirmity of purpose. Are these responsibilities essentially

ancillary to the core mission of modern higher education systems, which is to act as engines of technology-enhanced economic growth (and increased material wealth for individual graduates) – like corporate good works in markets focused on economic profit? Or are they woven into the same story of innovation, creativity, experimentation and enterprise, which apparently has little room for critical voices (except perhaps as 'disruptive' ideas that recycle back into narratives of – economic – 'wealth creation')? Are these social responsibilities of higher education discrete and largely disconnected, or can they be integrated into a framework of wider choices between facilitating social mobility, promoting social equity and leading more radical transformations to achieve social justice?

Once these questions may have lacked urgency. It seemed enough to promote incremental policies, as often aspirational as operational – in brief, the stuff of high-level communiques, and sometimes marginal efforts to widen access. But two new factors have erupted that make such gradualism no longer adequate. The first is the so-called 'populist' revolt against the growing inequality and austerity that have characterised the response of so many Governments over the past decade to the 2008 financial and economic crisis, often expressed through the distorting megaphone of the social media, but alongside this semi-authoritarian 'populist' revolt also resistance of other more radical and less nihilistic social movements. Fundamental principles of rationality, objective science and professional and scientific expertise – but also the insouciant entitlement of so-called 'elites' – have come under attack. Unless higher education takes urgent action to widen its social base and embrace democratic rather than elitist values (and develop more open and less hegemonic interpretations of academic knowledge?) it risks ending up on the wrong side of history. The second factor is the growing ecological crisis, of which the Covid-19 pandemic (which, of course, has also highlighted the gross inequalities of most societies) is perhaps the sharpest reminder. There can be no more important element in the 'social dimension' of universities than their perceived ability address this most existential of questions, the terms on which the human race can continue to live in balance and harmony on our planet.

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Chapter 15
Tuition Fees and University Reforms

Zdenko Kodelja

Abstract This chapter, which is written from a philosophy of education perspective, presents a short critical analysis of some crucial answers to the question of whether the introduction of tuition fees is a social injustice as well as a violation of international law and human rights. The reasons for the introduction of tuition fees – as proposed in Slovenia by the Reform Committee in 2005, as well as in other countries – need to be understood in a wider context within which their implementation was proposed: neoliberalism. Tuition fees, especially those charged to full-time students in public undergraduate education, are, as Pavel Zgaga also argues in some of his works, closely connected with the neoliberal transformation of higher education. On the one hand, tuition-fees are one of the main means to introduce market mechanisms into higher education, and on the other hand, they reflect neoliberal ideas of education as a private good and students as customers who are responsible for their choices. This might help to explain why governments are trying to transfer at least a part of the cost of higher education from the state to students.

Keywords Social dimension of higher education · Tuition fees · Higher education reforms · Human rights · Slovenia

15.1 Introduction

Tuition fees in higher education are a fact in many countries, while in others they either do not exist or have been merely a desired goal that has not been realized.[1] In Slovenia, no tuition fees have yet been introduced for full-time students in public

[1] But the purpose of this chapter is not to treat tuition fees in higher education as a factual situation in individual countries (who pays tuition fees, at what level, at what level of study, and so on). This

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higher education institutions,[2] but they have been a goal. In 2005, the Reform Committee, inspired by neoliberal ideas, proposed the introduction of tuition fees at the undergraduate level for all students (First report, 2005, pp. 96–98). At that time, the state provided at public higher education institutions free study to full-time students up to the postgraduate level and co-financed postgraduate studies. The Reform Committee's proposal to introduce tuition-fees, which also had the support of some members of the government and the rector of the University of Ljubljana,[3] provoked strong opposition from students because it took away from them something (the possibility of studying without tuition fees) that had previously been recognized as their right. However, this was true only for full-time students while part-time students were obliged to pay tuition fees. This difference in payment was, according to the proponents and advocates of the introduction of tuition fees, an obvious case of discrimination and social injustice that can and should be eliminated by the introduction of tuition fees for all students (ibid., p. 98). Therefore, they tried to justify the introduction of tuition fees precisely with the argument that such tuition fees eliminate this injustice. This argument seems to be persuasive, but at least two problems are related to it.

The first problem is that this injustice is presupposed but not proven. It would exist only if there were no relevant differences between full-time and part-time students which would justify their different treatment. In such a case it would be unjust if not all students were treated equally. But the different treatment of part-time and full-time students could probably be justified at least on the basis of meritocratic principles. What justice requires in this case is that a limited number of enrolment places for full-time study are occupied by those students who have achieved the best result in accordance with the enrolment criteria,[4] provided that the result reflects the

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has already been done for European countries in a transparent way (Eurydice, 2020). The purpose of this text is to treat tuition fees as a normative issue (whether tuition fees should be paid or not) and to critically analyse the arguments for and against tuition fees.

[2] Tuition fees (first- and second-cycle) are paid by only three categories of students: (1) those full-time students who "exceeding the regular length of studies by more than one year or those enrolled in a programme situated at a level they have already attained"; (2) international students who are not from the EU and those who are not "citizens of countries outside EU that have signed bilateral or multilateral agreements on educational cooperation with Slovenia", (3) those who take first- and second-cycle programmes "on a part-time basis", that is, "evening and weekend courses" (Eurydice, 2020, p. 76).

[3] Similar intentions regarding the introduction of tuition fees have been characteristic of many "transition countries" (Central, East and South East European countries) since 1990. In these countries "state budgets were decreasing very fast and public universities entered serious troubles; they started to charge student fees what was also unimaginable before" (Zgaga, 2009). The majority of Western Balkan countries, for instance, introduced tuition-fees for full-time undergraduate students in public higher education institutions. Slovenia is an exception in this respect: "no tuition fees are charged for full-time undergraduate students and there is a small share of fee-paying part-time students in public institutions". Moreover, even "students enrolled in concessionary programs in private institutions also do not pay any tuition" (Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2014, p. 47).

[4] Such an interpretation presupposes a competition for tuition-free admission among students. In Slovenia, this competition was more hidden than in other countries of the former Yugoslavia,

individual's personal merits (talent, effort, learning success). Therefore, the discussed difference could be understood as unjust only if we think, like Rawls, that desert is irrelevant to justice. In this case, the status of a full-time student (including free higher education), which they have achieved on the basis of their merit (good educational achievements in secondary schools), would be irrelevant to justice as well.[5]

But even if we agree with Rawls that rewarding merit is unfair, and that it is therefore also unjust that part-time students pay for their studies and full-time students do not, there is still another problem related to the argument which tries to justify the introduction of tuition fees for all students through the interpretation that such tuition fees eliminate this injustice. The problem, namely, is that the government can eliminate this injustice in exactly the opposite way: by eliminating tuition fees for part-time students. As the Reform Committee did not take this possibility into account, it seems that the real aim of its proposal was to introduce tuition fees rather than eliminate the aforementioned injustice. This is also indicated by the fact that the Reform Committee stated other reasons for the introduction of tuition fees as well. It was argued, for instance, that tuition fees would increase the quality of studies because students would have higher expectations of professors and higher demands on the quality of studies; that free higher education is unfair because it

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where, as Zgaga showed, "public higher education follows a dual tuition system that admits some students tuition-free based on state quotas. The others who do not qualify for the competitive tuition-free admissions can enroll in the same program and sit together in classrooms by paying a tuition fee" (Zgaga, 2013). In Slovenia, many of those who could not enroll as full-time students (because they had worse results in terms of enrollment conditions than those who enrolled), enrolled as part-time students. Today, there is no longer formally part-time student status, but despite this it is still possible to "take first- and second-cycle programmes "on a part-time basis", that is, "evening and weekend courses" for which tuition fees must be paid (Eurydice, 2020, p. 76).

[5] For Rawls, a reward system based on an individual's natural talents and efforts is morally unjustifiable. Such a reward system is unjust or unfair to him because it is based on the distribution of natural talents and even efforts (which give some more and others less) which are not the result of personal decisions but only a matter of luck, as they are genetic or environmental factors over which we ourselves had no influence. In other words, if we look at it from a moral point of view, then, according to Rawls, we do not deserve to be rewarded for characteristics that are a matter of coincidence. As individuals, we do not deserve the talents that fate has given us, nor the benefits that flow from them (Rawls, 1971). From this, it could be concluded that full-time students do not deserve free study because their status is the result of achievements that are the result of their greater talent, willingness to learn, or effort that they did not deserve. But such a conclusion can be challenged with Nozick's well-known argument that "the foundations underlying desert need not themselves be deserved" (Nozick, 1974, p. 225) For, even if an individual does not deserve the talents and abilities he has, he still has them, and he also has a greater right to the benefits that flow from them than anyone else. Talent and ability cannot be separated from the person who has them. For Nozick, only the way the individual came to benefit is important. If an individual has come to them in an honest way, he also deserves them. The benefits that come from an individual's talent and ability, Nozick says, must also belong to him (ibid., pp. 224–227). If we accept this interpretation, full-time students deserve free study, even if they do not deserve their greater talent and willingness to learn, which condition their better learning outcomes and, consequently, give them an advantage when enrolling in full-time study for which no tuition fee is required.

redistributes income in favour of the wealthier and thus increases social inequality, and so on (First report, 2005, pp. 97–98).[6]

Nevertheless, these reasons for the introduction of tuition fees need to be understood in a wider context within which their implementation was proposed: neoliberalism. Tuition fees, especially those charged to full-time students in public undergraduate education, are "inseparable from the neoliberal transformation of higher education" (Choat, 2017, p. 3).[7] On the one hand, they are one of the main means to introduce market mechanisms into higher education since they "create direct competition between private and public institutions for fee-paying students" (Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2014, p. 36).[8] On the other hand, tuition fees reflect neoliberal ideas of education as a private good and students as customers who are responsible for their choices. This can help explain why some states "are transferring the cost of higher education from the community to the individual. The neoliberal corollary of personal responsibility has provided the ideological shift that justifies the massive underfunding of higher education" (Mintz, 2021, p. 100). In addition, it should be noted that at least in the British case "the introduction of fees has been a vital factor in the acceptance of neoliberalism in universities, especially among students" (Choat, 2017, p. 5). At least two consequences of the introduction of tuition fees confirm this claim. Firstly, "fees have changed the way that many students view their education, making them far more instrumental, focused purely on the end result – a degree and the higher earning potential it brings – rather than the process of learning" (ibid., p. 6), and secondly, "what fees have produced is not so much the 'student consumer' as the 'student entrepreneur': a degree is not so much a product as an investment that is made with the anticipation of a future (financial) return" (ibid.). Both of these consequences of tuition fees are in line with the neoliberal conception of man as "human capital" and a "self-entrepreneur" (Laval, 2018, pp. 55–58), as well as with Foucault's and some others' interpretations of "neoliberalism as an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic

[6] In light of the arguments put forward by proponents of introducing tuition fees for full-time students, it can be concluded that in their opinion the State should introduce tuition fees because of two main reasons. Firstly, because due to the large increase in the number of students, it can no longer fully fund free study and as a result the quality of study or enrolment suffers; and secondly, because it should not even be fully funded, as tuition fees are an important means of raising the quality and efficiency of study, of shortening studies, of abolishing the privilege of full-time students compared to part-time ones (who have always had to pay for their studies), to ensure greater equity in the financing of higher education, and so on (Kodelja, 2006, pp. 147–154).

[7] For, "without fees, it would not be possible to expand the private university sector: why would anyone pay to attend a private university if the best university education was already free?" (Choat, 2017, p. 3).

[8] Moreover, the example of higher education in England shows that "competition between institutions has intensified competition *within* institutions – between faculties and departments fighting for students and resources, and between individual staff members desperate to keep their jobs" (Choat, 2017, p. 4).

values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life" (Brown, 2015, p. 30), including higher education.

This neoliberal context must be, as has already been said, considered when addressing the arguments for and against tuition fees in higher education. In the following, still within a philosophy of education framework, a short critical analysis of some answers to the question of whether the introduction of tuition fees is a social injustice and a violation of international law and students' rights will be presented.

15.2 Tuition Fees as a Social Injustice

Tuition fees are, as it is well known, a topic which has provoked polemics in many countries. This is not surprising at all if we take into consideration the fact that the opinions about tuition fees differ greatly. The answer to the question of who is right in this conflict is not a simple one because there are persuasive arguments for and against tuition fees.

If I limit my analysis here only to those arguments which refer to social justice as a reason why tuition fees are a case of social justice or injustice, then it seems that there are two main answers to the question of whether or not tuition fees are a social injustice. The first one is affirmative: tuition fees are a social injustice because they deter students from low-income families from going to university. The second answer is just the opposite: "free" higher education is unjust because it is not free at all – it is paid for by taxpayers and, since the students are from disproportionately better-off backgrounds, taxpayer finance is pro-rich. Therefore, if both answers are true, then States (governments) are faced with a dilemma: they have to choose between mutually exclusive alternatives – free higher education or tuition fees. The problem is that whichever they choose, the result will always be a social injustice.

This dilemma is, of course, false, if at least one of these answers is not true. The argument which some defenders of tuition fees use in order to show that the first answer is false is the enumeration of those countries where student enrolment even increased after the introduction of tuition fees. The power of this argument lies in the fact that it seems evident that the counter-argument, which says that tuition fees lead to a decline in student enrolment, is false. But the problem is that such argumentation, which has been used by proponents and opponents of tuition fees, attributes the consequence, that is, the higher or lower student enrolment, to only one cause: to the introduction of tuition fees. In addition, even if the introduction of tuition fees is the one and only cause of the increase or the decline of student enrolment, it has contrary effects, since there are not only countries where student enrolment increased after the introduction of tuition fees, but also countries where it

declined (Austria).[9] For this reason this argument is not persuasive enough either when it is used for fees, or when it is used against them.

A more persuasive argument against the thesis that tuition fees deter students from poor backgrounds is the one used by some proponents of tuition fees, like Nicholas Barr, who admits that this thesis is true in the case of upfront fees, that is, when students must pay tuition fees before they go to university, but denies that this is true also for top-up fees, by which students pay nothing at the time they go to university "and make a contribution only after they have graduated" (Barr, 2005). In the latter case, Barr suggests that students pay tuition fees through loans and that the state provides loans with income-contingent repayments for students. The loan entitlement should be, according to Barr, "large enough to cover fees and, in richer countries, living costs, with an interest rate broadly equal to the government's cost of borrowing" (ibid.). If loans cover tuition fees, the situation for students who take out such loans is very similar to "'free' higher education. Students pay nothing at the time they go to university. Part of the cost is paid through taxation and part through their subsequent income-contingent repayments. From the viewpoint of the graduate, the latter differ from tax in only two ways: they are paid only by people who have been to university, and they do not go on forever. Thus, income-contingent loans are logically equivalent to free higher education financed by an income-related graduate contribution" (ibid.). In such a situation there is no "reason why these loans should deter students from low-income families", says John Marenbon (2004, p 16). In his opinion, "the income of a student's parents is irrelevant to the matter. *They* are not liable to pay off the loan, the student is" (ibid.). Moreover, students pay the tuition fees after graduation and only if they are employed and have a suitably high salary. The student is here understood as an autonomous person, who can freely choose to take on a loan for paying tuition fees as well as the liability for a loan, and not as a child or dependent person whose possibility to go to university depends on his family's financial ability and willingness to pay tuition fees for him.

It seems, therefore, that the first answer to the question of whether tuition fees are a social injustice, which I mentioned at the beginning, is true and false. It is true when it refers to upfront tuition fees, which deter students from low-income families from going to university, and untrue when it refers to top-up fees, which, according to their proponents, do not have such effects. However, the objection to the second part of this statement might be that the deferred charges for tuition fees can deter students from low-income families from going to university as well, since they are "likely to be more reluctant than the children of better-off families to take on a large debt at the beginning of their careers" (ibid., pp. 16–17).[10] The answer to this objection given by Marenbon is that their feeling "is irrational, since they are likely to increase their earnings by far more than the cost of the debt by going to a

[9] The introduction of fees in Austria in 2001/02 "has been linked to an average decline of 20% in student enrolment" (Biffl et al., 2002, p. 451).

[10] Barr says that students from low-income families do not suffer only from financial poverty but also from information poverty. And "students who are badly informed about the costs and benefits of higher education will be reluctant to borrow" (Barr, 2005).

university, especially a good one. If we are intolerant of irrational feelings, we tend to condemn or ignore them. If we are tolerant, then we try to persuade people of their irrationality, so that they are not influenced by them into making decisions that are against their own best interests" (Marenbon, 2004, pp. 16–17). But if we fail to persuade them of their irrationality, they will remain reluctant to borrow the money for paying tuition fees and tuition fees will still deter them from going to university. Here it is not important whether their feelings are irrational or not. What really counts is the impact of such feelings on their decisions. And some research, done by Boudon, shows that the students' perception of the costs of higher education plays an important role in their decisions or, in other words, in their "self-selection" (Boudon, 2001).

If so, then we cannot exclude the possibility that also deferred tuition fees might be a reason why at least some students decide not to go to university. Therefore, if tuition fees are a social injustice because they deter students from poor backgrounds, then all tuition fees are a social injustice. Consequently, free higher education seems to be a case of social justice. But things are not so simple. Proponents of tuition fees argue against such a conclusion because, in their opinion, free education ensures 'equal access' for students from low- and high-income families, "but not 'balanced social representation'… nor an equitable situation. It is regressive because it subsidises those from the higher socio-economic groups who have the potential to be high income earners at the expense of all taxpayers, including low income earners" (Biffl et al., 2002, pp. 439–440). For this reason they are persuaded that it is fair that graduates bear some of the costs of their degree because they receive significant private benefits from it. The conclusion which follows from this is that "students should contribute to the costs of their degree" (Barr, 2005, 2004, p. 269).

Considering these and other arguments for tuition fees we can conclude that, according to their proponents, the State should introduce tuition fees because of two main reasons. First, the consequence of a growth in student numbers is that the State is not able any more to provide free higher education without either quality or access diminishing. Second, the State should not provide free higher education even if it can, since tuition fees are not only a means for increasing quality and efficiency of higher education, but also for greater social justice.

15.3 Tuition Fees as a Violation of Human Rights

But in this case every State which ratified the *United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* is facing a big problem. Why? Because the introduction of tuition fees is, according to some specialists for international human rights law, an obvious violation of Article 13 of this covenant (Otto et al., 2004), which focuses on the right to education and obliges the States parties to make higher education "equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education" (ICESCR, 1966, Art. 13. 2c). On the one hand this means that each State party is legally

obliged to take the necessary steps "to the maximum of its available resources"[11] in order to progressively achieve the full realisation of this right (CESCR, 1990, Art. 2).[12] On the other hand it means that "everyone who is capable of completing higher education is entitled to receive it in an increasingly free system" (Otto et al., 2004).

But although some States parties know very well what they would have to do in order to fulfil their legal obligations, they do just the opposite. They have not ensured the financial and other appropriate means which would permit the progressive introduction of free higher education. On the contrary, they have introduced tuition fees. In such a way they violate international law and show that they are not taking human rights seriously. Geraldine Van Beuren emphasises that even if the introduction of tuition fees is accompanied by grants to poorer students, as is the case in the UK, such a policy "would still not fulfil the government's duties to implement free higher education progressively. The English language cannot be so stretched", she says, "that the 'progressive introduction' of free higher education means the 'progressive reduction' of charges" (Van Beuren, 2003). The introduction of tuition fees and student loans in the UK was criticised also by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee criticised the introduction of tuition fees because "it is inconsistent" with the previously mentioned Article 13 of the covenant and "has 'tended to worsen the position of students from less privileged backgrounds, who are already underrepresented'" (ibid.).[13]

It is surprising that Barr has totally ignored all these critics when he critically discussed the thesis that higher education should be free of charge or, what is the same, financed from taxation, because it is a right. It seems that for him the legal form of this right is not important, but rather its essence. He stresses that "the fact that something is regarded as a right does not mean that it should be tax-financed. Access to nutrition", he says, "is a basic right, yet nobody argues that it is wrong to charge for food. The moral imperative is not about *instruments* (for example, price) but about *outcomes*, that is, that a bright person should be able to go to the best school or university irrespective of his or her financial circumstances" (Barr, 2005). Looking from this point of view, the equity aim is not free higher education, but a system in which nobody with capabilities and willingness to study is denied access to higher education because he or she cannot afford it. To achieve this aim we do not need free higher education, asserts Barr, but higher education "free at the point of use" (Barr, 2004, p. 266). If such a system of higher education does not deter

[11] "In order for a State party to be able to attribute its failure to meet at least its minimum core obligations to a lack of available resources it must demonstrate that every effort has been made to use all resources that are at its disposition in an effort to satisfy, as a matter of priority, those minimum obligations" (CESCR, 1990, Art. 2, par.1, point 10).

[12] Although "the full realization of the relevant rights may be achieved progressively, steps towards that goal must be taken within a reasonably short time after the Covenant's entry into force for the States concerned. Such steps should be deliberate, concrete and targeted as clearly as possible towards meeting the obligations recognized in the Covenant" (ibid., point 2).

[13] The same criticism can be made, according to Van Bauren, Di Otto and Salvaris, also of Australia (Otto et al., 2004).

students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as he assumes, then students' right to equal access to higher education will not be violated although the State does not provide free higher education.

Therefore, in the case that this assumption of Barr's is confirmed in real life, the State which has introduced such a kind of tuition fees and student loans would not violate the spirit of Article 13 of the Covenant, although the introduction of them would not be in accordance with the strict letter of the Covenant.

15.4 Tuition Fees in Relation to Justice and Equity

But, as we have seen, such a conclusion contradicts both Van Beuren's interpretation and the official interpretation of the present article of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This means that tuition fees are a clear example of human rights violations and social injustice from the point of view of international law. However, the question arises as to whether this is the only possible understanding of these two conflicting interpretations of tuition fees and the associated social justice. It does not seem to be. Perhaps Aristotle's distinction between two kinds of justice, that is, between justice (*dikaiosyne*) and equity (*epieikeia*),[14] might be useful when searching for the solution to the dilemma regarding the (in)justice of tuition fees. The introduction of tuition fees can be understood not only as a violation of international human rights law (*International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*), but also as an act of injustice, if justice is – as Aristotle claims – the same as legality. As we have seen, this Covenant requires that "everyone who is capable of completing higher education is entitled to receive it in an increasingly free system" (art. 13). But the problem is that free higher education is itself seen as unjust because it is paid for by taxpayers and, since the students are from disproportionately better-off backgrounds, taxpayer finance is pro-rich.

[14] Aristotle introduces this distinction by means of an obvious paradox: equity is for him neither the same as justice nor different from it (Aristotle, V. 1137b). Aristotle's solution for this paradox is to define equity as a kind of justice. The difference, therefore, is not between justice and something else that is not justice, but rather between different kinds of justice. On the one hand, justice and equity are both good and as such not opposed to one another; on the other hand, equitable is better than the just. However, this does not mean that equity is better than justice in its totality – in which equity is included as one of its parts – but rather that it is better than a certain kind of justice, that is, legal justice (the just is what is prescribed by law). This is the reason why equity is defined in relation to it as a correction or "rectification of legal justice" (ibid., 1137b 12–13.). But the question is: why does legal justice need correction? The reason, says Aristotle, is that while all "law is universal, it is not possible to deal with some situations by means of pronouncements that are both universal and just. The judge's equity will mitigate the imperfection of the law, which holds for usual cases but not for those that deviate from the norm. He will be just in taking the decision that the legislator would have taken if he had been present and had known the case in question" (ibid., 137b 18–24). Therefore, the equitable is just and better than legal justice, that is, better than the error that arises from the absoluteness of the statement. And precisely this is the essence of the equitable: a correction of law when it is defective because of its universality (ibid., 1137b 24–28).

According to this interpretation, the State, although violating international law by allowing the introduction of top-up fees, might be conforming to the intention (as opposed to the letter) of the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,* provided that these fees do not deter students from low-income families from going to university. In this case, the introduction of such tuition fees would be interpreted as a correction of an unjust international law in the name of equity, that is, in order to achieve a just or equitable higher education. In other words, the State decided the case as the legislator (the writers of the Covenant) would have decided it if he had been aware of particular circumstances (the possibility of the top-up fees as a means to achieve equal access to higher education). But even if such an explanation opens up a new perspective on the issue of deferred tuition fees and social justice, it is currently nothing more than a kind of thought experiment.

15.5 Concluding Remarks

This short discussion on tuition fees and social justice – limited to just a few essential issues related to them – is written in accordance with the interpretation of philosophy of education which argues that philosophy of education is not so much a corpus of knowledge but above all questioning, questioning in the sense that we must constantly question everything we know, or believe we know, about education (Reboul, 1989, p. 3), or in our case, about tuition fees and arguments for and against them. Consequently, I first tried to rethink that argument against tuition fees that is considered to be the most compelling: tuition fees are something bad and unacceptable because they hinder or even prevent studying for anyone who is unable to pay them. This has proven to be a strong argument, but only in cases of such high tuition fees that some are unable to pay them. Otherwise, in the case of the previously discussed deferred tuition fees, this argument is weak and unconvincing, as in these cases tuition fees do not prevent the poor or others from attending university because they are unable to pay them. Then, I confronted the argument that tuition fees breach one of the human rights and are at the same time contrary to justice and compliance with laws, that is, with Art. 13 of the Convention. This counter-argument is also valid, but the question is whether the law itself, which tuition fees violate, is just. According to the official and prevailing interpretation, it is just because the Convention, as a part of international law, protects the system of social justice. However, the mentioned article of the Convention protects it in relation to the usual tuition fees that can prevent poor students from going to university. But tuition fees are a problem not only if some cannot pay them. In the neoliberal context they are problematic also because they embody and sustain the idea that higher education is a private and not a public good. And if it is not a public good, then it cannot be a right that allows all capable students access to a university education.

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Chapter 16
The Democratic Role and Public Responsibility of Higher Education and Science

Åse Gornitzka and Peter Maassen

Abstract In the last decades of the twentieth century, higher education policy in Europe was characterized by a growing emphasis on the sector's contributions to economic development and its role in the innovation ecosystem. More recently, we can see a careful re-emergence of the political, social and academic interest in the contributions of higher education to democratic political order. This renewed interest in the democratic role and public responsibility of higher education features also prominently in the work of Pavel Zgaga. In this chapter, we will reflect upon the public responsibility of higher education as key knowledge institution in supporting and strengthening the democratic culture in European societies. The chapter starts with discussing central aspects of the relationship between higher education, knowledge, and society. Next, it is argued how the democratic role of higher education is manifested, and can be interpreted from an institutional theory perspective. The chapter ends, inspired by Pavel Zgaga's ideas, with a number of reflections, amongst other things, on how the Covid-19 pandemic displays the democratic value of scientific knowledge.

Keywords Public responsibility · Democratic role · Higher education · Science · Knowledge · Society

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16.1 Introduction

Universities and colleges play a critical role in their societies in the production and dissemination of knowledge for a range of purposes. The tasks and activities that come with this role have the last decades become more and more affected by external trends, demands, and expectations. An important factor in this is the global emergence of the knowledge-based economy (Powell & Snellman, 2004), which has moved higher education policy to a more central position in national and supranational policy arenas. This position has challenged the traditional internal control of higher education institutions over their primary processes of education and research. An effective knowledge-based economy is argued to require a more externally oriented and governed higher education sector, taking the needs of society more effectively into account in the management of its primary processes, and engaging more consciously with various societal partners. These developments obviously have an impact on the role of higher education in society.

In many countries around the world, higher education reform agendas have been introduced aimed at making higher education more directly responsive to society's needs (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2014). A closer look at expectations expressed in these reform agendas reveals that higher education is not only required to produce new knowledge, but is also expected to take the responsibility itself for engaging more proactively with society and transferring (relevant) knowledge to strategic socio-economic partners in society. Consequently, we can see new components emerging in higher education institutions' mission and academic work, such as entrepreneurialism and innovation contribution, community development activities, impact and impact measurement, and expressions of academic capitalism as well as academic activism (Olsen, 2007; Slaughter & Taylor, 2016).

Attempting to uphold a fitting balance between the institutional and instrumental perspectives on the role of higher education in society has been a key feature of higher education's long history (see, e.g., Dewey, 1916; Lipset, 1959; Weber, 1976). At the same time, in certain periods the balance between the institutional and instrumental perspectives has shifted quite dramatically in one direction, thereby attempting to give the role of higher education new content. The last decades of the twentieth century, for example, saw a growing emphasis on the contributions of higher education to economic development and its role in the innovation ecosystem, spelled out under the label of the economization of the higher education sector (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2014). There was less attention in that period, in terms of conceptualization, empirical analysis and public policy, for higher education's democratic role. More recently, however, we see a careful re-emergence of the political and academic interest in the democratic role of higher education (Bergan et al., 2020). For example, the 2020 Bonn Declaration[1] by the Research Ministers of the European

[1] See: Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research (p. 4); https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/europa-und-die-welt/forschen-in-europa/europaeischer-forschungsraum/europaeischer-forschungsraum_node.html, accessed 18 March, 2021.

Union and the European Commission highlights Europe as a "guardian of freedom, equality and the rule of law ensuring democracy". In addition, the ways in which public authorities have dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic clearly shows our societies' fundamental reliance on science and higher education (Bergan et al., 2021).

This renewed interest in the democratic role and public responsibility of higher education features also prominently in the work of Pavel Zgaga (2005, 2009), for example, in his contributions to the understanding of how European integration affects higher education and his discussions of the relationship between higher education and citizenship. Zgaga interprets the democratic nature of higher education as follows: ".. democracy at the university of today cannot be an "imposed" or "imparted" value…. democracy is not an extrinsic supplement to (higher) education but it is its complex inner value" (Zgaga, 2005: 112).

In this chapter, we will reflect upon this intrinsic value of higher education and discuss the public responsibility of higher education as key knowledge institution in supporting and strengthening the democratic culture in society. Accordingly, the following questions will be addressed:

1. How can the current role of higher education in society be interpreted?
2. How does the rise of the knowledge-based economy affect the democratic role of higher education?
3. How does the democratic value of higher education manifests itself?

We will start by discussing the relationship between higher education, knowledge and society, followed by a reflection on the notion of the knowledge-based society. Next, we will present how the democratic role of higher education is manifested, and discuss the democratic role of higher education from an institutional theory perspective. The chapter will end with a number of final reflections, amongst other things, on how the Covid-19 pandemic displays the democratic value of scientific knowledge.

16.2 Higher Education, Knowledge and Democratic Society

An early example of the political interest in the societal role of higher education can be found in James Madison's letter from 1822 to the state of Kentucky and its citizens for congratulating them on their willingness to make liberal investments in public education. In his letter, Madison makes the following observation under the heading 'On securing the Republic':

> A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a farce or tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their Governors, must arm themselves with the power that knowledge gives (Madison, 1900–1910).

In a contemporary context, we could say that Madison here actually expresses the key role that knowledge plays in a political order – or what Madison calls The

Republic. Without a political order, key components of a well-functioning society, such as effective and affordable health care, quality education, and clean water, are very difficult to provide (Rothstein, 2011: 1–6). In his letter, Madison makes the connection between good government and scientific knowledge, used in the broadest sense. His arguments can be read as a 200-year old acknowledgement of the public responsibility of universities and colleges in their two primary knowledge-handling activities, education and research. This directs our attention to how good government relies, amongst other things, on access to knowledge for both government institutions and the people working for them, while it also empowers citizens and their elected representatives. This is a valid point at a very general level, even though this connection has not always been at the center of attention in political thought and action.

Madison's version of how knowledge features as a prerequisite for "the rule of the people" in democratic societies continues to be relevant also in our times. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that it is rested in political structures that are very different from modern policy arenas and social realities, as well as a particular idea of what constitutes "the rule of the people." Madison's notion of democracy is referred to as "interest group pluralism", and argues that scientific experts are to take a proactive role in a democracy seeking to influence political decision-making on the basis of the strength of their authority and knowledge (Pielke Jr, 2007: 11–12). Schattschneider (1975) developed an alternative perspective on democracy by arguing that "policy alternatives come from experts, and it is the role of experts to clarify the implications of their knowledge for action and to provide such implications in the form of policy alternatives to decision-makers who can then decide among different possible courses of action" (Pielke Jr, 2007: 12). Brooks (1996): 33) combined the perspectives of Madison and Schattschneider on democracy with two alternative perspectives on science, that is, a linear model and a stakeholder model, for identifying four ideal types of roles of scientific experts in democratic decision-making. The first of these ideal types is the 'pure scientist', who focuses on research with no interest in its use or utility; the second is the 'issue advocate', who is interested in the implications of research for a particular political agenda; the third is the 'science arbiter', who does not engage with explicit considerations of policy and politics, but at the same time has direct interactions with decision-makers; and the fourth is the 'honest broker of policy alternatives', who engages in political decision-making by seeking explicitly to integrate scientific knowledge with stakeholder concerns (Brooks, 1996: 33; Pielke 2007: 13–16). The value of this conceptualization of the roles for scientists in political decision-making is that it highlights how different visions on democracy and science will result in different ways in which scientific experts are involved in democratic decision-making. As argued by Pielke Jr (2007): 21) ".. it is important to recognize that such decisions can be made in a number of different ways, with important consequences for science, policy, and politics." Extrapolating from this argument, we could also be attentive to how different conceptualizations of democracy might entail different societal roles for the research-intensive university in comparison to the roles of other types of higher education institutions.

The understanding that different perspectives on democracy and science lead to different outcomes is also recognizable in the work by Zgaga (2005: 108), who has interpreted democratic culture as the place where the public responsibility *for* higher education meets the public responsibility *of* higher education. The contributions that higher education institutions can make in that meeting space are dependent on internal factors, such as the way in which institutions practice democratic culture (de Boer & Stensaker, 2007), and external factors, such as the legal and financial framework conditions under which higher education institutions operate. These framework conditions are regarded as effective when they enable the transfer of knowledge to society in such a way that it can contribute to strengthening democratic culture in society (Zgaga, 2005). The latter is, amongst other things, of relevance for understanding how the notion of the knowledge-based economy affects higher education's framework conditions, and consequently, its democratic role and public responsibility.

16.3 Knowledge-Based Economy

Historically, the university has been one of the key institutions in early stages of the building of modern nation states.[2] Its original core functions in this consisted of the generation and transmission of a dominant Church-based or state ideology, and being a mechanism of the selection and formation of dominant elites. These two functions have to a large extent been replaced by the current core functions of higher education, that is the training of the skilled labour force and the production and application of knowledge (Castells, 2001: 206–210). This shift from the traditional to the modern core functions of higher education is related to the increasingly important role of knowledge especially in economic life.

Numerous scholars have documented the global transition taking place over the last decades from an economy based on natural resources and physical inputs to one based on knowledge and intellectual assets (see, e.g.: Foray & Lundvall, 1996; Powell & Snellman, 2004; Godin, 2006). The global emergence of the knowledge-based economy plays an important role in the changing position of higher education in society, in the sense that universities and colleges have become socio-economically more visible and more important, but at the same time politically less special. What does that mean?

Because of the massification of higher education, the growing volume and strategic relevance of academic research, and the increasing focus on innovation in private sector production processes and public sector service provision, higher education has moved in many countries around the world to the center of national

[2] This can be illustrated by referring to the early history of Harvard College in the USA (Correa, 2013), the establishment of the University of Oslo in 1811 as part of the early history of the building of the Norwegian nation-state, or the central role of the university in the development of the post-colonial nation-states in Sub-Saharan Africa (Cloete et al., 2015).

policy arenas. Consequently, higher education policy has become more directly linked to other policy areas, such as science, technology, innovation, business, and labor. Together these form a 'knowledge policy area' that has gained a prominent status in the political programs and sectoral organization of national and supra-national governments, as well as international organizations, such as the OECD. One consequence of this enhanced status is that in addition to the traditional actors involved in the vertical higher education policy pillar, that is, Ministries responsible for higher education and higher education representatives, new actors have become interested and involved in higher education policy processes. These new actors include other Ministries, covering related policy areas, such as Economic Affairs, Labor, Science and Technology, as well as employers' organizations and unions, and various interest groups. From the perspective of these new policy actors higher education should be treated by public authorities in the same way as other public sectors, such as health care, social welfare and public transport. This marked the end of the relatively protected position higher education was taking in society, where the universities and colleges could determine to a large extent their own affairs. This development started in the 1960s in the USA, while in other countries it is a more recent phenomenon. Overall, it has had important consequences for the role of higher education in society as can be illustrated by the following quote from the European Commission (2003: 22):

> After remaining a comparatively isolated universe for a very long period, both in relation to society and to the rest of the world, with funding guaranteed and a status protected by respect for their autonomy, European universities have gone through the second half of the 20th century without really calling into question the role or nature of what they should be contributing to society. The changes they are undergoing today and which have intensified over the past ten years prompt the fundamental question: Can the European universities, as they are and are organized now, hope in the future to retain their place in society and in the world?

From this perspective, higher education institutions themselves are expected to operationalize how they want to 'retain their place in society'. This implies that internally they would have to decide how to adapt and innovate their primary processes (education and research activities), while externally they would have to determine where and how they want to contribute more effectively to socio-economic progress, community development, job creation and innovation.

Gradually, over the last 10–15 years both nationally and at the supra-national level in Europe the dominance of the economic perspective on the role of higher education in society has been challenged. This does not imply that the economic perspective has become less important, but rather that there is a renewed interest in other aspects of the public responsibility of higher education. This is visible, for example, in the European Universities Initiative (EUI), a programme initiated by the European Commission in 2019, aimed at stimulating new levels of institutionalized cooperation in higher education through selecting and funding alliances of universities (Jungblut et al., 2020). The EUI programme aims at achieving two main objectives. EUI alliances have to promote common European values and principles,

linking the Initiative to Article 2 in the EU Treaty.[3] In addition, alliances have to contribute to the European knowledge economy, employment, culture, civic engagement and welfare.[4] Another illustration can be found in the European Commission's presentation of its higher education policies under the heading "Inclusive and connected higher education".[5] One of the current higher education policy goals emphasized by the Commission is: "Higher education must play its part in tackling Europe's social and democratic challenges."

However, while this renewed interest in the democratic role of higher education has received a lot of attention in the work of the Council of Europe (see, e.g. Barrett et al., 2016), in the academic literature the question of how to the democratic value of higher education is to manifest itself is hardly addressed over the last 10–15 years. Returning to James Madison, we therefore want to raise the question: How can scientific knowledge contribute to securing political orders and democracy?

16.4 The Manifestation of the Democratic Role of Higher Education

When it comes to the manifestation of the democratic value of higher education, we want to point first to the deep, long-term societal and political impact of universities and colleges through their graduates, also referred to as "knowledge transfer on two feet" (Maassen et al., 2019: 14). In general, there is a high impact of the people's level of education on all social phenomena. This implies that higher education is a significant explanatory variable, in the sense that higher education affects the quality of life: it is significant for explaining variation in health, life expectancy, political behavior and involvement; and social behavior, including the level of crime rates among various groups in society. Higher education's graduates are the main nexus that ties higher education to key social institutions that make up the political administrative order. It makes a difference for the competency and orientation of the public administration and state bureaucracy – that is, the educational profile of bureaucrats at all levels influences the way in which the executive branch of government works (Egeberg & Trondal, 2018). The quality and content of study programmes offered by universities and colleges make a difference for key social institutions, for example, for the competency of legal institutions or Central Banks

[3] Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union is formulated as follows: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities." (See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012M002&from=EN, accessed 10 March, 2021).

[4] See: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-b/three-key-actions/key-action-2/european-universities_en, accessed 12 March 2021.

[5] See: https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education_en, accessed 19 March 2021.

(Christensen, 2018), through the contributions of bureaucrats to the functioning of the institutions at which they are employed. In addition, the diversity of the study programmes offered in higher education is of importance, from the perspective that, for example, economists have different role conceptions and administrative behavior than bureaucrats with a degree in law.

This clearly underlines the crucial democratic role of higher education, with respect to which we identify four key features. First, higher education institutions have a democratic impact and a responsibility as gatekeeper by training bureaucrats that determine, for example, the difference between competent versus incompetent public institutions, the quality of public services, and the success of the implementation of public policies in general. The educational-disciplinary background of bureaucrats shapes ideational communities and networks, and frames decision-making. This can be illustrated by developments in forestry policy, which for decades was geared towards high timber production, largely based on ideas and knowledge from production oriented research and agricultural scientists. In general, the knowledge basis underlying forestry policy kept alternative perspectives, such as concern for biodiversity, out of the policy process (Gornitzka, 2003). Recent changes in forestry policy priorities and the underlying knowledge basis can be traced to the changes in the staff composition, study programmes and research profiles of the universities and colleges with a strong tradition in forestry science.[6] What kinds of graduates public institutions recruit and which academic knowledge they are interested in makes a difference for democracies and political orders.

Second, the democratic value of higher education lies in the long-term generation of ideas. This can be interpreted as the ‘long haul conversation’, that is, what is irrelevant for decades can become relevant under changing circumstances. This is the role of higher education as a knowledge reservoir in a wide range of areas. In each of these areas, academic knowledge held by higher education may or may not be useful at a certain moment in time.

Third, higher education’s engagement in the public sphere is an important democratic contribution. This concerns its involvement in critical political debates, social media, traditional media, etc. In this, academic researchers sometimes have an annoying yet important role as the nuanced ‘two handed experts’, always eager to highlight various sides of complex problems and issues by using ‘on the one hand’ and ‘on the other hand’. This is the important critical voice of higher education in public debates as well as in political and social sense making.

Fourth, the democratic value of higher education manifests itself in the use of scientific knowledge in decision-making – the epistemic quality of government decisions (Christensen et al., 2017). This can be interpreted as higher education’s cognitive pact with society (Gornitzka et al., 2007; Hernes, 2020). Of special interest in this is the manifold role of scientific knowledge experts in the policy process.

[6] See, for example, the development of forestry research orientations and study programme profiles at Europe’s leading life sciences universities, such as Wageningen University, the Netherlands (https://www.wur.nl/en.htm).

The way in which this cognitive pact works in different political systems can tell us a lot about the logics of decision-making in political orders. An important traditional use of scientific knowledge in politics is contributing to the understanding of societal problems and pointing to the possible links between cause and effect of government interventions. This is the instrumental role of knowledge and the role of academic experts as (transversal) problem solvers. This implies that these experts are used in political decision-making processes to identify and elaborate various alternative solutions for dealing with policy problems. In addition, science can be used for identifying problems, with academic experts as possible 'agenda-setters' instead of problem solvers. In essence, grand challenges that societies face, such as climate change, were initially identified and conceptualized as a problem by scientists.

A further component of the cognitive pact is that the use of scientific knowledge for substantiating policy might imply that a solution to a specific policy problem can be politically given, but that scientific information is needed for justifying the solution and making the preferred policy 'evidence-based' and legitimate. Closely related to this is the strategic use of scientific knowledge as 'political ammunition'. For example, scientific counter-expertise can be mobilized in the case of controversial policy issues. A key question often raised by policy-makers and stakeholders is "Where is the evidence – what is the scientific justification for the proposed policy solution?" In practice, this can imply using scientific knowledge in socially controversial political decisions, such as the location of windmill parks, whether or not to build railroads, and wildlife management ('wolves versus sheep').

Finally, science can be used as symbol and signal, thereby confirming our collective belief in rationality and evidence. For example, Ministries often commission more scientific research than they can possibly consume, but commissioning research can in itself be regarded as an important signal and a confirmation of the symbolic value of scientific knowledge in confirming our belief in and commitment to rationality and evidence.

These kinds of use of scientific knowledge exist in different blends over time and over various issues, areas and academic fields. To illustrate this, in the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic the whole palette of use has come into play – from one governmental press conference to another, with the government in many countries coming up with the scientifically embedded and professionally reasoned measures to fight the virus, and medical experts involved in the press conferences providing scientific arguments for the effectiveness of policy measures. In addition, academic experts from non-medical areas have become active in public engagement for explaining the history of the pandemic with references, for example, to the Spanish flue and by reinterpreting Camus' *la Peste*. Yet other contributions come from academics who are pointing to possible distributive effects, for example, children at risk paying the price for the way in which governments have decided to deal with the pandemic, or legal scholars warning about the violation of democratic procedures in the lockdown and state of emergency measures introduced in the fight against the spread of the virus. All in all, the Covid-19 pandemic provides an uncomfortable laboratory for testing out what causes variation in the use of

knowledge and for identifying the dynamics of the interaction between government and higher education. The challenges posed by the pandemic also demonstrate the importance of independent research and of the need to maintain or create the right conditions for institutional autonomy in order for higher education and science to perform their democratic role effectively.

16.5 Institutional Sphere, Contestations and Tensions

For reflecting upon the democratic role of higher education from a theoretical perspective, we can point to the importance of how institutions make up a modern political order, and to the contestations and tensions emerging when different institutional spheres interact (Olsen, 2007; Gornitzka et al., 2007: 186–187). As argued by Olsen (2007: 28) "institutional differentiation created independent but partly autonomous institutional spheres of thought and action based on different logics, norms and values, principles of organization and governance, such as democratic politics, market economy religion, science, art and civil society." This also implies that the role of science in political orders is not necessarily a tale of peaceful co-existence. The different kinds of expectations towards and uses of science are an illustration of these kinds of inter-institutional dynamics, for example, when party political ideologies collide with scientific knowledge on the issues of climate change and climate action, or when economic concerns and values strongly influence which research projects will be publicly funded.

Despite the institutionalization of the concern for rationality and professionality, and notwithstanding the efforts to secure the knowledge basis for political decision-making and public governance, the collision of institutional spheres has been and still is a highly contentious issue. Also in the relationship between higher education and society the balance between key democratic principles is not a given and varies over time and space. Reforms of political-administrative systems have grappled with the tense question of how concern for the 'rule of reason' and 'truth sensitivity' (Holst & Molander, 2019) in collective decision-making can be reconciled and blended with the concern for the will of the people, special interests and the 'rule of law' (Olsen, 2010). How exactly this blend comes about will depend on a range of factors and conditions, which include the policy area in question, the actors involved, the degree of politicization, and issue-specific contingencies.

From an organizational perspective, an important issue is how the relationship of higher education and science with the government and its apparatus is organized. Here we can refer, for example, to the differences between the Swedish response and the ways in which the other Nordic countries responded in March 2020 to the Covid-19 pandemic. This encompasses especially how professional expert concerns were organized as part of the crisis response, with a strong autonomous agency in the Swedish case versus the political steering that was striking especially in the case of the Norwegian, and to lesser extent also the Danish and Finnish response.

16.6 Final Reflections

The Covid-19 pandemic has clearly displayed the democratic value of scientific knowledge and higher education by showing how scientific and 'schooled' knowledge has become central in the working of political, social and economic systems. This has come to the fore after decades of exponential growth in knowledge production, which has dramatically expanded the pool of specialized knowledge potentially of relevance for politics, the economy and society-at-large. We have also seen a sharp increase in the level of educational attainment in our societies. At no point in time has there been a more educated electorate and workforce in Europe.

At the same time, the growth in scientific output brings to the table the problem of the high specialization of knowledge. In the dramatic growth of knowledge production, our knowledge basis is becoming more fragmented, which is a huge challenge for universities and colleges to grapple with, as well as for politicians, bureaucrats and other external users of scientific knowledge. An additional challenge is the continuous difficulty to communicate and collaborate across disciplinary divides.

Overall, democratic political orders have 'armed the people' and their 'helpers' in public administration with the power that knowledge gives – to return to Madison. Democratic political orders in Europe have become 'knowledge dependent' – and we can argue that a process of the 'scientization' of politics and other institutional spheres has taken place, implying that several arenas and sites of collective decision-making have been 'invaded' by scientific knowledge and scientific experts (Christensen, 2018). The scientist frame of mind seems to have become more common in different societal spheres. For example, it has become more common for interest groups, such as patient advocacy bodies and environmental organizations, to hire scientists and fund research.

Scientific knowledge and higher education may shape political orders in several ways, thereby affecting political systems' problem-solving capacity and its legitimacy. There is demand for and expectation that policy-making should be based on evidence and knowledge, and informed by what experts have to say when addressing complex problems. In addition, expert-knowledge is required for managing high pace technological change and complex regulation of risks. While universities and colleges play a central role in the provision of knowledge, there is clearly more competition among a range of knowledge providers, as a result of the rise of think tanks, the growing role of consultancy firms, and Ministries and agencies building up in-house research and study capacity.

At the same time, important and potentially disruptive counter trends and contestations have emerged. Science and scientific knowledge are seen by a growing part of society not as a democratic value, but as a factor contributing to creating and maintaining fundamental divides in society, and as such a threat to democracy (Holst & Molander, 2019). This is expressed in key claims, such as:

1. The 'people are tired of experts' claim, that is, there is devaluation of the importance of and loss of trust in experts in general, scientists included.

2. The technocracy claim, that is, the increasing powers of 'unelected' experts amounts to a democratic deficit.
3. The expert-elitist claim, that is, there is an increasing gap between the highly educated and the less well-educated in the access to policy-making arenas and political-administrative elites, implying a tension between meritocracy and democracy (Bovens & Wille, 2017).

The counter-trends and contestations are visible in the development of partisan preferences across Europe, with parties emphasizing skepticism towards the role of experts and expertise, and being critical about the role of higher education in society, having gained considerable popular support since the beginning of this century in Europe. This implies that we are currently facing a situation with growing reliance on specialized expertise on the one hand and the growing contestation of the role of scientific knowledge and experts in democratic governance on the other.

There are in these seemingly contradictory trends several challenges especially to the comprehensive research-intensive university when it comes to upholding and rejuvenating the universities' cognitive pact with society. Of great importance in this is how these universities and other types of higher education institutions will be able to balance their democratic role with other components of their public responsibility. As argued clearly by Pavel Zgaga (2009: 175), higher education has a multiple purposes and roles in society. It does not suffice for higher education to focus mainly on its role in the 'Europe of the Euro', and realize expected contributions to economic competitiveness. Higher education must also be committed to 'the Europe of Knowledge', and be at the forefront of contributing to strengthening the social cohesion and democratic functioning of societies in Europe and beyond.

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Chapter 17
Education for Democracy: Balancing Intellectual Rigor and Political Action

Sjur Bergan

Abstract Democracy is often perceived of as institutions, laws, and procedures, exemplified by parliaments, city councils, constitutions, and elections. All are essential but none can function without a culture of democracy, understood as a set of attitudes and behaviors that makes democracy possible in practice. Majorities decide but minorities have inalienable rights, conflicts are resolved by peaceful means, and diversity is accepted as enriching rather than threatening. The chapter explores the background for the Council of Europe's work on competences for democratic culture (CDC) and analyzes. The Reference Framework (RFCDC) developed in 2012–18. The chapter further considers the relevance of the RFCDC for higher education, in particular with reference to the European Higher Education Area and the ongoing work on the fundamental values of higher education. A guidance document on the use of the RFCDC in higher education was finalized in spring 2020; Pavel Zgaga was a key member of the group developing the guidance document as well as of the one developing the RFCDC.

Keywords Education · Democracy · Political action · Council of Europe

This chapter was submitted well before the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation assisted by Belarus on February 24, 2022 and the subsequent suspension of Russia and Belarus from particiation in the work program of the Euroepan Higher Education Area. The discussion in the chapter therefore could not take account of this important development.

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17.1 Introduction

Education is to society what oxygen is to living beings: we cannot exist without it.

These are the opening words of the guidance document for higher education (Council of Europe, 2020: 5) developed as part of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018a, b, c). Pavel Zgaga was a member of the group working both on the overall RFCDC and on the guidance document for higher education. Anyone knowing Pavel Zgaga will have no difficulty guessing that the noun "member" could easily be qualified by adjectives like "active", "key", "essential", or "constructive". His combination of intellectual rigor and a sense of politics was essential to the success of the RFCDC.

The assertion that we cannot live without education, and that education is part and parcel of democracy – the underlying as well as the explicit assumption of the RFCDC – goes against what seemed to be the prevailing view for much of the past few decades, in spite of the fundamental changes that catapulted democracy to the center of discourse in Europe in the 1990s.

Taken in a much-reduced sense, the opening statement of the RFCDC would probably have met with the approval of those who tend to equate existence with gainful employment and see the purpose of education solely as preparing for this. There was even a belief that one could have a liberal economy without a liberal, democratic society, a model tested out – however imperfectly - in societies as diverse as Pinochet's Chile and contemporary China, still ruled by a Communist party. And there are of course those who pretend the noun "democracy" can be prefaced by adjectives like "illiberal" and still make sense.

17.2 Why Education?

This is, however, a highly reductionist view of both education and society, one that equates education and training. But they are not one and the same. We need to be well *educated*, not just well *trained*. Human beings do not live by bread alone. Training may provide us with what we can live *from*. Education should provide us with what we want to live *for*.

At least in Europe, there was a shift in discourse from the mid-2000s. In higher education, this was noticeable within the Bologna Process,[1] of which Pavel Zgaga was one of the main architects as Deputy Minister and then Minister of Education of Slovenia.

The Ministerial meetings in 2001 and 2003 referred to higher education as a public good and a public responsibility (Bologna Process, 2001, 2003). This

[1] For an overview of the Bologna Process, which evolved into the European Higher Education Area as of 2010, see http://www.ehea.info/, accessed November 24, 2020. Pavel Zgaga was not only one of the signers of the 1999 Bologna Declaration but also one of the main architects behind it.

statement, in its turn, led the Council of Europe to reason that the most operational part of the statement is its emphasis on public responsibility. Rather than stating the obvious, Ministers were most likely expressing a concern that what had been a characteristic feature of European higher education – and for that matter education *tout court* - could no longer be taken for granted. If education was to remain a public responsibility, we would therefore need to develop a clearer view of what the public responsibility for education would imply (Weber & Bergan, 2005).

Detailing the public responsibility for higher education required a view of its purposes. From what had been a fairly one-sided emphasis in public debate on education as preparation for employment, the Council of Europe arrived at four major purposes:

- preparation for sustainable employment;
- preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies;
- personal development;
- the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base (Bergan, 2005; Council of Europe, 2007).

As of 2007, the notion that higher education has several purposes started being reflected in the communiqués of the ministerial conferences of the European Higher Education Area. In London in 2007, the Ministers declared that

> Our aim is to ensure that our HEIs have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full range of purposes. Those purposes include: 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" (Bologna Process, 2007, para. 1.4),

in language clearly inspired by the Council of Europe Recommendation that was adopted literally the day before the Ministerial conference, but the draft of which was well known.

In Yerevan in 2015, Ministers took a broad view of the challenges faced by higher education:

> Today, the EHEA faces serious challenges. It is confronted with a continuing economic and social crisis, dramatic levels of unemployment, increasing marginalization of young people, demographic changes, new migration patterns, and conflicts within and between countries, as well as extremism and radicalization. On the other hand, greater mobility of students and staff fosters mutual understanding, while rapid development of knowledge and technology, which impacts on societies and economies, plays an increasingly important role in the transformation of higher education and research (Bologna Process, 2015a: 1).

And also stated that the EHEA

> has a key role to play in addressing these challenges and maximizing these opportunities through European collaboration and exchange, by pursuing common goals and in dialogue with partners around the globe. We must renew our original vision and consolidate the EHEA structure" (*ibid.*: 1).

This was reflected in what Ministers referred to as a renewed vision:

> By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other's higher education systems; where

> automatic recognition of qualifications has become a reality so that students and graduates can move easily throughout it; where higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights; and where educational opportunities provide the competences and skills required for European citizenship, innovation and employment. We will support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions. We will support higher education institutions in enhancing their efforts to promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking, political and religious tolerance, gender equality, and democratic and civic values, in order to strengthen European and global citizenship and lay the foundations for inclusive societies. We will also strengthen the links between the EHEA and the European Research Area (*ibid.*: 1–2).

Ministers also indicated making education systems more inclusive as one of four priorities, along with quality, employability, and structural reforms.

In 2018, Ministers did not explore the societal role of higher education in quite the same detail, but the clear references to higher education playing a decisive role in meeting challenges ranging from unemployment to violent extremism and a commitment to "developing policies that encourage and support higher education institutions to fulfil their social responsibility and contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society through enhancing intercultural understanding, civic engagement and ethical awareness, as well as ensuring equitable access to higher education" (Bologna Process, 2018: 1) show that the societal role of higher education was very much on Ministers' minds. The emphasis given to the fundamental values of higher education in both the Declaration and in the Ministerial conference itself shows that Ministers were concerned about not only the role of higher education in furthering democracy in our societies but that the relative absence of democracy in some EHEA members is detrimental to higher education and research. This concern was present also in 2015 but had since then been reinforced by developments in several EHEA members, and in particular by the actions of the Hungarian government against the Central European University. Both the European Commission and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe asked the Hungarian government to retract the relevant part of the 2017 higher education legislation known colloquially as the Lex CEU; the Commission also concluded that the law is not compatible with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and took legal action against Hungary.[2] The Council of Europe also held a public event on academic freedom and institutional autonomy at the CEU in March 2019, in which Pavel Zgaga participated.[3] In October 2020, the European Court of Justice ruled in favor of the Commission and found that the law violates Hungary's commitments under the WTO and infringes the provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union relating to academic freedom.[4]

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[2] See a timeline of events with links to relevant documentation at Timeline of Events | Central European University (ceu.edu), accessed November 25, 2020.

[3] See Public event on academic freedom and institutional autonomy at the Central European University - Newsroom (coe.int), accessed November 25, 2020

[4] See "Landmark Judgment" - Lex CEU Struck Down by European Court of Justice | Central European University, accessed November 25, 2020.

There has been concern over the political situation in Belarus, including its lack of commitment to academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and student and staff participation in higher education governance for since the 1990s, and it is telling that the Roadmap that accompanied Belarus' accession to the European Higher Education Area in 2015 included provision on fundamental values (Bologna Process, 2015b). At the time of writing, concern about the impact of the crisis of democracy in Belarus on its academic community has been sharpened but there is no consensus about how to address it. A small minority of countries argue the doctrine of "non-interference" whereby the repression of the pro-democracy movement in Belarus in fall 2020 – still ongoing at the time of writing – is considered an internal affair of Belarus, expressed most clearly by the Russian Federation (Bologna Process, 2020a). Among the clear majority of actors that express concern over developments, however, there is disagreement about how this concern can best be expressed. In the preparation of the Ministerial conference of the EHEA held online on November 19, 2020, the Co-Chairs of the BFUG (Germany and the United Kingdom) issued a statement (Bologna Process, 2020b) to which a further 24 countries and 6 consultative members adhered.[5] The statement makes it clear that "What we are witnessing in Belarus is the grave violation of human rights and shared fundamental freedoms and values. The recent attacks, harassment, intimidation, detention, fines, arrest and expulsion of students and academic staff from higher education institutions are not acceptable nor negotiable". The German and UK Ministers - and presumably the other Ministers who acceded to the statement – commit to making violations of fundamental EHEA values public and offer support to the academic community and authorities of Belarus "to assist them in reaching our shared values".

In spite of this clear statement and the widely shared concern about developments in Belarus, the fact that there was not near-unanimity about this statement as well as the relative lack of reactions for example to violations of academic freedom and intuitional autonomy in Turkey in the wake of the failed coup in July 2016 demonstrates that governments as well as other actors in the EHEA often find it difficult to reconcile a commitment in principle to fundamental values with other political concerns.

17.3 Democracy: Institutions, Laws – And Then What?

In the years around 1990, the face of Europe changed rapidly as regimes fell in what had previously variously been called "people's democracies" and "East bloc countries", and which had to some extent been linked to the Soviet Union. New elections were held that were freer than any election held over the previous four decades or so, new constitutions and laws were passed, and in many countries former

[5] The list will be found at http://ehea.info/page-ministerial-conference-rome-2020, accessed November 24, 2020.

dissidents moved into government offices. At the same time, many of those who had had formal or informal positions in the former regimes managed to hold on to positions, not least in the economy.

Yugoslavia had been resolutely non-aligned and should not be grouped with the countries aligned with the Soviet Union. While hardly a democracy, it was also not a hardline totalitarian regime. Like the Soviet Union, however, it disintegrated, and the fate of its separate parts was highly diverse. Slovenia, like the Baltic countries, developed into a fully independent democracy, and Pavel Zgaga contributed to this development both as an academic and a political and intellectual leader. He maintained contacts with democratically minded academics in other parts of former Yugoslavia, where some of the new regimes were considerably more heavy-handed than Tito had been. Serbia was a particularly disturbing case, and Pavel Zgaga was among those who supported the Alternative Academic Education Network, set up by Srbijanka Turajlić and other academics who had refused to pledge loyalty to the Milošević regime in the wake of the 1997 higher education law. The AAEN organized alternative classes (hence the name) for students who had been expelled as well as for those who wanted an alternative to what the public universities could offer at the time.[6] The AAEN also organized a large conference within six months of the fall of the Milošević regime. Instead of the 300 or so participants it expected, in the end 850 participants turned up, along a with some foreign presenters,[7] and ironically the conference had to be held at the Sava Center, which was one of the show pieces first of Tito and later of Milošević.

The Alternative Academic Education Network shows how important education and academics can be to democracy. It, and developments in the 1990s more broadly, also show that democracy does not follow automatically when elections are free, constitutions revised, and parliaments representative. Institutions, laws, and elections will be democratic only in a context where people generally accept that others may legitimately view an issue differently than we do, that we may learn from others, that conflicts should be resolved through dialogue rather than by violence, that diversity – including that represented by minorities and migrants – is a potential source of strength rather than a danger, and that citizens have a responsibility for engaging in public space. Democracy needs what we have come to refer to as multiperspectivity, originally developed through the Council of Europe's history education program (Council of Europe, 2001; Stradling, 2003).

The Council of Europe has come to refer to the set of attitudes and behaviors required for institution, laws, and elections to function in practice as democratic culture, or a culture of democracy (Council of Europe, 2005:III:3, 2018a, b, c). This culture needs to be developed anew in each generation, and it can never be taken for granted. Democratic culture is very much an education issue.

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[6] See Serbia: Milosevic's crackdown on universities - Bosnia and Herzegovina | ReliefWeb, accessed on November 25, 2020. The movie *Druga strana svih* (The Other Side of Everything), made by Srbijanka Turajlić's daughter Mila, provides a vibrant impression of this period in the history of Serbia.

[7] The present author should declare an interest: he was one of the foreign presenters.

17.4 Competences for Democratic Culture

While there has been a positive development in the rhetoric on education, moving away from an almost unilateral emphasis on preparation for the labor market to a more balanced presentation of all major purposes of education, rhetoric alone will not change reality. The development of discourse must be followed by development of policies and practice. This was the background for the initiative taken by Andorra to make education not only *a* but *the* priority of its Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers from November 2012 to May 2013.[8]

It is certainly reductionist to see education merely as a process leading to a set of qualifications. Nevertheless, qualifications and the competences they certify are an essential result of education. If learning outcomes are essentially developed with a view to the labor market only, education will in practice give priority to such competences. For preparation for life as active citizens in democratic society to be seen as a major purpose of education in practice and not only in rhetoric, we therefore need to be able to describe the pertinent competences that our education systems, schools, and universities should develop in students at different levels of education. This was the task the Council of Europe set itself, with unfailing support from Andorra, starting with what was most likely the first Chairmanship conference ever devoted entirely to education, held in Andorra la Vella in February 2013 (Van't Land, 2013).

Work on what became the Reference Framework started later in 2013, led to a model adopted by Ministers of Education of the States parties to the European Cultural Convention in April 2016, and the complete framework completed and launched in spring 2018 (Council of Europe 2018a, b, c).[9]

The Reference Framework seeks to identify competences that are particularly important for a culture of democracy to become and remain a reality. It is important to keep in mind that competences for democracy are not like skiing or riding a bicycle: once you have acquired the competences, they do not disappear, absent any dramatic health issue. They may get rusty but can easily be brought back up to speed. Rather, competences for democracy are like languages: if we do not use them, we lose them – and that is true even for our native language. The need to maintain competences for democracy applies to individuals but also to societies: if democracy disappears for a generation, it is much more difficult to reestablish.

The competences are not exclusive to building and maintaining a culture of democracy, in the same way that the four major purposes of education outlined above are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Many of the competences that make us attractive on the labor market also help us be active citizens in democratic society and contribute to our personal development. Analytical competences, the ability to present complex issues clearly orally and in writing, and the ability and will to value cultural diversity are obvious examples.

[8] See www.exteriors.ad/en/andorra-hcairmanship, accessed November 25, 2020.

[9] For an overview of the Reference Framework and related issues, see https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/home, accessed November 24, 2020.

The examples are not haphazard: all three are part of the 20 competences identified in the Reference Framework and organized around four clusters: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. Graphically, the four clusters and 20 competences are represented by a butterfly (Fig. 17.1).

The Reference Framework was developed with the crucial assistance of an expert group, of which Pavel Zgaga was a key member. The group early on advised that the competences as defined would need to be teachable, learnable, and assessable. The latter was important because otherwise the goal of making education for democracy a key objective of European education systems would have been much more difficult to reach. Each of the 20 competences are described as learning outcomes, and for almost all of them three key descriptors are identified for each of three different levels; basic, intermediate, or advanced (Council of Europe, 2018b). No attempt was made to link the level of competences to specific levels within education systems, such as seventh grade, as national systems and curricula vary. It was, however, recognized that the descriptors may not apply to the very youngest learners, below age 9, and work is now nearing completing on a specific set of competences for this group.

Of the many interesting discussions within the group as well as between the group and other experts, I would highlight three. These discussions are not new to the Council of Europe (see e.g. Bergan & Damian, 2010) but they crystallized in the discussion of the RFCDC.

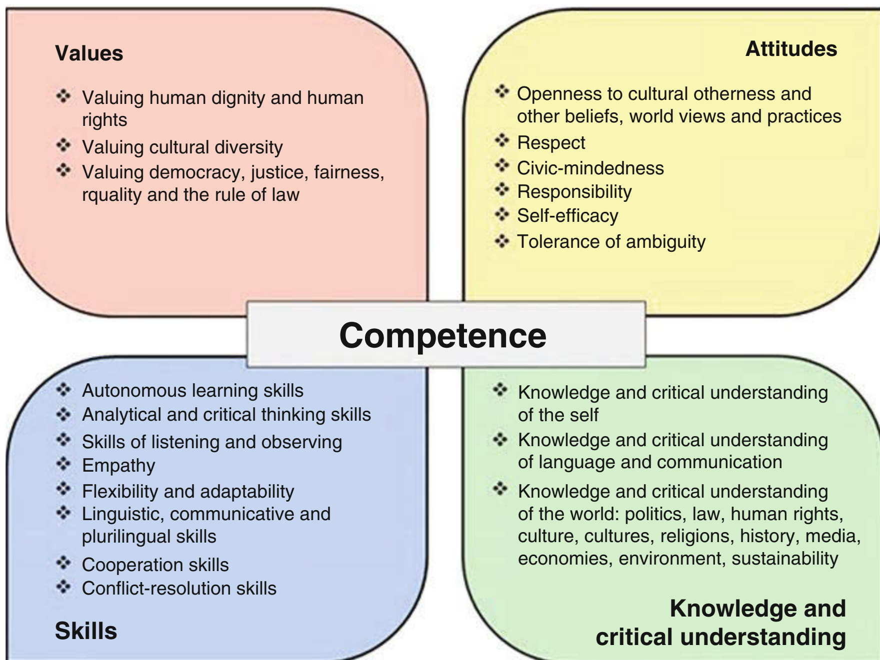

Fig. 17.1 Competences for Democratic Culture. (Source: Council of Europe, 2020)

Firstly, some members of the broader education community questioned whether values could or should be taught, and even more whether they could or should be assessed. The first sub-question is easily answered: it would be difficult to identify an education system that takes an entirely *laissez-faire* approach to values and that does not somehow seek to instill core values in students, especially in the earliest stages of education. The role of parents is of course essential, but it is not exclusive. Values as well as labels may differ, but they are normally the key values of society, such as the French *valeurs républicaines*, or – in the case of less than democratic countries - of the regime in place, sometimes disguised as "patriotic values". The group found the argument that European education systems should not or could not teach democratic values unconvincing. Key democratic values are enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (European Court of Human Rights, 2020).

The argument against assessing values needed to be taken more seriously. Instinctively, grading values may not seem like an attractive idea, and many European education systems have abandoned giving grades for "behavior", "order", or anything similar. While the link between "assessment" and "grades" may be instinctive, it is also imperfect. The outcome of an assessment may be expressed through grades but there are other options. Certainly, abstaining from correcting behavior that arises from lack of values, or from anti-democratic values in a broad sense of the word, cannot be an option for teachers. If some students were to make fun of or even engage in hate speech against other students because they look or dress differently, profess another faith, or have a disability, teachers would not be doing their job if they did not intervene. Many cases will be obvious but in some cases the line between legitimate dissent and unacceptable views that betray a lack of values can be difficult to draw. In Europe, the reality of the Holocaust had been questioned only by the most extreme right-wing groups. However, teachers in some countries are now faced with students who either deny its reality or question its unique character, often with reference to the current situation in the Middle East. A country like France, which has seen several terrorist attacks by extreme groups claiming affiliation with Islam,[10] has also seen memorial acts, such as observing a minute of silence, interrupted by students expressing admiration for the terrorists. These are not actions that European educators can accept, nor can they accept the values and attitudes that motivate them.

These are of course extreme examples but values like tolerance, respect, and valuing human dignity need to be developed through education. They will be assessed through everyday practice but the discussion of how they can best be assessed also in more formal ways needs to continue. For good reason, one of the guidance documents addresses assessment (Council of Europe, 2018c). The guidance document outlines key principles to be considered when assessing competences for democratic culture and explores the implications of the value foundations of the RFCDC for assessment practices. The document specifies that "education practitioners therefore

[10] "Claiming" is an important qualifier: the affiliation is not accepted by mainstream Islamic authorities.

need to make careful judgments concerning assessments in which learners are found to express opposition to valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity and valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and rule of law. It is crucial that such opposition is only taken into consideration in the assessment when the learner spreads, incites, promotes or justifies hatred based on intolerance" (Council of Europe, 2018c:3:6). The document further describes assessment approaches and methodologies, covering their strengths, challenges and risks and provides examples of how the assessment of clusters of competences can be conducted.

A second contested point was whether schools and universities should limit their teaching and learning of competences for democratic culture to theory, or whether they should also encourage students to practice these competences in a school setting or on campus. The majority view in the group – and by a large majority at that – was that democracy cannot be learned through theory alone, and that schools and universities must offer students opportunities to practice competences for democracy. The parallel to language education is striking: fluency in a foreign language cannot be developed through theory alone, and schools and universities offer their students possibilities to practice the foreign language(s) they are learning to the extent possible.

The underlying concerns of those who are reluctant to allow students to practice rather than just study democracy at school or university is, at least for some, rooted in a fear that education will become politicized. In some cases, resistance to political activities on campus or in school is a feature of more recent democracies (Plantan, 2004: 93–94), where such activities may be seen as reminiscent of the "political education" required under some previous regimes. In other cases, the reluctance may be rooted in the view that education should focus on the "basics", by which is meant more traditional school subjects, and that preparation for democratic participation is not a core education mission.

In most European education systems, however, students are encouraged to develop their democratic competences also through participation, adapted to their age. This may be through student associations of all kinds, from sports through theater to charitable or solidarity work. In Norway, for example, Operasjon Dagsverk[11] (OD; literally "Operation a Day's Work") is an annual campaign through which high school students work for a day and donate their earnings to the project selected for the annual campaign, normally a solidarity project in the Third World, under the motto "changing the world one day at a time". The first campaign was conducted in 1964, and campaigns have been conducted on an annual basis since 1967.[12] OD also offers high school students the opportunity to engage in the governance and organization of its activities. It is linked to the national organization for school students (Elevorganisasjonen).[13]

[11] https://www.od.no/, accessed November 24, 2020 (the site is in Norwegian).

[12] https://elev.no/vi-tilbyr/operasjon-dagsverk/, accessed November 17, 2020 (the site is in Norwegian).

[13] https://elev.no/, accessed November 24, 2020 (the site is in Norwegian).

Student participation in school and higher education governance is a feature of most European education systems. At higher education level, this is almost universal (Eurydice, 2018: 43). In most countries, secondary school and higher education students are organized in national organizations, and these are again organized in European organizations – OBESSU[14] for secondary school students and the European Students Union[15] for higher education students. ESU, in particular, has considerable visibility, represents the students on the Bologna Follow-Up Group, and influences the development of the European Higher Education Area. Among other things, ESU co-chaired the group that developed the Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension of Higher Education adopted by Ministers in November 2020 (Bologna Process, 2020c).

The third issue concerned the concepts of critical thinking and critical understanding, which a small minority in the group found difficult. The difficulty seemed to arise from different interpretations of "critical", which some took to imply destruction or tearing down. In particular one member of the group saw "criticize" as focusing on identifying mistakes or logical inconsistencies in a line of argument. To the other members of the group, however, "critical" had a broader meaning than just "finding fault". Identifying problems is just a first step and may even be considered the lesser challenge involved. Critical thinking and understanding imply multiperspectivity (Council of Europe, 2001; Stradling, 2003) – looking at issues from different angles – and not least identifying alternative solutions. If a given solution is considered faulty or insufficient, it is not enough to identify its weaknesses. We need to find viable alternatives. Critical thinking is essential to democratic participation and deliberation. For the same reason, it be perceived as particularly undesirable by non-democratic regimes. Both cases demonstrate the importance of democratic competences.

17.5 Conclusion

Pavel Zgaga's career has spanned fundamental changes in Europe, and he has played an important role in bringing some of these changes about. Through is own work, he has demonstrated that the ivory tower is an illusion. Scholars should engage, and both politics and policy need input from scholarship. Pavel Zgaga bridges the worlds of academia and politics, just as he has credibility with people of very different persuasions in the countries of former Yugoslavia and bridges this specific part of Europe with the rest of the continent.

One important common denominator in Pavel's diverse work is his strong belief in democracy, coupled with the belief that democracy needs education. He has been

[14] The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions, https://www.obessu.org/, accessed November 24, 2020.

[15] https://www.esu-online.org/, accessed November 24, 2020.

proven right by the development of the European Higher Education Area and, less encouragingly, by some of its present challenges in reacting adequately to breaches of its fundamental values. He has also bene proven right by the development of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, to which he contributed significantly.

Occasions on which *Festschriften* are called for could easily become excuses for looking back. But I believe Pavel Zgaga would much rather look ahead, to many years of continued work to make democracy a reality, based on values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding that can only be developed through education at all levels.

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Sjur Bergan was Head of the Education Department of the Council of Europe 2011 - 22 and lead the project Council of Europe projects on Competences for Democratic Culture and the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. He has represented the Council of Europe in the Bologna Follow Up Group and Board since 2000 and chaired three successive working groups on structural reforms 2007 - 15. Sjur was a member of the editorial group for the Council's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and a main author of the Lisbon Recognition Convention as well as of recommendations on the public responsibility for higher education; academic freedom and institutional autonomy; and ensuring quality education. Sjur Bergan is series editor of the Council of Europe Higher Education Series and the author of *Qualifications: Introduction to a Concept* and *Not by Bread Alone* as well as of numerous book chapters and articles on education and higher education policy. Sjur was also one of the editors of the *Raabe Handbook on Leadership and Governance in Higher Education* (2009 – 15) and one of the session coordinators at the Bologna Process Researchers' Conferences in 2015, 2018 and 2020. He is the recipient of the 2019 EAIE Award for Vision and Leadership.

Part IV
Teachers and Teacher Education, Academics and Academic Profession

Chapter 18
Teacher Education as Part of Higher Education: The Mission and Challenges

Hannele Niemi

Abstract In many European countries, teacher education (TE) has been transferred into higher (HE) education and follows the Bologna degrees' main structures and principles. This chapter focuses on TE as part of HE, especially in Europe, with some references to the global context. The following questions are reflected on: (1) What are the new challenges in HE? (2) What are the recent demands to revise TE programs in HE? (3) What role does research play in teachers' work and TE? and (4) How can TE fulfill its role in HE and society? These questions are analyzed from policy-level perspectives. TE has triple dependencies when it fulfills its mission. First, TE falls under HE policy, facing tensions of accountability and finance that concern all HE and simultaneously confronting social and environmental challenges that set new global demands for the entire HE system. Second, TE prepares teachers to work in schools in accordance with all the demands linked with teachers' work at different levels of educational systems. The third dependency is TE's mission from the value perspective that is linked with wide societal aims, such as equity, democracy, and human rights. The analysis concludes that TE programs must be based on premises that highlight teachers' high professional status with autonomy and responsibility, strong connections with research and an evidence-based working culture, and an active contribution to society. These demand continuous revisions in TE programs, more communication between society and universities, improved cooperation between disciplines, and increased investment in educational research.

Keywords Teacher education · Mission · Challenges · Reform

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18.1 Introduction

The role and function of teachers and teacher education (TE) is a burning issue, both globally and in Europe. In most countries around the globe, both policy makers and researchers acknowledge the importance of high-quality teachers. However, the function, role, and status of TE are contradictory, and many challenges exist (e.g., European Commission, 2013; League of European Research Universities [LERU], 2020; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). One of the major challenges is the low status of teachers in society. A report on teaching careers in all the European Union (EU) member states reported that "[A]lthough the role of teachers is becoming increasingly important as Europe rises to meet its educational, social and economic challenges, the teaching profession is becoming less attractive as a career choice." (European Commission et al., 2018, p. 16).

Before the Bologna declaration, TE training was provided in different kinds of educational institutions in Europe; some were part of higher education, but not all. The Bologna declaration was agreed upon by the education ministries in European countries and signed by ministers from 29 European countries in 1999. It harmonized the degree structure of higher education (HE) and made TE part of European HE. HE now consists of tertiary education provided by traditional comprehensive research-intensive universities, but also more practice-oriented HE institutions often called universities of applied sciences. Both types offer bachelor's (BA) degrees, and in many countries, universities of applied sciences also provide master's (MA) and PhD degrees; the latter, however, is not common practice. In this article, the term "university" is a common concept referring to both types of universities unless some specific features are otherwise emphasized.

Eurydice, the European information agency that collects basic facts about European countries' education systems, has provided an overview of initial TE in Europe (Eurydice, 2015). The common feature of teacher qualifications in European countries is that students who want to become teachers generally have to study for four or five years. The degree structures follow the Bologna degree system. The teacher qualification generally requires a four-year BA for primary teachers, and in many European countries, a BA degree is also valid for teaching at a lower secondary school level. In a few countries, primary-level teachers have only a three-year BA degree. Students who want to qualify to teach at the upper secondary level have to study up to MA level. However, in most countries, it has become necessary to have MA-level qualifications for the earlier school years. Eurydice (2015) also provides more detailed information about teacher qualifications. The MA qualification level (The International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED) is the minimum level required to work in general lower secondary education in 17 European countries: Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Finland also requires primary teachers to have an MA degree.

HE is not unified in Europe, even though the Bologna declaration consists of unifying principles for degree systems and guidelines for quality criteria and quality assurance and aims to increase mobility and internationalization. The big picture is that TE is part of HE, but at the same time, it means something very different in different countries, as Pavel Zgaga (2008) described just after the transformation, stating that a move to HE created new demands for TE. He also warned that Europeanization and internationalization, which includes harmonizing TE degrees and learning outcomes, mobility, and employability across European countries, are much more complicated processes in TE than in general (Zgaga, 2008). TE structures, status, and national political contexts are very different in European countries.

Zgaga (2008) also referred to the time before the Bologna process, when much hard work was done in TE systems and institutions across Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, but he warned that "Teacher education has caught the advanced wagons of the 'academic train' but could easily remain forgotten at a small, remote rural railway station as the 'train' continues along its way very fast and driven by complex processes, e.g. Europeanisation, globalisation, academic competitiveness etc." (Zgaga, 2008, p. 18). His comments forecasted challenges that turbulent processes in HE and in the global context bring forth to TE as a specific area within HE. Furthermore, Zgaga (2008) observed that TE is a young "academic discipline" and summarized the potential dangers of being left a marginalized discipline as follows:

- having a relatively lower "critical mass" than traditional academic disciplines;
- being at a higher level of political (governmental) influence than traditional professions;
- more vulnerable with regard to "national interests";
- being at the beginning of a true internationalization process; and.
- being confronted by the challenge of contributing knowledge to the emerging society. (Zgaga, 2008, p. 39).

This article focuses on TE as part of HE, especially in Europe, with some references to the global context. Today, all HE is under new pressures, although we can also recognize many challenges repeating themselves in 2021 as during and after the Bologna process. This is also a reality for TE, which has, in addition to general HE challenges, many severe problems due to educational, social, and cultural transformations in societies.

This article will reflect on the following questions:

1. What are the new challenges in HE?
2. What are the recent demands to revise TE programs in HE?
3. What role does research play in future teachers' work and TE?
4. How can TE fulfill its role in HE and society?

These questions will be analyzed from policy-level perspectives using research publications, statements, and reports from the EU, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and from HE agencies or associations,

especially the European University Association (EUA), representing more than 800 European universities and from the League of European Research Universities (LERU) which represents 23 research intensive universities in Europe. This chapter will also draw a picture pertaining to how research studies and research components have been integrated into TE.

18.2 Higher Education Facing New Demands

Starting globally in the twentieth century, but continuing and even accelerating in the last two decades, HE has expanded to include an increasing number of students, while simultaneously, demands for a higher societal impact have increased. Many challenges focus on governance and finance, as well as high competition for resources. The EUA, which represents more than 800 universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries is very concerned about this development and states:

> Many universities face a continuous underfunding challenge. Funding does not always follow the expansion of, and changes in, provision, and there are big differences across Europe. This leads to an uneven playing field and to increased competition between universities for resources (EUA, 2021, p. 5).

Many problems are linked to HE institutions' autonomy and accountability. Universities have had increasingly high pressures on accountability in terms of their study programs' quality standards, their internationally recognized research outputs, and demands to be like innovation centers for societal progress and welfare. HE institutions are only partially funded by the public, and resources come from a variety of funding sources, such as students and their families, foundations, companies and other private sector entities. Globalization has also brought forward the marketization of HE as a reality in many countries. This situation has been criticized by researchers (e.g., Bamberger et al., 2019; Cannella & Koro-Ljungberg, 2017; Giroux, 2002), who are concerned that universities will lose their academic autonomy and be pushed to neo-liberalistic management models, in which universities are led by external stakeholders and use management strategies derived from the business sector. Criticism also comes from the fear that private sector funding will narrow and bias research. However, while these are still urgent issues and have been in wide discussion over the last 20 years, it seems that the discourse has turned from neoliberal management and biased research themes to questions regarding HE's societal responsibilities. Autonomy can be understood as the right to determine institutions' own strategies rather than as a question of whether to include external stakeholders in institutional governance. Therefore, EUA (2021) states that external members of governing boards as well as other partners in society are seen as stakeholders that can provide ample knowledge and experience. EUA states:

> When looking to the future, we envision universities without walls; these are universities that are open and engaged in society while retaining their core values. All of Europe's

> universities will be responsible, autonomous and free, with different institutional profiles, but united in their missions of learning and teaching, research, innovation and culture in service to society (EUA, 2021, p. 5).

Burning global threats, such as global environmental and social crises with loss of democratic values, poverty, hunger, air quality, and pollution, as well as questions of the value of scientific and evidence-based knowledge creation, have raised and accelerated discussion on HE's core aims (Council of the European Union, 2020; OECD, 2012; UNESCO, 2021a, b). The crucial question is how HE, together with other actors and stakeholders, can contribute to solving these problems; the challenges are so huge that no single institution can solve them alone. This has led many universities to put their missions in education, research, and innovation policy into the service of achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) globally and locally. The EUA (2021) also recognizes that persisting social disparities and demographic changes in many European countries place pressure on social systems, and this calls also for reforms to lifelong learning, access, equity, and inclusion in Europe's universities and emphasizes a dialogue with society.

In HE, there is also a burning concern about the erosion of public debate regarding misinformation. The spread of false information and the concept of "alternative truth" undermine the value of evidence and the role of science in society (EUA, 2021, p. 4). Universities need to position themselves on this issue and find new and more effective ways to help counter this trend. LERU, another group of universities is also worried about the understatement of knowledge:

> With the global rise of populist movements and with authoritarianism gaining ascendancy, some observers in the media as well as in educational institutions speak of a watershed moment: How to keep informed public debate alive, how to ensure an ongoing exchange of thoughts especially among young people so as to foster democratic discourse and the open minds equipped for today's world? (LERU, 2020, p. 7).

HE institutions are facing many demands, such as creating new knowledge for huge global environmental challenges, defending democracy and evidence-based scientific knowledge, participating in societal issues, and engaging in wide communication with different partners and stakeholders nationally and internationally, all while maintaining their institutional autonomy. This sets high demands for TE and how it can be an active part of HE.

18.3 Teacher Education in the Middle of Many Dependencies

TE has double or even triple dependencies when it fulfills its mission to educate teachers. First, TE falls under HE policy, facing tensions of accountability and finance that concern all HE and simultaneously confronting social and environmental challenges that set new global demands for the entire HE system. Second, TE prepares teachers to work in schools in accordance with all the demands linked to

teachers' work at different levels of educational systems. The third dependency is TE's mission from the value perspective, which is linked with wide societal aims, such as equity, democracy, and human rights. This section will analyze how TE fulfills its place in HE in Europe and globally and what kinds of reforms are needed.

18.3.1 Demands to Revise Teacher Education Programs in Higher Education

Lefty and Fraser (2020) collected historical perspectives of changes in TE policy over 20 years from 11 countries in Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Africa, including Israel. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and Lieberman (2012) edited a compendium of TE policy and implementation from Asia, Europe, and Australia, representing seven countries. Globally, most countries provide TE as part of HE and acknowledge teachers' importance; however, there are many difficulties and tensions in recruiting high-quality candidates to TE programs. The teaching profession is not an attractive career path, and the reasons for this are often due to a lack of respect for teachers, low-quality or irrelevant TE programs, stressful working conditions and bureaucracy in schools, low teacher salaries, and top-down leadership models. European Commission has used Eurydice (2012) statistics and refers (2013, p. 15) "Salary levels, supplemented by the award of possible additional allowances, and good working conditions may be two of the major incentives that ensure high motivation of teachers and make the teaching profession more attractive". TE is at the intersection of many political and macro-level educational trends in education systems in general and as part of HE (see also Murray et al., 2019).

Many tensions regarding TE revolve around teachers' professionalism and whether they are regarded as professional at all. The concept of the profession is commonly used to describe medical doctors' work. Universities are responsible for medical doctors' and lawyers' education, but there is no discussion on whether they are professionals or why they are part of HE, which is typical in the TE sector. We have seen an ongoing debate on whether teachers can actually be classified as professionals (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Howsam, 1976; Lefty & Fraser, 2020; Tom, 1984). In addition, de-professionalization trends, which refer to the fact that teachers can be hired and work without real education or with short practical training has increased. The classical definition of the profession suggests that they are societal institutions that are recognized because of their specific area of expertise and special features, such as long, high-quality education in institutions that have been audited or accredited, quality criteria for entering said profession, a codified body of knowledge as a basis for work, wide autonomy, and the responsibility to develop one's own work and ethical code of conduct (e.g., Cruess et al., 2004; Niemi, 2021). If teachers are regarded as representatives of the profession, this status requires TE to prepare forthcoming teachers for the roles, structures, and demands that accompany the practice of professional autonomy and responsibility. Regarding teachers only as practitioners or servants of contemporary political aims places TE and teachers in

a narrow role that is not in line with universities' missions to educate autonomous, critically thinking professionals.

In HE, TE is also connected to how valuable TE is seen in universities. With some exceptions, such as Finland and Singapore (Schleicher, 2011) TE programs are unwanted and unattractive programs in most universities; thus, the LERU (2020) has become worried about TE in Europe. The LERU (2020) sees several urgent challenges, such as gender and ethnic imbalance, both in the teaching profession and in HE widely. Recruiting teachers for teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects is increasingly difficult in many countries, and overall, the LERU has called for TE to better prepare teachers to guide their pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. LERU universities see the value of teachers from future perspectives while also recognizing the many changes needed for (1) effective in-service TE, (2) better interlinkage between disciplinary subjects, didactics, and educational sciences, (3) more internationalization, and (4) a rapid inclusion of digital skills and competences, digital education, and data literacy into programs (LERU, 2020). The ability to work in teams, address, and operationalize interdisciplinary challenges and themes and communicate skills will be indispensable future competences that any teacher needs to have. The LERU's analysis provides strong evidence that many practices in TE should be improved in universities. Many of these suggestions have been recognized many years (e.g., Livingston and Flores (2017) but they need still much work for facing today's burning challenges.

The LERU statement also refers to the underrating of the importance of teaching in HE. While excellence in academic teaching is generally recognized, it is still undervalued as a prerequisite for tenure and further promotion. The statement (LERU, 2020, p. 8) refers to initiatives to integrate academic excellence and teacher training initiatives, which are often considered, as the document says, "cute rather than critical". The document (LERU, 2020, p. 8) also clearly remarks that "[A]cademic staff so inclined should be positively encouraged to actively contribute to raising the profile of the Initial Teacher Education programmes recruiting their students and, as such, become teacher educators themselves."

The author of this article has been a panel member of more than 10 HE institutional evaluations and auditing processes in Europe over the last 10 years. In many universities, TE is still an isolated island in universities, both in research-oriented universities and more business- and innovation-oriented universities. This isolation means that educational departments and other disciplines are not in communication and do not have joint aims. TE is invisible in universities' strategic goals, and in some cases, TE is divided into many small programs for specific teacher groups, making it all the more difficult to understand the common aims of educational professionals. There are also difficulties with systematic research in TE departments.

LERU (2020) has created a plan to clarify what would be needed to make TE more attractive and respected in universities and in society. It does not set any structural recommendations, but highlights that in universities, there is first a need for renewed and rewarded involvement in initial TE to improve continuing professional development. Revisions are needed to have more innovative cooperation between

the STEM disciplines and the social sciences and humanities disciplines, and an exploration of interdisciplinary thinking in pre-university curricula is required. Structural funding and robust infrastructure are needed to make new initiatives sustainable. Second, more public and pupil engagement is needed to encourage academics to enrich their courses with outreach excursions to share course content with the wider public, including local schools and their pupils. Third, more career options and promotions are needed to make pre-university education a positive, potential career prospects for PhD students. Overall, universities need flexible and affordable teacher training programs to stimulate an influx from other parts of the labor market into education as well as the development of hybrid careers. Finally, the fourth recommendation proposes increased educational research and the right to balance between subject expertise and pedagogical skills in initial TE and increased investment in educational research. The overarching ambition of LERU (2020) universities is to help raise the societal profile of the teaching profession and to fully recognize the contribution of comprehensive research-intensive universities to the career-long formation of teachers in pre-university education as an integral part of their mission. The LERU document (2020, p. 5) emphasizes that universities need "to foster the self-understanding of outstanding academic staff, not only as scholars and scientists but also as teacher educators."

Demands for revising the teaching profession and TE are global. The OECD (2018) conducted the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which is an international survey of teachers and principals. Through the breadth and depth of the indicators collected, the OECD (2018. p.) analyzed the necessary global revisions in recent TE. It presents a five-pillar model of what the teaching profession should consist of:

1. *The knowledge and skills base*, which includes shared and specialized knowledge, is captured through standards for access to the profession, pre-service training, and in-service professional development.
2. *Career opportunities*, such as contractual arrangements offering security and flexibility, competitive reward structures, and room for career progression.
3. *Peer regulation and a collaborative culture*, which provide opportunities for collaboration and peer feedback to strengthen professional practices and the collective identity of the profession.
4. *Responsibility and autonomy*, which refers to decision-making, applying expert judgment, and informing policy development at all levels of the system.
5. *The prestige and standing of the profession*, which includes the ethical standards expected of professional workers, as well as its perceived societal value and standing relative to other professional occupations.

In the teaching profession, continuous revisions are needed; however, looking back at past reforms, this is a slow process. Lefty and Fraser (2020) provide many examples of transformations in TE in the last 20 years in different countries that have not been successful. The essential reason for these failed transformations has been that plans and decisions for teachers or TE have been made without the representatives of teachers and teacher educators whom the decisions concern. Reforms have been

started and monitored from the top down, either by the government or the university administration. Also, the crisis of legitimacy is a typical reason for unsuccessful reforms that can also be a consequence (Wheeler-Bell, 2017). It means that people do not trust that the reforms have elements that improve current practices or take a leap to a better future, which is needed for real change. In some cases, the reforms have not been successful because they have been driven by political power changes and rapid new demands, creating more difficulties for schools and teachers, as well as TE. If teachers' roles are strongly tied to short-term political aims without wider societal discussion, this narrows teachers' professional role. Certainly, TE education needs revision. However, the decisive pillars of reforms should be how teachers' professional roles with autonomy and responsibilities can be implemented and how teachers can lead their students for the very complex future.

18.3.2 The Role of Research Studies—Leading to Professionalism

Research is linked to traditional universities' work, but it is also an important part of teaching-oriented and applied science universities, where research is often linked to practical development projects. The EU (2020) and universities themselves (e.g., EUA, 2020; LERU, 2020) have emphasized the role of research in its full range, from basic research to applied and innovation-related research-based development.

Research is a key component of a university's mission, and TE as part of HE must also be seen from that perspective. However, research studies do not have an established position in TE programs. Eurydice conducted an internal survey that revealed that this research component means very different things in TE (Caena, 2014). It can refer to a course on research methods, reading merely research articles, or authentic research. Healey (2005) and Jenkins and Healey (2005) reviewed how research components can be implemented in TE and presented four ways to engage TE students with research: (1) research-led engagement where students learn about current research in the discipline; (2) research-oriented engagement that develops research skills and techniques; (3) research-tutored engagement that relies on research discussions; and (4) research-based engagement that undertakes research and inquiry. Different TE programs have very different implementations regarding whether students are considered audience members rather than active participants.

It seems that the research component is still seeking its place in TE programs. BA degrees have very little time for all the studies and competences that teachers need in their work, and teachers' work can be seen as a practical rather than an academic endeavor. Although the research component has had difficulty being integrated with TE programs and research has played various roles in programs, we have had for many years international discussions about the significance of teachers' own inquiries for improving their own work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Dick, 2006; Elliot, 1990, 2001; Lunenberg, et al., 2007). These discussions have focused on a tradition of an action research paradigm or other teacher-conducted

inquiries wherein teachers develop their profession through systematic data collection and observations and transform teaching methods or learning environments based on evidence. Many researchers see these kinds of research experiences as valuable, especially in in-service training (Breen, 2003; Crawford & Adler, 1996; Wang & Zhang, 2014; Xu, 2014).

When giving reasons for the importance of research studies, we have to ask why teachers need research capacity. Research in TE should be seen from the teaching profession's perspective. Teachers work in complex situations and circumstances, and they need new scenarios for the development of their own work, which is the focus, for example, in action research. Developing one's own work is an essential criterion if someone's work can be regarded as professional. In addition, research studies can have a more general purpose. Teachers need to understand how knowledge is created and to learn critical thinking through research studies. In research studies, teachers can also internalize the attitude that a researcher has in their work, which means a persistent drive to find out reasons, effects, and relationships. In the teaching profession, this attitude means continuous efforts to assess teaching and learning processes to understand their effects on students' learning. Therefore, teachers also need to know the basic principles pertaining to research methods to understand errors or biases and to understand why we have to analyze teaching and learning with open and critical lenses. The critical mindset is the basis for all professional work, and research studies ensure that teachers have the intellectual and creative capacity to develop their profession. Furthermore, research studies are linked to teachers' professional roles in society. Teachers' roles as evidence-based practitioners will be minimal if they do not have the ability to use the required tools, such as inquiry, questioning, and critical thinking, which are fundamental to research work. However, research studies cannot do so alone, and these studies must be integrated with other parts of TE.

Finland has been a forerunner in integrating research in TE (e.g., Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006), devoting one-fifth of the contents of primary and secondary school TE programs to research consisting of methodological courses, research seminars, authentic data collection and analysis experiences, and scientific writing of BA and MA theses. Niemi and Nevgi (2014) studied the role and significance of Finnish TE in primary and secondary school TE and found importance at two levels: (1) student teachers learned critical thinking, independent inquiry, and many other skills that were necessary in knowledge creation that can be taught through research studies in TE; and (2) student teachers regarded these studies not only as important from the viewpoint of general scientific inquiry but also for their own professional development. Research studies also opened student teachers' eyes to understanding pupils' learning difficulties and how to help them, and they learned how to collaborate with different partners in the school community. Research studies even helped them with their everyday classroom teaching by bringing additional value to teachers' professional duties (Niemi & Nevgi, 2014). Jyrhämä (2016) confirmed that the most common values given to research studies are a positive attitude toward one's work and one's own development as teachers and knowledge of how to contribute to the development of the school community. Through research studies, teachers learn alternative ways of working, reflecting, dialoguing, and gaining feedback for their work.

The study by Niemi and Nevgi (2014) found a strong effect from how research studies were implemented. Active learning experiences in TE reinforce research studies' positive effects on professional competences. An active learning culture means that student teachers are not only audience members, but also active agents in their studies and learning. The active learning culture is realized via pedagogical arrangements, such as timing (e.g., to get methodological studies closer to MA research seminars), as well as how research studies are integrated with other parts of TE programs and how supervisors support their research work. The role of supervisors in research studies is crucial, as they must understand teachers' professional development, make studies pedagogically meaningful, and clarify these studies' objectives and criteria. This supports the findings of other studies (Cornelissen & Van der Berg, 2014). Student teachers not only need support for their scientific work but also for their growth as professionals. Research studies on TE are complex processes with many parallel and longitudinal perspectives. The real challenge is how teacher educators balance research and professional practice while simultaneously preparing students for professional practice and academic work.

18.3.3 Teacher Education's Mission in Society

TE in schools works with very practical situations. Universities and schools set aims, structures, and regulations for teachers and TE based on contemporary demands and challenges. However, as professionals, teacher educators and teachers are tied to fundamental values aimed toward human development and wellbeing, democracy, and human rights. TE works toward long-term effects in schools and society and has far-reaching aims that require continuous evaluation to fulfill its role in HE and society. However, it cannot do it alone. The only way to see real change is to have active interaction and dialogue between universities and different partners in society; it needs change in all aspects of interaction.

Already in the 1990s, Carr and Hartnett (1996) and Hartnett and Carr (1995) presented the following principles as the basis of teacher development and TE:

- Teacher development must be connected to general social and political theories about issues such as democracy, social justice, equality, and legitimacy. It should demonstrate the implications of a principled view of democracy, not just for educational systems but also for the way in which educational institutions should be run. It also has to relate these ideas to curricula, pedagogy, and assessment.
- Teacher development must be located within a particular historical, political, and educational tradition and context. Teachers do not work and reflect in a social vacuum; they act within institutions, structures, and processes that have a past and a social momentum.
- A theory of TE has to re-establish a democratic political agenda and develop societal constituencies in society to bring about the required changes.

TE and teachers' work have that have far-reaching consequences. Zeichner et al. (2020) raised some critical questions regarding how TE serves democracy and how this should be its core mission. They proposed that the preparation of teachers for a democratic society should be based on an epistemology that in itself is democratic and includes respect for and interaction among practitioners, academics, and community-based knowledge. Souto-Manning (2019) called for the transformation of TE to foster equity in and through education and to promote the preparation and development of justice-oriented teachers.

Global perspectives have grown in the last two decades within HE, along with a number of global challenges. The new feature of universities' missions to work toward the UN's sustainable development goals intersects with many values that aim for a better life for human beings and natural environments. Societies are changing, and TE should prepare teachers to work with these changing conditions and play an active role in defending the fundamental values of equity and democracy and bringing them to their teaching. However, this can happen only if TE and other faculties and partners in HE institutions actively interact in teaching arrangements, joint research projects, and development- and innovation-oriented activities. Without active cooperation between national policy makers, local schools, teacher and parent associations, and cultural and business stakeholders, it is difficult to anticipate institutions' future needs and challenges and to actively influence change at a macro level. TE programs should have a stronger research component in which students are not only audience members but also have an active role, and TE departments should be capable of opening research calls nationally and internationally. Research projects nowadays consist of wide consortiums that are often multidisciplinary, with ambitious aims to find new solutions. The research themes of teaching and learning also have many connections to other disciplines, such as psychology with neurosciences, social sciences with the question of equity, technological issues with new modes of artificial intelligence, and philosophy with value and moral questions. Even though TE's core issues are often linked to questions of how to teach different subject matter, the TE mission is also connected to wider human and societal challenges.

The EU created the concept of the European Research Area (ERA) in 2000 and revitalized this concept in 2018 to the "new ERA." The European Commission described the aims of the new ERA in December 2020 as needing to encompass the full range of fundamentals for applied research and innovation (Council of the European Union, 2020). The new ERA should be based on shared responsibilities and the participation of stakeholders and citizens, building on the diversity and strengths of European research and innovation (R & I) ecosystems. Also, the EUA calls on the commission and EU member states to invest across national and EU-level funding programs in both investigator-driven and mission-oriented R & I, acknowledging them as mutually reinforcing contributors to both short-term solutions and long-term sustainable development. TE should be actively involved in these research missions.

18.4 Conclusions

Zgaga (2008) described TE as having taken a step toward an advanced train but also warned against the dangers of remaining at a silent side station. We can see that this hypothetical train is driving quickly and through different landscapes. However, global and national changes and huge dramatic challenges call for the whole HE system to revise its teaching methods and research missions to add quality and effectiveness to its societal contribution, and TE is part of that development. Autonomy in teaching and research is the core value of universities' work, but this does not mean isolation. The only way to solve huge problems is through dialogue, which is acknowledged by the HE sector itself, by international organizations, and by agencies. Niemi introduced the concept of an educational ecosystem that considers the education system part of a wider societal process; real changes can be done only through dialogue and collaboration (e.g., Niemi, 2016, 2021; Niemi et al., 2014). TE needs transformation to be an active partner in HE, but changes are needed in many other parts of the education system as systemic changes: within HE institutions, schools, educational administration and governance, as well as in the teaching profession. TE, especially pre-service training, cannot change teachers' status and make the teaching profession more attractive, but it can open new perspectives to teachers' work by taking seriously the UN's sustainable development goals and preparing new generations for the very complex future. This means continuous assessment and revision of TE programs, more communication between society and universities, improved cooperation between disciplines, and increased investment in educational research. Based on a big international summit of teaching and teacher education, Schleicher (2011, p. 63) has concluded that.

> Making teaching an attractive and effective profession requires supporting continuous learning, developing career structures to give new roles to teachers, and engaging strong teachers as active agents in school reform, not just implementers of plans designed by others. It also requires strengthening the knowledge base of education and developing a culture of research and reflection in schools so that teaching and learning can be based on the best available knowledge.

TE has a close connection to practice by educating teachers to make a difference in their students' lives through learning and preparing them to live and act in a multicultural and increasingly changing world (Simões et al., 2018; Zgaga, 2017). Pavel Zgaga states (2017, p. 35) "In the last two decades, teacher education has made a lot of experiments; it is time to analyse them systematically and thoroughly. Teacher education research should continue, on one hand, to pay attention to issues associated with quality teaching, inclusion, equity in education". And he continues:

> …on the other hand teacher education research should also seriously deal with broader issues, such as issues of openness and inclusiveness of the education system, including issues related to mobility and migration. Finally, it must also address systematically the issue of its positioning within academia, within the university as well as in relation to contemporary society and the State. Teacher education should not become hostage to tensions between academic disciplines; it needs to strengthen its research-based character and establish parity with other academic fields (Zgaga, 2017, 36).

TE has a wider global mission of promoting democratic values and being a partner in solving global challenges. For teachers to become agents of change, it is crucial that TE creates a vision of a future and redesigns its role in HE, which also includes a strong research contribution in its work for society and the development of the teaching profession. TE programs must be based on premises that highlight teachers' high professional status with autonomy and responsibility, strong connections with research, an evidence-based working culture, and an active contribution to society.

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Chapter 19
The Transformative Potential of Doctoral Networks in Teacher Education: A European Perspective

Vasileios Symeonidis and Michael Schratz

Abstract Almost 20 years after the launching of the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Declaration, teacher education remains an area embedded in national histories and conditions, although some common trends can be identified as the result of a broader Europeanisation process. Against this background, the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) was developed as a project funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme to raise awareness of what constitutes the "Europeanness" of teacher education and what it means to be a "European teacher". This chapter aims to explore the impact of EDiTE, drawing on the authors' experiences and project-related documents. It employs a framework for differentiating change processes of social systems and describes changes at the institutional level of participating universities and at the individual and professional levels of participants. Findings indicate that transnational doctoral networks place high demands on all participants due to their complex embedding in the different institutional contexts. The added value from the intercultural experience can increase the quality of teacher education in the future to a higher level if there is the appropriate commitment.

Keywords Teacher education · Doctoral networks · European Doctorate in Teacher Education

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19.1 Introduction

Over the past 20 years, several countries have been increasingly reforming their teacher education systems across the world, particularly after the emergence of evidence suggesting that student outcomes depend predominantly on teacher quality (see Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hattie, 2009; OECD, 2005). And while the importance of teacher quality for student learning is not something new, the discourse around measurable student outcomes, resulting from the global education reform movement, implies the effort of governments to monitor and control teachers' preparation (Trippestad et al., 2017). In Europe, teacher education reforms have also been promoted by EU policy initiatives and the Bologna process, aiming to achieve a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The scope of teacher education reforms remains, however, narrowed to the delivery of initial teacher education programmes (Vidović & Domović, 2013; Hudson & Zgaga, 2008), while other important aspects, promoted by the EHEA, such as teacher mobility and internationalisation, recognition of teacher qualifications, access of teachers to doctoral education, and improving synergies between research and teacher education, are topics often neglected by policymakers.

A survey on doctoral studies in teacher education conducted by the European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP) revealed that teaching professionals' career paths rarely include the possibility of third cycle research activities, since only a small number of countries deals proactively with doctoral studies in teacher education (Iucu & Schratz, 2013, p. 17). The fact that master qualifications in teacher education do not automatically count for some systems as adequate for entering doctoral programmes (e.g. in educational sciences, or in subject-specific disciplines), implies also that teachers rarely undertake doctoral studies and that traditional programmes in place produce more traditional scientific knowledge potentially neglecting the knowledge base from the field, something that can lead to the loss of research originating from practice. This situation hinders the mobility of teaching professionals both transnationally and within individual countries when individual institutions exercise discretion on the types of doctoral programmes offered.

Almost 20 years after Bologna, the mobility of teachers in Europe has not been improved sufficiently, despite various policy measures in place (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; Worek & Elsner, 2017; Zgaga, 2013). This is true for student teachers, newly qualified and experienced teachers alike. According to an EHEA working group: "While the mobility of teacher training students carries a great potential for future generations of pupils and students, they belong to the least mobile groups" (EHEA, 2015, p. 13). Moreover, Eurydice reported that at EU level, only one in four teachers (27.4%) say they have been abroad at least once for professional purposes (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). The fact that teachers are not enabled to easily move their employment from one country to another points to the strong national traits of what it means to teach in a particular country and raises the question of what makes a teacher "European" (Schratz, 2014).

To address the aforementioned issues and discern the "Europeanness" in teachers' work, the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) was developed as a multilateral project of five European universities in two different phases. In the first, preparatory phase (2012–2014), the project was funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission to create a PhD programme for education professionals in the field of teacher education (EDiTE, 2014). The second phase (2015–2019), supported by the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme,[1] materialised the idea by bringing together Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) from around the world, employed by five partner universities – Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Hungary, University of Innsbruck (UIBK) in Austria, University of Lisbon (UL) in Portugal, Masaryk University (MU) in the Czech Republic and University of Lower Silesia (ULS) in Poland – in conducting research on the theme of "Transformative teacher learning for better student learning in an emerging European context".

Under the leadership of UIBK, the consortium received funding to recruit 15 ESRs who would be adequately trained and would receive European Joint Degrees (EJD). The goal of EDiTE was to provide education professionals with the opportunity to become qualified researchers able to focus their research on current and future European challenges and to engage in continual transformative professional learning with a European perspective. In essence, EDITE is a PhD for professionals that would enrich international research about teacher education. Considering that teacher education is very much context-specific, a transnational perspective is essential to complement the typical national or regional perspectives found in teacher education programmes (Kotthoff & Denk, 2007; Symeonidis, 2021; Zgaga, 2006). In that sense, EDiTE aimed to promote a European perspective on the academic level by fostering joint European research.

Following the completion of the project and the submission of the final periodic report to the respective EU agency, this chapter will present the lessons learnt from EDiTE's journey and reflect on the value of creating international doctoral networks in teacher education. It includes valuable intellectual contribution from Pavel Zgaga, who had supported the project work as a dedicated member of the Academic Supervisory Board. If teacher education should go more international, because of transnational agreements such as Bologna, or because of research pointing to the benefits of internationalisation, then the EDiTE endeavour can provide evidence on the transformative potential of such a process in teacher education institutions across Europe.

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19.2 Towards a Model of Transformational Change Processes in Teacher Education

EDiTE was designed to offer a transnational space for communication, exchanges and joint academic training to researchers and practitioners with an active role in building the future for the next generation of European and global citizens. As activists from various socio-cultural backgrounds with their heterogeneous capital, the EDiTE community collaborated under the joint theme of “Transformative teacher learning for better student learning in an emerging European context”. This common framework of EDiTE research activities fostered the development of professional knowledge and scholarly thinking of researchers and contributed to transnational knowledge acquisition, which can be used for the benefit of the education sector in particular and society in general.

Due to the different education systems in the countries of the partner universities, there was no baseline for the research perspective of the ESRs. EDiTE had to create a professional understanding of how to become aware of and deal with the complexity and chaotic variety of issues, elements, aspects, dimensions, factors, as well as of problems, programmes and intentions, which make up the education system. In order to find a viable way to dovetail the interests and socio-historical conditions at each partner university with the overall need for a workable EDiTE framework for each ESR that would enable him/her to fulfil the qualification requirements for the graduation, the consortium was confronted with many questions, such as:

- How can the complex culturally embedded structures of doctoral programs be disentangled and the different demands of institutional and personal interests be brought into balance?
- How is it possible to coordinate communication and actions both of what had been decided on in the EDiTE grant agreement and the ESRs’ research projects between the universities involved?
- How can a research context be created which aims at influencing the patterns of how teacher education professionals go about changing their organisations?
- What can the partner schools (and other educational institutions) in each country, as places serving the field work of the ESRs, gain from EDiTE?
- How can teacher development be more closely connected with student learning by creating findings and realisations for modernising education in Europe?
- How can teacher education in each country initiate system-wide culture change and be linked with the improvement capacity of the actors on the different horizontal and vertical levels of the system?

In addressing these questions, a framework for the individual research projects was developed that allowed enough flexibility on both the individual and system levels that the ESRs were confronted with. In their collaborative work, the consortium of the five universities decided to focus on the theme of “Transformative teacher learning for better student learning in an emerging European context,” in the belief that the transformation of teacher learning has the strongest impact on student learning,

which needs improvement in many directions, particularly in view of the relationship among policy, research and practice, affecting the changing European area.

What do we mean by "transformative teacher learning" and an "emerging European context"? In our understanding, transformation is more than optimisation and implementation, which we show by means of Fig. 19.1.

If we look at the paradigmatic underpinnings of the three developmental approaches, there are significant differences in their conceptualisations:

Optimisation aims at improving practice by intensifying efforts and enhancing structures (including infrastructure). Best practice models should act as prototypes and show the intended direction which others can follow. In teacher education, this was – and in certain countries still is – the case that (experienced) master teachers, often closely linked to research institutions, demonstrate best practice lessons by instructing students in front of congregated teachers or teacher representatives from different schools, answer questions, explain theoretical background and provide back-up material. Such an approach can help in aligning individual teachers' thinking and acting about how to approach certain teaching situations. The participants take home valuable experiences of successful teaching encounters with background information, supplementary material to use in their own classrooms and they can refer to colleagues who had shared the same experience.

Implementation aims at introducing new practice, which is often necessary when new policies are introduced and replace previous routine handling. In Europe, most countries recently introduced quality standards which were based on competences, both teachers in their qualifications and students in their education should acquire. To implement such new approach curricula had to be revised, textbooks had to be rewritten and classes had to be taught in a different manner. Professional development courses were organised to promote and disseminate the new way of teaching

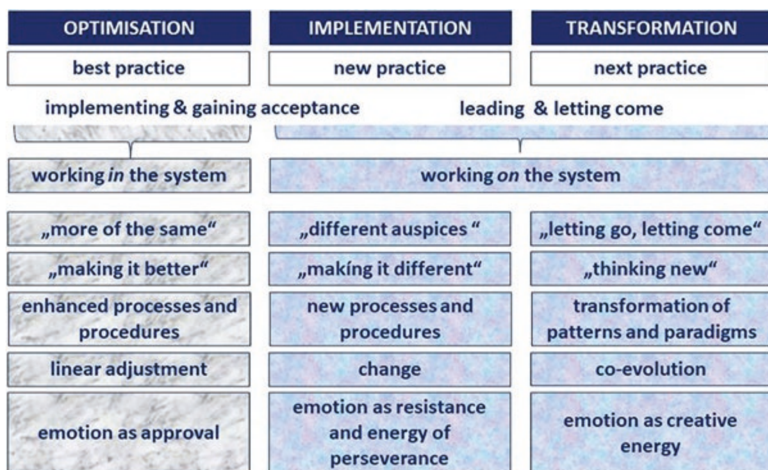

Fig. 19.1 Differentiation of meanings in institutional change processes of social systems. (After Schley et al., 2019, p. 72; transl. ours)

and learning. In both optimisation and implementation approaches the task for teacher educators is in finding ways to advocate for the idea or policy to gain acceptance by teachers and teacher educators respectively. Models and related performances of best or new practice are used for promotion and dissemination in order to create awareness and positive response. Similar to car manufacturers presenting prototypes of new models which should convince potential buyers of the potential and performance of their latest developments.

Transformation, however, does not offer the ready-made solution to be presented and implemented according to RDD (Research – Development – Dissemination). Consequently, everybody is confronted with the newness of the situation and does not have the solution. Such a situation was created by the unexpected closure of the schools during the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020: From one day to the next the students were not allowed to come back to school and the teachers had to reinvent their teaching being physically separated from them. It was no longer a question of optimising the previous teaching concepts, as the practised routines of face-to-face teaching did no longer work. Teacher educators made the same experiences: In their seminars, they could no longer stage roleplays for their students simulating classroom situations. Due to the sudden switch to distance teaching in both cases, there were no scientifically developed prototypes available that could be implemented.

The actors involved in EDiTE had a similar transformational experience. The teacher educators suddenly had to offer a doctoral programme in the English language at their institutions, where courses had predominantly been taught in the local language. Relating to the different university cultures, there is no blueprint for such transformational processes, since internationalising study programmes is not just translating course offerings into another language, but penetrates almost all spheres of academic lives – from the collaboration between the supervisors over data collection in native language settings to the alignment of administrative documents between national policies in higher education.

Through these new challenges, the educational institutions and their representatives involved faced an *emerging complexity*, which according to Scharmer (2007) is defined by disruptive patterns of innovation and change in situations in which the future cannot be predicted and is addressed by the patterns of the past. In order to deal with the challenges involved, it was not enough to simply adjust procedures, but often co-evolutionary endeavours were necessary to lead to transformation. For the actors involved, it was not always enough to work *in* the given framework, they also had to work *on* the system, meaning to expand possibilities, e.g. by creating a "third space" (Williams, 2014) demanding a new mindset toward transnational collaboration. For Kruse (2004) critical incidents or disruptive occurrences are necessary to open up new perspectives for next practice.

The experience working with a cohort of 15 ESRs from 11 countries across five universities has proven a challenging way guiding them along the paths of personal transformation, but it also needs accompanying measures to support issues of complexity, diversity, ambiguity, ambivalence and uncertainty. It required wisdom in dealing "with oddities, surprises, disturbances, the strange and irritations that

cannot be explained by old patterns and for which new explanatory patterns are needed" (Ortmann, 2014, p. 181).

The following sections will describe changes resulting from EDiTE at two levels: (a) the institutional level; and (b) the individual and professional levels. Data are drawn from the experience of the authors[2] gained throughout the project and from secondary data analysis of project reports and relevant publications (e.g. Baráth et al., 2020; EDiTE, 2020; Schratz et al., 2019). The website of the project (www.edite.eu) was also useful in providing information about the dissemination and outreach activities of the project. The information is synthesised to reflect the main aspects characterising transformation at each level.

19.3 Transformation at the Institutional Level

Internationalisation through EDiTE was recognised by all participating universities as the main contributing factor for changes at the institutional level. One aspect of internationalisation can be discerned in the effort of universities to overcome existing traditions and administrative bureaucracies regarding the delivery of their doctoral education programmes. For example, some of the participating universities had to develop for the first time at the level of their institutions an English language programme in a scientific area such as teacher education, where courses are predominantly taught in the local language. This was the case for the UL's Institute of Education, ELTE's Department of Education and Psychology and ULS's Faculty of Education, which created a parallel English track to their existing PhD in Education programmes. At ULS, the new English language programme in Educational Studies (Pedagogy) continues to recruit new students every year, and similar is the case at ELTE, which attracts international students, particularly from Central and South-Eastern Asia, financed through a Hungarian scholarship scheme and EU funds.

Offering PhD courses in English proved to be challenging at UIBK, where ESRs were expected to have or be willing to acquire some competence in the German language during the recruitment process. The presence of ESRs contributed, however, internally to the internationalisation of the respective department at UIBK, through promoting international exchanges of supervisors during events that took place in the other partner universities. At UIBK, the ESRs also shared their research with a wider audience at the university or presented jointly with other department members at conferences abroad. Other opportunities emerged through special events developed by the ESRs for the local university communities, such as the U.lab workshop following online sessions by MIT professor Otto Scharmer via the edX platform, or through lecture series dedicated to issues relevant for EDiTE, the so-called "EDiTE Lectures", open to all members of the university. Similar

[2] Vasileios Symeonidis was an EDiTE ESR and Michael Schratz was project coordinator and supervisor in the project.

outreach activities took place through an open-to-all seminar series organised by the EDiTE researchers at UL. In the cases of ELTE and UL, the ESRs were also involved in teaching activities, offering insights from their research projects to undergraduate students in English, through the course "Educational Issues in Europe" at UL, and the course "The Learning Teacher" at ELTE.

The involvement in EDiTE had an impact on the development of PhD programmes in all partner universities. Various constellations were developed to integrate the European Doctorate into the other research programmes of the university, with faculty staff and ESRs being involved in the design and development of the programme. Some partners reported that several innovations were first tested in the EDiTE project, later spreading to other doctoral programmes as well. For example, using programme designs based on the definition of intended learning outcomes, designing coherent research agendas as the basis of doctoral programmes, or implementing a staff development strategy to improve the quality of doctoral supervision. EDiTE led also to the revision of the content of doctoral seminars and the remodelling of teaching methods for doctoral education, while the continuous quality assurance processes provided internal knowledge for further improvements. During their studies, ESRs had the opportunity to undertake an internship in a partner organisation (mostly schools), thus strengthening school-university partnerships at the doctoral level. This kind of cooperation provides an ideal space for linking research and practice in teacher education, and its outcomes for EDiTE have been documented in a comprehensive report (see Baráth et al., 2020).

Another institutional change observed among partner universities related to the duration of the PhD programmes. Through the international joint-degree structure of EDiTE, partner universities were required to adjust the duration of their programmes to 3 years. ELTE and MU have a tradition of doctoral programmes taking longer than 3 years to complete, so different strategies were adopted to cope with the needs of the project. ELTE designed a research framework that defined the dissertation topics of the ESRs beforehand, connecting this to the work of existing research groups in the respective department. Such a pre-existing framework allowed to overcome some administrative hindrances at the institutional level and was meant to provide a clearer focus for the work of ESRs. MU enrolled the ESRs in the regular PhD programme, which has a 4-year standard length, but allows students to finish off earlier. Some of the ESRs used this opportunity and fulfilled the requirements for completing their PhD studies in 3 years, while others took up the extension opportunity. However, towards the end of the project, it became clear that some partner universities would not be able to adhere to a 3-year duration in the future, since Hungary and Poland changed their higher education laws and defined a standard and compulsory duration of studies for doctoral programmes nationwide.

A major administrative challenge for all partner universities was the joint degree provisions. According to the Horizon funding scheme, universities had to issue joint or double degrees for the ESRs who completed their studies and had successfully conducted a mobility period of at least one semester in a partner university. The process of awarding joint degrees was however not straightforward for all partners, because legal recognition was not possible in some national qualification systems.

Installing a joint degree programme, in addition or parallel to an existing PhD degree, would also require approval by university senates and accreditation, a rather time-consuming process with unforeseeable outcomes. Instead, the university partners opted for a cotutelle agreement that did not require any new accreditation and allowed for individual contracts for each ESR. The cotutelle agreement tested the administrative capacities of partner universities, since in some cases, as for example UL, eight cotutelle agreements had to be prepared, because many ESRs decided to undertake their mobility in Lisbon. Mobility was an additional administrative complexity, because some universities could not issue a double degree if ESRs spent less than 9 months in their institution. On the positive side, the relevant authorities at each of the five partner universities are now experienced in handling dual degree doctoral procedures and doctorates in the English language conducted in co-supervision arrangements.

Overall, EDiTE paved the way for the Europeanisation of doctoral programme structures (including curriculum content, programme organisation, methods of delivery, research themes, graduation procedures, etc.), which can have an indirect impact on first and second-cycle study programmes as well. In some of the cases described above, it became apparent that the modernisation of the programme structures allowed universities to attract doctoral students from other countries and thus contributed to the sustainability of the specific English-language PhD tracks. EDiTE promoted a transnational dimension of doctoral studies in teacher education, offering a platform for professional dialogue that can potentially act as a generative model for the development of other European joint doctoral programmes in teacher education. To date, the project reached beyond European borders, acting as a prototype for the Doctoral Network in Teacher Education in Africa (DNTEA) which operates under the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme.

19.4 Transformation at the Individual and Professional Levels

The EDiTE project had manifold impacts on the personal and professional development of the people involved, particularly the ESRs and their supervisors. In the first place, the EDiTE researchers were initiated into various constellations of scientific communities: together with doctoral students from other programmes running at the partner universities, they were socialized into the local and national research communities of the respective institutions. Transnationally, they also grew together as the EDiTE ESR community, undertaking joint dissemination and outreach activities, including the development of a blog (www.blog.edite.eu), newsletters (www.edite.eu/newsletters), scientific publications and conference presentations. Through personal networking in EDiTE events and international conferences, ESRs and supervisors extended their professional networks and created partnerships that inspired future collaborations and projects. After the end of the EDiTE project, several of the ESRs successfully moved to academic positions in different institutions,

while others undertook project management and policy advisor positions in governmental and non-governmental educational organisations.

EDiTE had also an impact on ESRs' understanding and elaboration of teacher education research in a transnational context. The ESRs learned to position their data collection in the specific national context they are working in and became aware of the complexity inherent in the interconnections between teacher education research, policy and practice. Their mobility period helped to expand inter-institutional and international research collaboration, while the work with local partner organisations led in practice-relevant research. Specifically, their research projects revealed important challenges to European teacher education, such as educational inclusion, citizenship education, school leadership, pedagogical supervision and professional development. However, tackling the language barrier when undertaking field research in schools proved a significant challenge for many researchers who could not speak the local language. Experience revealed that ESRs lost some of their initial motivation during the process because they could not easily communicate with their research participants or with staff in their local university settings. Some of the ESRs managed to overcome the language barrier by asking for the assistance of a translator or a local university colleague who helped in the data collection and analysis process.

The experience of working with people from different cultural backgrounds contributed to an understanding of the functional differences between academic institutions and organisations and the diversity in approaches towards research as demonstrated by various partner universities. According to several ESRs, the mobility period and the co-supervision agreement were instrumental in fostering a transnational research perspective, balancing administrative requirements for acquiring a double degree, and receiving the necessary support for completing their research projects. In some cases, ESRs would report that their co-supervisor complemented and even provided deeper insights than their main supervisor, who might have been caught up in the everyday bureaucracies of his/her institutional setting. The ESRs developed their intercultural sensitivity, since their recruitment allowed them to work and live in a new country, learn a new language, and become immersed in a new culture. It thus became highly relevant among ESRs to develop cultural awareness and understand both the "official" and the "hidden" academic curriculum in their respective universities.

As part of their funding agreements, ESRs contributed to the delivery of project related work packages that were necessary for reporting to the European Commission. Dealing with project management activities helped them to widen their knowledge and competences of administrative tasks which are an essential part of academic life. Specifically, ESRs gained knowledge and experience in dealing with research funding, documentation, quality assurance, outreach and dissemination by undertaking active roles in project management services. The deliverables that they had worked on jointly helped to improve their understanding of cross-national project management, encouraged identification with the project and raised a common understanding for the research that they undertake. As a requirement of the funding agency, ESRs were also thoroughly instructed on responsible research conduct and other ethical concerns, as well as open access publishing.

An important element of the social impact that EDiTE had was achieved through collaboration with the partner organisations involved (schools, governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations). Some researchers directly impacted practices in schools through action research and school development work, while others had an influence through their research-based feedback. Several researchers were involved in the daily activities of the schools, where their transnational encounters and their research activities enabled school actors to reflect on their practices. Schools took up the opportunity and used the presence of researchers to gain new insights for their school development and to provide intercultural content to their students. Such activities helped ESRs to strengthen their social responsibility as researchers who care about the impact of their research on society.

The supervisors played an important role in the personal and professional development of the ESRs. The organisation of the work that assigned a main supervisor (from a "home" university) and a co-supervisor (from a "host" university) to each student was a novelty, at least in some university departments. The supervisors came from a range of research paradigms, which made (co-)supervision challenging from the beginning. Because of their institutional backgrounds, the roles of the main supervisor and the co-supervisor had to be aligned for the project. Within EDiTE, a shared framework of supervision was thus established and further refined during joint summer school meetings which provided opportunities for joint supervision sessions between the ESRs and both their supervisors. The interinstitutional supervision framework was also a tool to safeguard the quality of the daily work of supervisors and co-supervisors with the ESRs. In some cases, the cultural differences among the supervisors were problematic for the ESRs who had to balance between different expectations, while supervisors were not always familiar with the research approach pursued by some of the ESRs. For example, practice-oriented research was new to some of the supervisors. Soon enough, it became clear that professional opportunities related to doctoral supervision were lacking in most of the participating institutions. To overcome this challenge, doctoral supervision seminars were organised and helped the EDiTE supervisors to better understand their role in transnational and collaborative settings. The supervisors were also encouraged to engage in meta-dialogues about the supervision with the researchers, so that student learning and supervision styles could be better aligned. This collaborative endeavour was a transformative experience for most supervisors, who brought an added value to the (supervisory) work at their home universities.

19.5 Conclusion and Future Perspectives

This paper has attempted to shed light on the transformative potential of doctoral networks in teacher education from a European perspective. The transnational experience in building an international network of doctoral students in EDiTE has shown that coordination and cooperation in the third cycle of the Bologna structure, the doctoral programme, places high demands on the participating institutions. Dealing

with the complex culturally embedded structures of individual doctoral programmes asked for a common framework of research activities which could foster the development of professional knowledge and scholarly thinking of the participating ESRs. Although the content framework for the individual research projects of the ESRs was kept very global, a major challenge for all involved actors was to bring the different demands of institutional and personal interests into balance.

Such complex individual and institutional demands placed high expectations on all participants involved. First and foremost, the individual ESRs, who had to undertake their research projects and produce their dissertations, were confronted with the demands of the overarching, jointly agreed EDiTE theme of "Transformative teacher learning for better student learning in an emerging European context". This could not be a process of optimisation (*best practice*) or implementation (*new practice*), but of transformation (*next practice*). The transnational cooperation and the intercultural curricular activities have often led to a loss of orientation and security, but have also opened up opportunities to engage courageously with the newly emerging future: The old structures were no longer sustainable, new ones were often not yet available. In such a research environment, everybody is confronted with the newness of the situation and does not have the solution. Therefore, it is not an option to rely on a balancing compromise, but to focus the attention of the emerging future on a third way or place. This is not always easy, as security is lost. However, trust in the potential and commitment of the actors involved holds opportunities for next practice that need to be seized.

The fact that many countries do not offer a PhD programme in teacher education implied that such a PhD degree was conceived in a context in which there are strong hints of competing bids for control between "academic" and "professional" interests, whereas academic demands are rigorous in the scientific discipline from the teaching profession point of view, other factors too are relevant, particularly in relation to professionalism in a particular social context. This has created a need to rethink conventional distinctions between "education" and "training" as it is seen to be in the interests of all sectors to pursue a doctoral degree and to connect this to institutional demands for showing quality education. The question remains open as to whether the introduction of a professional doctorate could open up new possibilities for this.

Projects like EDiTE provide an important avenue for institutional revival, making possible new kinds of working partnerships focusing on research. From the university's point of view, the project offers access to educational workplaces which might otherwise be closed. From the students' points of view, there is an opportunity to craft a different kind of approach to research and, in the process, it can help to redefine their own career, thus reclaiming a degree of professional autonomy. The experience from EDiTE has shown, due to its challenging objectives, that doctoral networks require a multi-faceted management on different levels. Several conclusions can be drawn from this for future activities.

Despite the common effort towards a European scientific area, the third circle in the Bologna architecture in teacher education is strongly characterised by national and profession-specific peculiarities. The goal of a (European) teacher in an

emerging Europe cannot be normatively prescribed, but is a construct to be aspired to, which arises from the historically and culturally shaped particularities of the countries involved and can only ever be approximated.

Transnational doctoral programmes which build on the existing university study structures confront ESRs with several stumbling blocks ranging from native language competence to formal study requirements and institutional cultures. In order to guide and support doctoral students in overcoming such constraints, a strong relationship between supervisor and co-supervisor has proven crucial. Since doctoral supervision varies considerably between individual institutions, both organisational (e.g. formal supervision framework) and academic (e.g. prevailing research paradigms) alignment is necessary for successful completion of doctoral studies. Transnational doctoral supervision seminars, workshops and exchanges help in strengthening supervisory practice.

Competences in comparative research in transnational networks can only be acquired through experiences of immersion in the respective academic cultures and school practice contexts. This requires, on the one hand, the expertise and field knowledge of the supervisor(s), and on the other hand, the willingness of the individual ESR to engage unreservedly in the field of practice in question. If, from a comparative perspective, a bias determines the content-related orientation or the (research) method, a transformational experience will hardly take place.

Although transnational doctoral networks require engagement and cooperation beyond the time limits of regular departmental work, the benefit for participating staff and institutions will be the experience of growth both in academic and organisational terms. However, they need to commit themselves working across different perspectives and understandings. In our case, EDiTE has enabled the participating institutions to prepare doctoral education in the field of teacher education to a higher quality level for the future.

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Chapter 20
Academics, Neo-liberalism and English Higher Education: Decline and Fall

Ian Jamieson, Rajani Naidoo, and Jürgen Enders

Abstract The chapter examines the position of academics in English universities since the period when Halsey (*Decline of donnish dominion: The British academic professions in the twentieth century*. Clarendon Press, 1992) wrote his classic treatise on the decline of the English 'don'. It surveys the effects of neo liberalism and of marketisation in higher education and the consequent introduction of performance management in research into universities. It asks the question of why there has been so little effective opposition to these measures from university leaders and academics and provides a series of research-based answers.

Keywords Academic profession · Neoliberalism · England · Performance management in institutional research

20.1 Introduction

Pavel Zgaga has expertly and delicately held the governmental role of State Secretary for HE and Minister of Education and Sport as well as that of an esteemed scholar. He has also been the force behind the flourishing of the Centre for Educational Policy Studies which enhanced the development of a new generation of young, critical scholars who gained accomplishment in their own rights. A significant part of his research, and that of the scholars in the Centre has brought together the ideas of external intervention including increasing competition in a neo-liberal context and the actions of university actors and how this has impacted on the core functions of higher education

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such as research and teaching (for example Weber & Zgaga, 2004). We take inspiration from Pavel Zgaga's corpus of work to analyse the interaction of government policy in the context of competition and neoliberalism with academic complicity to assess both the impact on research and on the power and autonomy of academics.

Until the 1970s, English higher education (HE) had experienced a long period of gradual expansion overseen by a series of relatively benign governments. At this point it was barely a 'system' of higher education. No more than 7% of the school leaving cohort attended university, and that 7% was largely drawn from the higher social classes. But at this point a period of financial retrenchment on the part of government marked a significant turning point for universities, bringing increasing financial steering of the HE sector.

In 1992 Halsey, the doyenne of English sociologists, and one of the great chroniclers of both English society and its universities, published a seminal book, *Decline of Donnish Dominion*. Although the view of HE in the book is very much a view from Oxbridge, arguably the pinnacle of status in English HE, it struck a broader note, even a warning, that the primacy of academics in the life of universities was under challenge. Halsey summed up the problem thus: 'Academic men and women see themselves as the natural proprietors of their institutions' (Halsey, 1992: 227). In the years that followed, the challenge only grew and a whole army of educational sociologists chronicled the increasing challenges to 'donnish dominion'.

In this reflection on the position of academics in English universities we chart many of these changes and attempt to portray a more nuanced picture of their role. We focus more on the domain of research rather than teaching, and more on the sciences rather than the arts and humanities. One of the reasons for this is that the balance of academic emphasis has shifted away from teaching to research. In the 1970s Halsey and his colleague Trow (1971) showed that the majority of academics, when surveyed, claimed that their main focus was teaching. Today the balance has decisively tipped the other way. The majority of academics declare that research is their main interest. We focus on science because the science budget dwarfs that of any other subject grouping and the resource allocation problems are at their most severe.

20.2 Neo-liberal Higher Education

It would be fair to say that the analysis of English academic life by sociologists has, since the time of Halsey, been dominated by an argument which has stressed the importance of neo-liberalism as a key factor in explaining the trajectory of the HE system. As that system has expanded to the point where 50% of the age cohort attend university, the resources required to run the system have grown exponentially, and this is particularly the case in science. If we combine these facts with the presence of a long series of governments, which have been more or less aligned with the interests of private capital (including Tony Blair's Labour Government) and embraced the idea of marketising large sections of the economy, then we have all the conditions necessary for a neo-liberal hegemony. We have witnessed a series of

reforms in the governance and operation of HE and other public services. A common thread running through the neo-liberal regime is the vision of self-interested individuals and organisations, and the role of material incentives in motivating them. This analysis produces the creation of a market in higher education, with students as consumers competing for and paying for university places, and academic staff competing for research monies. A key feature of this model has been performance-based funding which sits alongside features like performance management of staff and a regime of quality assurance.

From the perspective of academic staff, we have moved a long way from the position chronicled by Halsey of academics seeing themselves as 'the natural proprietors of their institutions'. The picture painted by the theorists of neo-liberalism is of the academic tribe having their rights constrained by government finances and its insistence on certain standards of 'quality', linked to attempts to reframe the mission of universities away from the creation of a critical citizenry and more towards a mission which focusses on the production of a highly-trained workforce suited to a flourishing national economy. All of this has been overseen at the university level by governance arrangements which are heavily influenced by the business community. In this new market place, students are asked to assert their new consumer rights by assessing the quality of the 'product' which they have purchased.

One particular feature of the funding of English universities exposes the complexity of some of the problems posed by performance-based funding and at the same time exposes an uncomfortable feature of the neo liberal argument: the tacit support of many academics to many features of the model. The funding of research in English universities represents a classic problem of resource allocation. The funding available for research from government is always going to be significantly less than the demand, particularly when the majority of academics declare that research is their primary focus. In 1986 the government decided that it would use a form of performance-based funding to allocate a significant amount of the funding for research to universities. The idea was that there would be two funding streams. One would allocate funding through a series of state-funded Research Councils for different funding areas, where academics would bid for research monies for specific projects on a competitive basis. The judgement would be made by each Research Council by peer review. The new additional mechanism, entitled the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was to provide an allocation based on the research performance of academic staff allocated in various subject groupings. The judgement about performance was to be made by each subject panel composed of subject experts who would scrutinise each submission. The primary judgement was made on research 'outputs', primarily publications, and the result was a subject grading, initially on a five-point scale, which at the end of the exercise was fitted onto a funding formula – the higher the grading the more research funding was allocated, with funding skewed towards the higher grades.

The first RAE certainly captured the attention of universities and even its critics (cf. Martin, 2016) conceded that its inception put pressure on universities to focus more clearly and coherently on the research activities of their staff. Research assessment as a model of judging research performance has been continued every five years since 1986.

One of the reasons for the continuation of this allocation mechanism, despite growing criticism, is that it went with the grain both of the values of neo-liberalism as personified by government, and, particularly in the case of science, with the ethic of academic competition. In his classic 1957 essay the sociologist Merton viewed competition as a favourable influence on the scientific enterprise, arguing that it promoted the rapid dissemination of research discoveries and motivated scientists. He also argued that competition for recognition among autonomous scientists tends to allocate scientific effort more efficiently.

The supporters of competition in research funding often cite stories of particular rivalries or breakthroughs as evidence of the power of competition, often quoting what is known in science as the 'priority rule': the prizes and funding go to those who are first to make the discovery. There are no prizes for being second. However, although seductive, it is somewhat unlikely that these accounts represent a reliable sample of scientific discoveries: tales of serendipitous discoveries seem almost as numerous! More persuasively the funders themselves seem satisfied that the competitive funding model works. Both the European Commission and the OECD have, for example, supported the idea that the competitive funding by national research councils is positively related to research performance. Their confidence seems boosted by the inter-country comparisons of research performance. These regularly show that those countries which have embraced the competitive model in supporting research lead the research performance tables, whilst those that have not largely cluster at the bottom.

Of course, one needs to be cautious of such claims. First, many of the proponents of performance-based funding argue in support of their own model and, even worse, use coercive and normative pressure through their funding mechanisms and the banner of 'best practice' to persuade countries to adopt competitive funding. Moreover, although it is undoubtedly the case that most studies do show the value of competitive funding, it must be conceded that at the country level, the difficulties of undertaking this kind of research are formidable.

We need to see the competitive model in academic research as a social construct, shorn of many of its qualifying adjectives like 'natural' or 'free'. The RAE and its successors are constructed to solve two problems of the neo-liberal state. First, how can we judge the quality of research which we fund in the universities, and secondly, on the basis of that judgement of quality, how can this guide the allocation of state finance to university research? So, the RAE model was both an exercise in accountability and of state-steering.

Each subsequent RAE since the first in 1986 was slightly different from its predecessor. This is because the designers reacted to some obvious difficulties in the construction of the model, often exposed through universities gaming the exercise, and secondly because government priorities had changed. One inevitable consequence of any socially constructed exercise that has economic and social consequences, such as winners and losers, is that the participants find ways to game the exercise. This is neatly encapsulated in Goodhart's law: 'when a measure becomes a target it ceases to be a good measure' (Strathern, 1997). In the RAE, which essentially scrutinises the research publications of each submitted academic during a

fixed period of time, academics and their managers found plenty of opportunity to game the metrics. Strategies included: recruiting research 'stars' for limited periods, not submitting the record of poorly performing staff by declaring them 'teaching only' staff, improving their citation count by self-citing and trading citations with colleagues. More worryingly there has been a growing concern about the prevalence of fraud in scientific papers. Scientists have increasingly found it difficult to reproduce the results of other scientists, leading to what has become known as the reproducibility crisis. Collins (1992) in his classic study of the behaviour of scientists in action found that in order to maintain their competitive position they often did not include all the details of their methodology. More recently there have been increasing complaints that the raw data of experimental results are not submitted with the paper. Miyakawa, Editor in chief of *Molecular Brain,* wrote that 'an absence of raw data means an absence of science' (Miyakawa, 2020). He has also commented on the significant number of papers which are retracted after challenge in his own and other similar major scientific journals.

An exercise that placed a premium on publications had another obvious consequence: huge pressure to publish and to publish in the 'best' journals, where 'best' was translated as those journals with the highest citation counts. This was less problematic in the sciences, which largely operate on the base of strong paradigms within the boundaries of 'normal' science (Kuhn, 1962), but there are significant problems in the social sciences and humanities where multiple paradigms vie for prominence. In these weak paradigm subjects academic subject associations made great efforts to get their members on the assessment panels to establish what constituted 'good' research. Economics is often cited as a subject where the mathematical version of the neo-classical model became established in the economics panel as 'normal science', and this even led to the establishment of what was known as the 'silver list' of high-status journals. Something similar happened to management studies where a list of more or less highly ranked journals has been established. So not only was there great pressure to publish, but also to publish in the highly-rated journals that had a particular view of the discipline.

These pressures, it is argued, had some unintended consequences. The RAE had an effect on the research emphasis of both individuals and departments. Why choose a speculative and difficult problem in the discipline to focus on when there are lots of problems which look as though they could be tackled by the standard methods of normal science? Comments circulate in universities that scientists like Einstein, or mathematicians like Andrew Wiles, who worked on Fermat's theorem, would never have been successful in the RAE because the problems they focussed upon were both too difficult and would take longer than the five-year assessment period! More generally it is argued that more speculative blue-sky research does not thrive under such regimes.

The initial RAE in 1986 was firmly rooted in the assessment of the academic disciplines, although as time went by some of the disciplines lost their single discipline panels and were merged with other panels. This was part of the growing recognition that many fundamental problems, both in the physical, natural and social sciences, were clearly not problems that would yield to single discipline solutions.

Although recognised, the research assessment exercises have struggled with this problem and several redesigns of panel composition to include academics with experience of working in a cross disciplinary way have been tried.

Another somewhat similar problem has come more directly from the government. Just as we can chart the move away from a focus on discipline-based critical research and more toward applied subjects that could be mapped onto employment skills, so we have witnessed a drive for more applied research that would have a more immediate impact on the economy. Starting in 2014, the designation 'Research Assessment Exercise' was dropped in favour of a new designation: Research Excellence Framework. This has attempted a measure of the impact of research undertaken in universities, through the production of impact case studies. This followed another change to the panel structure which added expert users of research to the panels.

Whereas it could be argued that impact is a legitimate goal of research paid for by the state, the difficulties of assessing impact are clear. First, there is the question of timescale. Many fundamental discoveries in science do not have immediate impact, and certainly not in the timescale demanded by five yearly assessment exercises. An emphasis on impact is unhelpful for blue sky research and is likely to dissuade researchers from fundamental speculative projects, rather than problems which are likely to be 'solved' within a short time span.

Many of the arguments about the effects of the research assessment exercises show that such social constructs do themselves have both intended and unintended impacts on the behaviour of university researchers. The designers of such assessments have recognised many of these and the design has been modified with each new round, with varying success. Some of the consequences raise very difficult questions which will not be addressed by 'tweaking' the model. The first consequence to note is that the resulting resource allocation for research, particularly in the sciences, has produced a concentration of research income in a small number of universities, nearly all of them members of the elite Russell group of leading research universities. At the other end of the scale, a large number of universities receive very little, if any, research income from an exercise which is designed to give the greatest rewards to the most successful. There are two possible reactions to this result. It could be argued that the concentration of resource in a small number of universities might lead to the closing down of innovative ideas. On the other hand, it might be argued that such concentration merely reflects the trajectory of the scientific endeavour. Much of science requires a significant amount of very sophisticated equipment and large interdisciplinary teams which can only be resourced in a small number of institutions. The success of CERN in making important discoveries in fundamental physics may even suggest that the single university model in one nation state is itself becoming outdated, at least in science.

The final issue with the research assessment model in England, widely regarded as a pioneer, points to why it has not been more widely copied. As Sivertsen (2017) has observed, most European countries do not use the UK model of panel evaluation of research publications and peer review. One reason for this difference is cost. If you add up the institutional costs of preparing for the submission and the state's cost

of organising the work of the peer judgement panels, the UK system is very expensive. The total estimated cost of the exercise in 2014 was £246 million. As Martin (2016: 16) has observed, 'this is a rather expensive solution to the problem of distributing research funds to 100 or so UK universities.'

One might argue that these costs are merely the costs of competition and that the competition itself is important because it identifies those whose productivity and inventiveness merit further investment, an argument that usually satisfies the supporters of neo-liberalism. Given the allocation problem (how do we distribute funding for university research), what other solutions are there? Costs could certainly be radically reduced if the UK adopted a metrics-based solution, and in the science field there have been proponents of a metrics-based approach where publication-based metrics are well accepted. The other alternative would be to abandon the dual funding model and revert to a single funding model, wholly based on competitive bidding for grants for specific projects. This is essentially the US model where broadly speaking only teaching is funded by metrics-based models.

There are more radical solutions to be found in the academic community, which is probably not wholly committed to competition in funding. A good example of the quasi-competitive model is the Health Research Council of New Zealand which has used a 'modified lottery' since 2013 to award grants. The Explorer programme encourages scholars with a transformative research idea with the potential for major impact. If an applicant's idea was deemed innovative and viable by an expert panel, that application was entered into a lottery, with funding allocated randomly until the scheme's budget was exhausted.

The RAE/REF block grant is important to universities not only for the money it channels to successful universities but also for their reputation, a reputation signalled by, amongst other things, league table position. However technically deficient the tables, a university's position in these tables send important messages to prospective staff and students as well as government. So important has the regular research assessment exercise become that the vast majority of universities believe that it is too important to be left to the academics themselves. There is a story told by university managers of the first of these exercises, where the history department of Oxford Brookes university was ranked higher than the equivalent department in the University of Oxford. The reason given is instructive, the managers argue. Secure in the certainty of their superiority, the Oxford University historians were left to 'do their own thing', whilst the management of Oxford Brookes recognised that if they were to be successful the 'game' would need to be carefully played to maximise the returns, both to their finances and reputation. In more recent times nothing is more carefully managed in universities than the REF. Pressure is put on academics to research in the 'right' areas, to apply for the most prestigious grants, and to publish in the 'right' journals. Impact case studies are carefully selected and edited to suit the predicted views of the judging panels. The whole submission is tightly steered and managed by staff drawn from the highest echelons of the institution. In an exercise which inside the university is dominated by the decisions of senior academic and professional staff operating within a framework of rules set largely outside of the university, the dominion of the don seems neutered. There are

also continuing worries about the levels of stress, morale and the mental health of academic actors located towards the lower levels of the institution (Wellcome Trust, 2020).

It can be seen that academic managers and professional administrators have become ever more significant actors in the life of universities (Enders & Naidoo, 2019). As Söderlind and Geschwind (2019: 80) write, 'Academic managers have been identified as significant actors as they are likely to be influential in making decisions, setting priorities, and mediating the potential pressures exerted by performance measures. Because they are situated in the midst of academic work, managers are likely to be familiar with a variety of metrics and have hands-on experience of collecting, reporting and using performance measures'. Although the RAE/REF and Teaching Excellence Framework were designed to help allocate funds and create a functioning HE market for students, they have produced a great deal of data that can influence the internal distribution of finance and help determine things like promotion decisions in support of university strategy: knowledge is power.

The HE system is supposedly designed to produce scientific and technological breakthroughs that should enrich both academics and their institutions as well society and economy. However, the evidence suggests that academics and universities are rarely major beneficiaries of these potential rewards, at least in financial terms. The reasons for this are instructive. In universities with strength in science and technology there is usually a flow of discoveries and inventions which could, in principle, be marketed for the benefit of both the university and the academics. Most universities in the UK have protocols about how the benefits should be distributed internally, and they also have Technology Transfer offices which are knowledgeable about marketing discoveries. But few universities have the resources to successfully float companies to exploit their intellectual capital. Although the state provides some resource to help the process through structures like University Challenge Funds, most universities feel the need to use the services of private finance specialists – venture capitalists. Launching new companies to exploit intellectual capital is a risky business and venture capitalists demand high returns (Wright et al., 2006). They usually also demand that they find and put in place the managing director of the company on the grounds that academics are unlikely to possess the right management expertise. Initially the university will have a stake in the company through a shareholding, but, if the company is successful and requires more capital, the university holding is usually severely diluted and the eventual returns to both the university and academics very modest.

20.3 Academic Complicity

If the evidence suggests that the worst of Halsey's fears have been realised – that the academics (dons) have been systematically stripped of many of their powers and privileges, and that universities, despite being formally independent of the state and being guaranteed academic freedom, are increasingly steered by the state's agenda,

then the question arises: how did universities let this happen? Or to formulate this another way: why has there been no consistent and effective opposition from universities?

For part of this answer we must go back to our previous arguments about competition. HE is deeply implicated in supporting the competitive ethic which sits at the heart of the neo-liberal project (Naidoo, 2018). Universities select and grade students, promote some staff and not others, allocate scarce resources to some departments and individuals and not others. They encourage their academic staff to win research grants and publish in the best journals. Whilst ritually complaining about university league tables, they put significant effort into improving their position in these rankings (Enders, 2014). Inevitably in such a structure there are winners and losers, but a scrutiny of the UK league tables, not surprisingly, reveals that the winners tend to be the old established universities, led by Oxford and Cambridge, which are most likely to have the ear of government. Senior members of UK governments are also more likely to be alumni of such institutions. The inevitability of winners and losers in such a system means that the winners have few incentives to challenge the system. The Presidents and Vice Chancellors of UK universities sit together in their association called *Universities UK*. Inside that organisation there are sub groups of universities with different missions and interests. The Russell Group contains the majority of the old universities with prestige and a reputation for success. These are important national institutions and have an international outlook. They tend to win the lion's share of research money, both from the Research Councils and the REF. Universities towards the other end of the league tables achieve little research funding, tend to have a more local or regional perspective, and tend to focus more on activities like widening participation in higher education. In summary, it is very difficult to get UUK to agree a common position to government on anything significant.

UK universities are, technically, independent entities. Why do they not mandate their leaders to campaign for change? Part of the answer to this question lie in the arrangements for the governance of universities. The majority of universities have a bicameral governance structure. The Senate, made up of a majority of academics, can largely decide academic matters, but the Council is the supreme governing body with the power to decide strategy and finance. The governing body has academic representation although this is usually dominated by senior academics like the President/VC and their senior teams. The majority of members of the Council are outsiders to the university, usually recruited for their experience and skills that relate to the university's academic portfolio. The majority tend to come from the business community or from professions like finance and law. This is not a group which is likely to give significant challenge to the neo-liberal status quo.

The two 'insider' groups which sit on the governing body are senior academics, including the President/VC's team, and the students. The VC's team are the least likely group to offer a significant challenge to the 'normal' way of doing business. They are usually recruited from amongst those staff who have been among the most successful in the highly competitive academic race. They are significantly better remunerated than other academic staff. The students who sit on the governing body

are normally students who have been elected to the Students' Union, the independent body which represents the interests of students. As elected representatives they are likely to align with student interests. It can be argued that in recent times these interests have become less radical as students have been placed in the role of consumers paying fees to attend university. In return for these fees, and with the overt support from government, students have tended to focus their interests on student welfare, curriculum and pedagogy which it is hoped will deliver them a well-paid job. Studies of student unions in the UK suggest that student unions tend to work closely with senior members of the university to achieve their ends (Brooks et al., 2016).

The critiques of neo liberalism have usually painted a picture of the academic staff under siege by growing scrutiny of their work and growing demands for increased performance both in research and teaching. In England the complaints have also included growing casualisation of employment, with increasing numbers of academics on short term contracts, and in recent years, with real terms pay cuts. As academic staff have become ever more pressured by the academic demands placed upon them this has left them less time and energy for the necessary 'academic politics' that would be necessary to challenge the neo liberal hegemony. By contrast universities have tended to increase the relative number of administrative staff to help manage the demands of quality assurance and performance in teaching and research. As Halsey foretold, 'The Don is becoming increasingly a salaried or even piece work labourer in the service of an expanding middle class of administrators and technologists'. But as yet there is no sign of the revolution. We have argued that the managerialist model is likely to be supported or acquiesced to by the senior management of the university and the governing board, and that the new 'students as consumers' are unlikely to mount any systematic opposition. Like most consumers, they are concerned about value for money.

Studies by Kolsaker (2008), and Shields and Watermeyer (2020) throw further light on the position of academics in the neo liberal university. Kolsaker (2008: 517), using a Foucauldian perspective argues that although 'managerialism changes the nature of relations between professionals and managers', what happens is that academics tend to both use and adapt to these new conditions. Academics tended to see managerialism as instrumental in sustaining their own academic professionalism. So the academic faced with mastering on-line education appreciates the support of the educational technologists, and the researcher faced with the complexity of making multiple grant applications to different research funders welcomes the assistance of the professional grant writer and the horizon scanning activities of the research support unit. Kolsaker (2008: 523) concludes that the majority view of academics to emerge from the research, 'is to accept managerialism as normative and productive in enabling self-regulation'.

Similar findings emerge from a study by Shields and Watermeyer (2020), carried out ten years later. Working in the institutional logics perspective and with a much larger sample, they examined the extent to which academics would fit their universities into the two ideal typical models of the 'traditional' and the 'managerial' university. They argue that their results can best be understood in terms of three ideal

types which they label 'Autonomous', Utilitarian' and 'Managerial'. The autonomous bears a strong resemblance to a traditional model that would have gained the approval of Halsey. The other two models are different versions of the neo liberal university. The utilitarian model focusses on the teaching of employability skills, whilst the managerial closely resembles the depiction of 'new public management' – hierarchical, bureaucratic and mirroring the competitive ethics of business (Deem & Brehoney, 2005). Interestingly academics' responses in the study did not show that demographic variables like age, gender, or academic discipline, or time in sector accounted for the differences. Instead they showed that research is the key variable (Shields & Watermeyer, 2020: 8): 'Universities that have more funding for research are more likely to view the university as an autonomous institution and less likely to view it as a managerialist institution.' Their explanation for this marries neatly with the arguments of Kolsaker.

The picture that emerges here is that of academics quickly adapting to the neo-liberal university, and working with the grain of the institution, finding space and autonomy to protect their professional identity. This might be an example of what Brown calls the 'neo-liberal stealth revolution', or what Shields and Watermeyer (2020: 10) dub 'the naturalization of the neo-liberal mindset', but it does explain why there are so few academics on the barricades.

20.4 Conclusion

We have argued that universities in England have indeed witnessed the decline of 'Donnish Dominion' and have arrived at a place which would have distressed Halsey, but that most academics have found ways to accommodate to the system. Is there any prospect for change in a different direction? There are pressures in the system that could lead to change and it is worthwhile outlining some of them. Firstly, as Martin (2016: 7) has pointed out, it seems anomalous that most universities have become so hierarchical and bureaucratic when 'the managerial literature of the last two decades have stressed the benefits of flatter organisational structures, of decentralization and local initiatives, of flexible and 'lean' systems and processes'. If universities are about creativity and innovation then should they not look more like innovative and creative enterprises? It is interesting that Shields and Watermeyer (2020) found that universities which were more research-oriented did report less hierarchy and bureaucracy. It is possible to imagine that the English university system could gradually evolve to a system where universities were more specialised and evolved organisation and with structures which were more appropriate to their purpose. For example, universities which specialised in research and innovation, particularly in science and technology, could come to resemble the big science labs in Germany, or even the Crick institute in the UK. Similarly, institutions whose primary mission was teaching for the professions such as Pharmacy, Medicine, Law, or the creative industries such as Music, Film and so on could evolve structures and organisation appropriate to their key tasks. But there is also a fundamental paradox

to these ideas. Halsey believed in the integrity of the university as a concept – a place where academic subjects could come together in collegiality. Oxford and Cambridge have largely retained such a model. Their colleges are still small multi-subject institutions governed by their 'fellows', and sitting under the larger structure of 'the university'. But their existence is an anomaly sustained by their historic wealth and their ability to attract exceptional staff. In these two small corners of England, Donnish dominion still survives.

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Chapter 21
Global Vertical Stratification of Institutions and the Academic Profession: The Role of Research in Future High Participation Environments

Marek Kwiek

Abstract In this chapter, I link two themes in the context of participation in higher education: vertical stratification of national systems and the changing academic profession. The perspective used is a longer-term scenario (20–30 years), the trends are examined as they emerge from the data (Elsevier; OECD; SciVal; Scopus), and from the theorizations of university governance, funding, and politics of higher education. The chapter shows that higher education may be expected to be sharply divided into two contrasting segments, both globally and intra-nationally, with only a limited number (say, 1000 or 3–5%) of universities truly combining teaching and research missions. Globally, in the overwhelming majority of institutions, academic work will mean relatively unexciting teaching of the masses of nontraditional students, higher workloads, and curricula much more closely related to the labor market needs than today. In other words, higher education, as a public good, will be provided to the masses of students at a relatively low cost by the masses of academics. However, the positional value of higher education credentials may be lower than currently expected, as in high participation systems, they will become widely available. Access to higher education will probably be fully open in general, but still highly restricted in the case of selected top institutions, with no changes from the current selectivity patterns. In this scenario, common social and economic returns from higher education will be high, but individual returns will diminish.

Keywords Academic profession · Research · Research excellence · Global vertical stratifiction

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21.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I link two themes in the context of participation in higher education: vertical stratification of national systems and the changing academic profession. In the postwar period, mostly in affluent European and North American societies, we became accustomed to the idea that the academic profession was relatively homogeneous, our higher education systems were more similar than dissimilar to each other, and the academic profession lived and worked maintaining middle-class lifestyles. However, in the past two decades, two processes have been increasingly visible: the academic profession has become more internally divided than ever before, perhaps most visibly in the United States (Cummings & Finkelstein, 2012; Johnson, 2017; Hermanowicz, 2012); and higher education systems have become vertically stratified (Cantwell et al., 2018b; Kwiek, 2019b). The various segments of the profession and components of higher education systems have been drifting apart, with a general contrast between the haves and have-nots in terms of working conditions and the attractiveness of the academic profession at the individual level, and the global visibility in league tables and access to national research funding at the institutional level. There have been many social, economic, political, and financial factors influencing these changes (Altbach et al., 2010), but perhaps the most divisive factor that causes higher education and its workforce to drift apart is research. The role of research in universities embedded in knowledge economies is powerfully divisive—and research performance and outputs are more easily measurable and internationally comparable than other university missions (Marginson, 2014; Stephan, 2012).

It is research that differentiates the academic profession into segments with various roles, and divides and ranks higher education systems into components with various functions. In ranking and measuring exercises, it is research that is most widely used across the globe to vertically stratify both academics and universities. This paper is an exercise in future scenario writing, in which the radical consequences of the divisive impact of academic research on individuals and institutions are discussed. The future of universities and the academic profession does not necessarily have to develop along the lines discussed here, but it certainly could. The perspective used is a longer-term scenario (20–30 years), the trends are examined as they emerge from the data (Elsevier, 2020; OECD, 2020, 2021; SciVal, 2021; Scopus, 2021), and from the theorizations of university governance, funding, and politics of higher education (Cantwell et al., 2018a, b; Kwiek, 2019a).

21.2 What Do High Participation Systems Mean?

What can be expected within the timeframe explored? In most countries, the higher education sector will probably be more sharply stratified than today, both globally and intra-nationally, with few highly prestigious institutions at the top and

numerous low-tier institutions. The binary divide will be between elite knowledge producers and the remaining institutions. There will be limited opportunities to move up the prestige ladder and join the elite sub-sectors, and much higher chances of staying in the demand-absorbing segments of national systems. Demand-absorbing institutions will be widely accessible, and the massification of higher education in high-participation societies at levels of 60–90% will be achieved in most developed and developing countries. Recent trends in the massification of higher education and their rationales are best shown in a series of studies presented by Simon Marginson and colleagues in the past few years, allowing the global higher education research community to move beyond both Martin Trow's theoretical tripartite division of higher education systems (Trow, 1973) into elite, mass, and universal (Cantwell et al., 2018b; Marginson, 2016a, b) and the other influential explanation of growth and massification of higher education: institutional theory, proposed by Evan Schofer and John W. Meyer (2005). The worldwide trends of expansion are examined through the themes of governance, horizontal diversity, equity, high participation society, and vertical stratification (Cantwell et al., 2018b, pp. 1–200; Kwiek, 2018b) and country cases include Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Norway, Poland, Russia, and the USA. Global expansion of higher education, leading to the emergence of "high participation systems of higher education (HPS)," is linked in their research to the growing social demand for position.

There are a number of factors leading to high participation systems of higher education, but Marginson and colleagues suggest that social aspirations are key. Once basic needs for subsistence are met, parents turn their minds to "lifting their children above themselves. If they are already affluent, they still want to improve the position" (Cantwell et al., 2018b, p. 27). Once the majority of families enter higher education, students and families outside of it face growing disadvantages. Non-participation in some types of higher education increasingly hurts, both socially and economically. As one of their propositions state, "In HPS there is no intrinsic limit to the spread of family aspirations for participation in higher education until universality is reached; and no intrinsic limit to the level of social position to which families/students may aspire" (Cantwell et al., 2018a, b, p. 27). In other words, the HPS theory suggests that in the long run, participation expands globally without limits. At the same time, social demand for higher education is not equivalent to economic and market demand. Social demand is the best available candidate for the role of common driver of the worldwide tendency toward HPS.

The HPS narrative of expansion goes beyond, but does not exclude, several other narratives: economic development narratives based on human capital, credentialism narratives based on degrees and certificates, and urbanization and middle class narratives. Higher education credentials are becoming a social and economic must (as a "defensive strategy") for millions of global citizens who increasingly want to have higher than average graduate earnings and live in cities where higher education institutions tend to be concentrated (Horta et al., 2019). What for decades was restricted to a small minority of citizens is today becoming more and more available to masses of young people. There are more than 250 million students at the moment, and the number is rising continually.

21.3 Higher Education Futures and Academic Profession Futures

It is difficult to think about the future of the academic profession in isolation from the trends impacting the future of higher education. Hundreds of millions of students worldwide mean dozens of millions of academics who are teaching them in all types of institutions. The first idea that comes to mind is that the vast change in student numbers expected in this scenario of increasing participation and unstoppable expansion of higher education will lead to a parallel change in the number of academics and in the type of work they will be performing in the sector; or rather, in its diversified sub-sectors. The relatively homogeneous nature of higher education systems known until fairly recently in most countries, sometimes with dual university and vocational sub-systems as in Germany or the Netherlands, is probably not sustainable in the future, with millions of new entrants to higher education globally.

What can be expected in this long-term scenario? The increasing global vertical stratification of higher education systems may include the emergence of a small global ultra-elite, a top league of research-intensive universities competing with each other, present in most countries but specifically in the affluent OECD economies (let us estimate provisionally their number to be around 1000). The global elite of universities will be distinguished by their supreme research performance and outputs, relatively easy to measure and rank in the various league tables, both nationally and internationally.

Research-intensive universities and their departments and individual academics act largely as "prestige maximizers" (Melguizo & Strober, 2007, p. 634), striving constantly to increase their status. Just as companies are "profit maximizers," universities predominantly seek prestige at the intersection of the monetary and prestige economies. Prestige can also be used to leverage resources, principally through research grants, and institutions, departments, and individual academics modify their behaviors—including publishing patterns (Kwiek, 2021)—to that end, competing for external resources in quasi-markets (Rosinger et al., 2016, Taylor et al., 2016). Individual prestige generation through publications, research grants, patents, and awards are critical resources for research-intensive universities. In this "competitive status economy" (Marginson, 2014, p. 107), research is a powerful source of differentiation and ranking, and prestige is a major driver of what Slaughter and Leslie (1997) called "academic capitalism." Prestige is a rival good, based on relative rather than absolute measures—a zero-sum game, in which "what winners win, losers lose" (Hirsch, 1976, p. 52)—as global research-intensive segments of academia become ever more competitive.

Most countries have research-intensive national flagship universities, often, although not always, located in capital cities. Most of them enter global rankings, sometimes alongside other national universities. These ultra-elite institutions are internationally visible knowledge producers that also train national political, social,

and economic elites. Their high selectivity in teaching and elite status in research are often accompanied by a long history.

21.4 The Concentration of Research: Institutions and Individuals

Among about 20,000 higher education institutions in the world (Scopus, 2021), there is no more than 1000 involved in competitive, global academic knowledge production. The SciVal platform of the Scopus database (SciVal, 2021) shows that in the decade 2010–2019, the total number of institutions (of all types) involved in global academic publishing was not higher than 9000 (8639), including institutions from academic, corporate, government, medical, and other sectors. If a threshold of 500 publications per year on average (or of 5000 publications within this decade) is used, then the number of all institutions above the threshold shrinks to 1590. There are 934 institutions with at least 10,000 publications, 153 with at least 50,000, and 24 with at least 100,000 publications of all types. Harvard University is by far the largest global knowledge producer, with more publications than any country except for 22; for instance, in Europe, Harvard has more publications than Denmark, Austria, Portugal, Czech Republic, Norway, and Finland, as well as Mexico, Singapore, Israel, and Malaysia globally. If we look at the research-focused rankings, the Leiden ranking 2020 lists 1176 universities with at least 100 publications in the 2015–2018 period and the ARWU World University Ranking 2020 lists 1000 universities. Specifically, in more regional terms, 41% of universities in the Top 100 of the ARWU ranking are located in the USA, two-thirds of universities are in one of five countries: the USA, the UK, France, Switzerland, and Australia (66%), and the upper 10 countries take 83% of places.

The concentration of research intensifies both at the level of institutions and individual scientists and scholars; and in the case of individuals, it intensifies with respect to both publications and citations. Four in ten of 6167 Clarivate's Highly Cited Researchers in 2020 come from US universities (41.5%), seven in ten come from the top five countries (71.8%), and 84.2% from the top ten countries. Should we expect radically more research-intensive universities in the future than the current 1000? The answer is probably not, and what is more, the number might be even smaller for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most important is the ongoing concentration of the most expensive research, elite journal publications (for instance, the upper 1% of highly cited papers and the upper 1% of publications in top journals), and their impact as shown through a proxy of citations.

Only about 1% of globally publishing scientists (of about 15 million in the period 1996–2011) constitute the "continuously publishing core" of the academic profession, with at least a single paper published every year within the 16 years studied. They are responsible for 41.7% of all papers in the same period (Ioannidis et al., 2014, p. 1). Also, about 1% of the most cited scientists in 118 scientific disciplines

in 2015 received 21% of all citations, a sharp increase from 14% in 2000 (Nielsen & Andersen, 2021, p. 5). The upper 10% of scientists and scholars in terms of research productivity are responsible for about half of all academic knowledge production in 11 European systems across seven major clusters of disciplines (and are often termed “research top performers” or “research stars”) (Kwiek, 2016, 2018a). Highly productive and highly cited scientists tend to be increasingly concentrated in selected, elite institutions to different degrees in different countries (Abramo et al., 2019a, b; Yemini, 2021).

21.5 The Top 1000 Universities

Importantly, this ongoing research-induced global vertical stratification of higher education institutions seems to be accompanied by the ongoing vertical differentiation of the academic profession. Both processes can be expected to intensify in the coming decades. The processes of the concentration of top research in selected institutions may have a powerful impact on academic lives and careers. The attractiveness of the academic profession and the academic workplace is certainly at stake, especially in those institutions that are not research-intensive and instead, in this binary distinction, will be predominantly teaching-focused. The basic assumption of this scenario is that in hugely massified systems, the traditional Humboldtian (Kwiek, 2006, pp. 81–138; 2008) teaching-research nexus will be maintained in practice almost exclusively in the small elite sub-sector—despite normative narratives about the critical role of the nexus for higher education in national systems (Teichler, 2014). The opportunities at the disposal of institutions and individual scientists (or their teams) will vary immensely in the future, but most importantly, qualitative cross-institutional distinction will probably be between the top 1000 universities and the rest (comprising about 25,000–30,000 institutions, up from the current 20,000).

Depending on the country, steeper or flatter vertical stratification of academic institutions within national systems may become the rule rather than the exception, especially in less affluent economies. Limited affinities between the super-league of institutions, comprising just a few universities in most medium-sized countries, and the rest within national systems can be expected. Only in more affluent OECD nations will there be a larger number of universities that are globally visible and ranked (in terms of research intensity), with countries such as the USA, the UK, China, Japan, and Australia and such regional academic superpowers as the EU (with Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands) hosting the bulk of the global super-league universities responsible for 80–90% of all research published in globally recognized and indexed peer-reviewed academic journals. Vertical stratification of academic institutions may take different forms in different countries and its intensification may differ between national systems, but as Cantwell and Marginson (2018, p. 125) described, in the case of current HPS, it may take the form of bifurcation, or “a binary division into separate and opposing sub-groups that

together constitute an interdependent system." In their terms, the two opposing subgroups present today are "the artisanal" and the "demand-absorbing" sub-sectors, with different degrees of similarity to these two ideal types in different systems.

The 1000 top universities as global leaders in science, technology, and scholarship, nationally embedded and nationally funded but operating on a planetary scale and closely collaborating in research (Olechnicka et al., 2019; Wagner, 2018), will be providing the vast majority of internationally visible research and internationally recognized doctorates to the global higher education system as a whole. Additionally, due to their high selectivity, prestige, and long tradition, they will be training national and global elites. Students will become increasingly anxious about access to top universities, and status anxiety will be on the rise, leading to increased global mobility of status-seeking students (Oleksiyenko, 2018).

Always providing the best opportunities for its scientists and scholars, the super-league will likely have drastically different institutional features, management and governance modes, total funding, and total research funding than the rest of institutions, guaranteeing them unlimited access to a global pool of top research talents. The global vertical stratification of higher education will be based on institutional research capacities and global academic knowledge production, with the levels achieved by the super-league far beyond the reach of the remaining thousands of universities across the world. Advanced research is expected to be ever more costly, and impactful research results are expected to be ever more concentrated in a couple of thousand top, English language, peer-review academic journals, rather than in the tens of thousands of easy-to-publish, open access, non-indexed journals, in which research results will be widely disseminated, but possibly not widely read or cited. The global distribution of funding for research is highly skewed, with the USA spending 613 billion USD in 2019, China spending 515 billion USD, Japan 173 billion USD, Germany 132 billion USD, France 64 billion USD, and the United Kingdom 52 billion USD (OECD, 2021).

The concentration of funding for academic research in selected institutions is expected to be accompanied by the concentration of academic knowledge production, especially of globally indexed publications. Already, the sheer volume of publications—3.5 million articles published in the 40,000 journals of the Scopus database in 2020, up from 2.5 million in 2010—makes it almost impossible for scientists to follow the ongoing research (even in their specific fields), except for publications in globally indexed journals. In the past 5 years, some 18 million researchers have authored or coauthored at least one publication indexed in Scopus (SciVal, 2021); this number does not have to be different in the future, and may even drop as further expansion of national academic research systems may be difficult to finance.

Examining the global and national concentration in academic research production is in fact parallel to examining the concentration in research funding at the same levels. National research funding can be expected to be concentrated in the ever smaller minority of institutions, with the ensuing intra-national and cross-national mobility of top academic minds seeking smaller teaching workloads and better research opportunities. They will likely be trying to maintain the slowly

disappearing prestige of holding academic jobs, accompanying them with full-time employment with competitive remuneration, job benefits, and work stability. International academic mobility may intensify, but predominantly for junior academics. Intra- and international mobility will be driven by a scarcity of research opportunities and the sharp contrast in working patterns between the highly selective, research-intensive top institutions and the rest, in terms of teaching and research workloads, working hours, academic satisfaction, and job-related contractual arrangements. The contrast may be expected in the type of academic work performed, remuneration levels received, and job security enjoyed, all directly related to the attractiveness of the academic workplace.

Top institutions may be much more focused on socially and economically relevant research, with different disciplinary priorities than today's, and may be heavily involved in preparing national and global elites with entrance policies as selective as those used today. Internationally, major Anglo-Saxon countries (such as the USA, the UK, and Australia), with high fees and low and declining public financial support, may still be garnering huge private funds through fees from teaching the global elites. The "rest" (or the non-top universities)—as many as 95–97% of all universities globally—may be expected to become demand-absorbing, teaching-focused institutions, only loosely involved in any large-scale, international, collaborative research, especially in research with global impact and visibility. Exceptions can be expected, but the rule of the thumb may be much more the spatial concentration of research rather than its scattering across national institutions. The European Union, with its powerful integration policies, huge research funding, and a long history of the modern institution of the university, may be an exceptional region from a global perspective, with weaker stratification processes and less intensive transformations of the academic profession (Kwiek, 2006, 2013).

21.6 The Teaching-Focused Sub-sector of Higher Education

The teaching-focused sub-sector of higher education may become more similar to the current secondary education sector than to the current higher education sector, possibly with relatively low remuneration (compared with other professionals) for their staff and a high percentage of part-time and/or contracted staff. The casualization and perhaps feminization of academic faculty in the global teaching-focused sub-sector may thus be expected in this scenario. Working conditions in higher education beyond the top 1000 universities may be harder than today; the upward mobility for scientists and scholars in higher education systems will be possible both intra-nationally and globally, but the opportunities available may be limited due to the scarcity of best places and relatively friendly working conditions in the top universities (e.g. tenure advantages), hindering more accelerated exchange of academics. Tenured positions will be available, but competition for them will be higher than today. A smaller core of tenured scientists, surrounded by larger peripheries of their collaborating postdocs than today (Jaeger & Dinin, 2018; Yudkevich

et al., 2015), may characterize employment patterns in top universities in this scenario.

The negative impact of these increasing systemic inequalities in global science will build up over time. A strong "self-reinforcing dynamic" may develop (van den Besselaar & Sandström, 2017, p. 14). The dominant dynamics at the global level may be that as the rich (in citations, publications, international collaboration, global mobility, research funding, professional networks, research time, tenure opportunities, academic recognition, etc.) get richer, the poor get (relatively) poorer. These dynamics might operate at the level of countries, institutions, disciplines, and research groups as well as, to an extent, individuals (Kwiek, 2020).

The vast majority of universities may become similar to the private higher education institutions found around the world today (except for the elite private sub-sector currently present in the USA and Japan). Higher education will be fee-based rather than tax-based (Johnstone & Marcucci, 2010), (perhaps except for Continental Europe, which has a long tradition of tax-based higher education), with decent loan schemes available to all. The increasing role of fees in national systems may transform higher education beyond recognition.

21.7 The Vertical Stratification of National Higher Education Systems

Thus, internationally visible, cutting-edge academic research may be confined to elite national and global universities. This increasing institutional concentration of research funding will be driven intra-nationally by the growing costs and complexity of research. The concentration of research funds, perhaps accompanied by friendly national academic mobility schemes, may be viewed more favorably than the dispersion and deconcentration of research funds and academic immobility by policymakers, scientists, and the general public alike. The number of elite-producing universities for national systems may be lower than today, and the role of higher education credentials in general (rather than the credentials from top universities) may be diminished. "High participation systems," in which 60–90% of the age cohort may be trained in the higher education sector, will be globally dominant in most parts of the world.

For national higher education systems aiming to remain socially and economically relevant and publicly fundable, the need to be vertically stratified will be ever stronger. The role of the public in the strategic distribution of tax-based public resources will grow, with increasing competition among the healthcare sector, the pensions sector, basic national infrastructure, and higher education. Also, publicly-funded infrastructural needs may be much higher than today, resulting in sharp competition for public dollars. Universities will still be using huge public funds for research and innovation, but probably only in selected, top places. The vast majority of universities may be severely underfunded as part of the public sector in general,

with increasingly fee-paying students requesting stronger links between the teaching they receive and (mostly local) labor market needs.

The vertical stratification of national higher education systems is already occurring in many countries (e.g. national case studies in Cantwell et al., 2018a, b). The gap between top universities—usually located in national capitals and major academic cities—and other institutions has been growing. Our assumption in this scenario is that this gap will widen rather than close. Disinterested, and basic rather than applied research, really costs and it cannot be cross-subsidized by third parties, be they students through fees or the business sector through university-business contracts. What will truly differentiate the academic sector internally will be research, used as a criterion for further concentration of talents and resources.

21.8 Positional Goods and Social Congestion

In the majority of higher education systems, higher educational credentials lead to better jobs and better life opportunities. Nevertheless, from a theoretical perspective of "positional goods," developed in the 1970s by a British economist, Fred Hirsch, there is always "social congestion" in every society: the number of good jobs (for instance, prestigious jobs leading to high incomes or to stable middle-class lifestyles) in a labor market system is always limited, and top jobs in a given system will always be limited, no matter how well educated the workforce is. "Elite students" will always get the vast majority of "elite jobs," as studies on hiring processes in top-tier investment banks, management consulting firms, and law firms show in detail (Rivera, 2015), hiring being more "cultural matching" than based only on individual merit (Rivera, 2012).

Higher education is a powerfully positional good: it defines the social and economic position of its possessors only relative to others in societies and labor markets. Educational expansion leads to a higher number of highly qualified people who find it increasingly difficult to have stable, middle-class jobs compared with their parents across the whole developed world. The "positional goods" argument posits that the advantage of higher education credentials in the labor market is relative or positional: if collective efforts of ever-increasing numbers of young people are focused in the same direction, individual gains from individually rational life strategies do not lead to expected results (Brown et al., 2011; Hirsch, 1976). Higher education credentials in times of higher education expansion should be increasingly viewed as (Fred Hirsch's) "positional goods": they improve the chances of better labor market trajectories only to a certain point of saturation, beyond which they become a must, a starting point in competition between individuals holding it, rather than a clear competitive advantage.

As "social congestion" increases, that is, the number of higher education graduates increases in society, the role of credentials as signaling mechanisms (about abilities of graduates) is changing: as in Hirsch's memorable metaphor, standing on tiptoes in a stadium does not help to get a better view if everyone else is standing on

tiptoes. At the same time, not having higher education credentials, like not standing on tiptoes, is a serious drawback. So credentials are sought by an ever-increasing share of young people, even though their economic value for individuals in many systems may be questioned. Global expansion will involve millions of newcomers in the various higher education sub-sectors, but the stratifying force for institutions and the academic profession will not be teaching-related. The consequential stratification will be powered by research funding, performance, and output.

21.9 Final Words

To sum up, higher education may be expected to be sharply divided into two contrasting segments, both globally and intra-nationally, with only a limited number (say, 1000 or 3–5%) of universities truly combining teaching and research missions. The vast majority of institutions in this scenario will be teaching-focused, with marginal internationally visible research. Academic careers may maintain their current (diminishing) attractiveness (Roach & Sauermann, 2017), probably only in the top echelons of national higher education systems: the small sub-sector of highly selective and research-intensive universities. Globally, in the overwhelming majority of institutions, academic work will mean relatively unexciting teaching of the masses of nontraditional students, higher workloads, and curricula much more closely related to the labor market needs than today. References to the "teaching-research nexus" may be expected to be present almost exclusively in the elite sub-sectors of higher education. In other words, higher education, as a public good, will be provided to the masses of students at a relatively low cost by the masses of academics. However, the positional value of higher education credentials may be lower than currently expected, as in high participation systems, they will become widely available. Access to higher education will probably be fully open in general, but still highly restricted in the case of selected top institutions, with no changes from the current selectivity patterns. In this scenario, common social and economic returns from higher education will be high, but individual returns will diminish.

Finally, I offer my praise to Pavel Zgaga, the focus in this volume. Pavel's research into higher education is a perfect example of long-term, sometimes visionary, thinking about higher education futures and the role of research in higher education reforms. A number of themes highlighted in this paper appeared in his writings: the academic profession and inbreeding patterns (Klemenčič & Zgaga, 2015), higher education reforms policies (Zgaga, 2013; Zgaga et al., 2019) and centers and peripheries in global higher education (Zgaga, 2019; Zgaga et al., 2013). Pavel's research has been consistently focused on the issues highly relevant to Western Balkans and post-communist transition countries generally, or, recently, to "the non-core regions of Europe" (Warren et al., 2021), apart from Europe and the European Higher Education Area. Pavel studied the Bologna Process and the public-private dynamics in higher education, as well as education research centers emerging in the Western Balkans (Zgaga, 2014). Pavel was also State Secretary for Higher

Education (1992–1999) and Minister of Education and Sport (1999–2000), an exceptional experience for a higher education policy analyst, and the founder of the Centre for Education Policy Studies (CEPS) 20 years ago. He has collaborated widely, inviting the global and European higher education research community and hosting them generously many times. I am personally very grateful for the invitations I received and the fantastic time spent in Ljubljana, in various configurations of colleagues and friends from various international research projects. I am very grateful for his work on the Editorial Board of the HERP book series in Peter Lang Verlag (*Higher Education Research and Policy*) in the past decade. Thank you so much for everything, Pavel, my colleague and friend in higher education research and policy, and comrade on the long journey of reforming higher education systems in transition economies. I have learned a lot.

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Chapter 22
Impact of Internationalisation Strategies on Academics' International Research Activities – Case Study of the Three HE Peripheries: Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania

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Abstract Internationalisation processes affect academic cultures by establishing new challenges within different higher education functions, with academics being an important actor in its implementation. Even though internationalisation is usually central to higher education reforms in small higher education systems, to be successful, it needs to be accepted and acknowledged by the individual academics and supported by institutional and national mechanisms. In our chapter, we analyse the academics' views on their institutional focus on research excellence and internationalisation and to what extent they are involved in international research activities. Internationalisation is one of the major reform issues in the three studied small peripheral higher education systems (Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania). The chapter looks at the internationalisation of research, which is high on the institutional agendas, but its actual implications in the studied countries vary due to different historical backgrounds, focus and approaches. Presenting comparative analysis, the authors discuss differences and similarities in three former socialist higher education systems and analyse gender, ranks and disciplinary perspectives.

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22.1 Introduction

It is widely presumed that international research collaboration has benefits for the scholars and institutions by enhancing the quality of research and resulting in higher numbers of publications and citations (Van den Besselaar et al., 2012; Leydesdorff & Wagner, 2008). Through collaboration, partners share costs and resources, access high-end facilities, synergise each other's expertise, share newly developed techniques, skills, and knowledge, fortify areas of deficiencies and gain through diversity in professional cultures (Khor & Yu, 2016). Universities need to maximise their internationalisation efforts as an important factor in regards to academic quality (Rostan et al., 2014) and to keep pace with higher education's competitiveness and globalisation (Adams & Carfagna, 2006).

As discussed by Zgaga (2014), universities in the peripheral regions are located between the global, transnational space and the rhetoric of national interests and the possibility of financial gains. Although these topics are already much studied for the 'core' higher educational systems, there is not much evidence-based policy about higher education internationalisation strategies in peripheral countries. Another proposition made by Zgaga (2017) is that general principles and policy ideas that might work well in 'central' systems cannot always be directly transferred to the specific higher education situations of 'peripheral' systems.

The universities in Eastern European countries inherit some characteristics from the centralised socialist tradition (Erdős & Varga, 2012) and these transformations have been affecting both the individuals and the universities (Pekşen et al., 2020). Slovene and Croatian higher education system as an ex-Yugoslav/Humboldtian HE and Lithuania as Ex-Soviet/Napoleonic model also contribute to the differences in the academics' views and attitudes towards the research internationalisation. The contemporary period pushes the higher education systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) towards global policies and strategies, but these are still essentially national systems in the making (Zgaga, 2017; Leišytė et al., 2015).

As internationalisation is one of the major contemporary reform issues in the three small higher education systems, this chapter addresses the research gap by exploring higher education institutions' internationalisation strategies and its' link to academics' international research activities in the three studied countries that belong to the peripheral higher education systems: Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania. We pose three questions: (RQ1) How does the focus on research excellence compare in Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania? (RQ2) What is the institutional focus on internationalisation in the three studied countries? (RQ3) To what extent are academics involved in international research activities in Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania?

22.1.1 Literature Review

Internationalisation is of high priority in HE reforms in the peripheral countries, as it is an effective strategy to enhance the international presence, profile, reputation and ranking of the university (Zgaga, 2018; Zgaga et al., 2019; Chan & Dimmock, 2008).

Europe exhibits diversity of national systems of higher education and research traditions, including its status in terms of international outreach of intellectual production in local languages (Warren et al., 2021). They argue that an increased importance of international comparison in higher education has problematized the idea of European higher education as a unified area of academic activity, as research selectivity is likely to differentially impact on academic work across different regions of Europe. This also differs between disciplines or research fields in terms of positioning and recognition as well as periphery-like features, such as linguistic marginality.

Academics' mobility is associated with increased international visibility and excellence in teaching and research but often attracts flows to academic centres from the peripheries (Scott 2015; Leišytė & Rose, 2016). In peripheral regions the policies and practices often vary significantly across the HE systems and institutions due to administrative and financial obstacles to internationalisation, differences in motivation, and even in national and institutional conceptions of the role internationalisation should play in the individual higher educational institution (HEI) (Flander & Klemenčič, 2014). Academics are central to the success of internationalisation in research in all systems while the imperative to internationalise is reported to be stronger in smaller and more peripheral countries (Kwiek, 2018).

In the last decade, we have witnessed both a national and an international shift in using the performance based indicators of research excellence as a significant feature of international comparisons (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007; Zgaga, 2014). Research excellence is a multidimensional, complex, and value-laden concept, even though it is a regularly used term (Ferretti et al., 2018). At the EU level, the understanding of excellence has shifted from a relatively fuzzy concept embedded in the research community and revealed through peer reviews to a more sharply defined one, connected with breakthrough research (Sørensen et al., 2016), which policymakers attempt to measure and promote with quantifiable indicators (Mali et al., 2017). As Ferretti et al. (2018) also argue, the 'institutionalised' definitions of research excellence depend very much on the actors involved in developing quantifying research excellence through the indicators, such as for example the number of published papers or number of international research projects. Following the political changes in the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe, the governments in Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania have also established models to increase science accountability and to promote knowledge production and research excellence driven by indicators (Mali et al., 2017). This is also argued by Warren et al. (2021), underlying that academic work is increasingly requested to produce data for institutional performance indicators and benchmarking exercises. Also, there are increasing concerns

on how this impacts the research performativity and the publication metrics in the peripheries, as part of the national and institutional responses to rankings (Warren et al., 2021; Busch, 2017; Hazelkorn, 2015). Warren et al. (2021) also show that this also determines internationalisation academic practice, as the academics manage their own behaviours in line with the demands of rankings and publication metrics. This also reflects a limited recognition is given to non-English language publications, in rankings and publication metrics (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Zgaga, 2015, 2018).

In peripheral HE systems, seeking international recognition is reported to be "necessary" and plays an increasingly important role in stratification within and between higher education systems in Central and Eastern Europe (Antonowicz et al., 2017; Leišytė & Rose, 2016). In addition to the external factors, such as history, language, cultural traditions, country size and economic status and reputation, the international research collaboration is also affected by academics' individual professional or career-orientation motives (Kwiek, 2019; Hoekman et al., 2010). The academics are crucial actors in implementation of internationalization strategies, so the individual level factors like motivation to internationalise comes from academics themselves and depends on their individual values (Finkelstein et al., 2013, Merton, 1973; Kwiek, 2019). Even though the system and university level factors are crucial for fostering internationalisation policies, significant authority, both formal and informal, rests with individual academic members when it comes to implementing university policies (Clark, 1983; Flander & Klemenčič, 2014). The behaviours, attitudes and values of academics are part of the "black box" of contextual conditions that are recognised as having a decisive influence on the implementation of HE reforms (such as for example internationalisation) at the institutional level (Elken et al., 2011). In addition, international research collaboration also depends on the academic's attractiveness to international colleagues to be able to join international research networks (Kwiek, 2019; Wagner & Leydesdorff, 2005).

Internationalization policies on country or institutional levels have become central or 'mainstream' in paying attention to how general policies and activities affect how international policies and activities affect the higher education systems as a whole (Teichler, 2015). Institutional focus on internationalisation should aim to achieve a long-term internationalisation goal taking into consideration intended behaviours, analytical processes and action plans (Mintzberg, 1990; Soliman et al., 2019). Universities as loosely-coupled systems (Bartell, 2003; Weick, 1976; Cohen & March, 1974) can therefore only adopt different strategies according to various rationales, incentives, and political and economic circumstances, by involving all of institutional managing structures and processes to implement strategies for internationalisation in an integrated approach. Government policies do not necessarily influence academic values, but they do influence the academics' understanding of what constitutes expected and desired behaviour and the activities in which they engage (Musselin, 2013; Altbach, 2002; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

Europe still faces a diversity of national systems of higher education and research traditions also in terms of international outreach of intellectual production. Due to historical, economic, and institutional factors, the peripheral universities in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries face the same global challenges as the ones in the 'core' countries, but in addition they must cope with the challenges that look in Western countries as historical memory only (Zgaga, 2014). The historical dynamics, changes and differences in the Soviet bloc and Yugoslavia influenced different academic developments and openness across academic fields towards Western scholarship (Warren et al., 2021; Zgaga, 2018).

It is important to notice also that literature shows that international research collaboration has different meanings in soft and hard sciences (Hakala, 1998) and varies by academic generation as well as by country and discipline (Kwiek, 2018, 2019; Stephan & Levin, 1992).

Previous empirical research has shown that in CEE countries, as peripheral European higher education regions, research productivity in all disciplines significantly depends on the current system of material and social conditions of scientific work and production, including scientific institutions, projects and financial resources (Warren et al., 2021; Prpić & Brajdić Vuković, 2009). Countries from this region are still lagging behind in terms of internationalisation of their academic work. This is mostly due to the barriers, such as for example English language barrier and lack of networks in the West. Further, 'internationality' seems to play a greater role for research biographies in the natural sciences than in the social sciences and humanities (Zgaga, 2015, 2018; Rončević & Rafajac, 2010). Joining the EU was another important development giving the CEE and Baltic countries access to EU Structural Funds that become the predominant research funds since 2006 (Leišytė, 2018).

22.2 Methods

22.2.1 Data

In this study, we analyse the data from the Academic Profession in the Knowledge-based Society (APIKS) cross-national comparative project. The data come from large-scale national surveys using a mutually agreed set of structured questions on different aspects of the academic profession. While 30 countries were involved in the APIKS project (Flander et al., 2020), our focus is on peripheral higher education systems in Slovenia, Croatia, and Lithuania.

The definition of the population are academics professionally active at HEIs in the studied countries (Table 22.1).

Table 22.1 APIKS project survey data collection characteristics in Slovenia, Croatia, and Lithuania

Country	Sampling	Mode of data collection	Data collection period	Response rate	Final sample size
Slovenia	Total coverage, no sampling	Online	Jun – Jul 2018	13.2%	n = 1035
Croatia	Total coverage, no sampling	Online	Nov 2017 – Feb 2018	10.8%	n = 1038
Lithuania	Quota sampling	Online	Oct 2017 – Jan 2018	5.3%	n = 389

22.2.2 Measures and Covariates

To answer research questions, we select variables from the APIKS questionnaire relevant for internationalisation of research based on the existing literature (Kwiek, 2020; Finkelstein & Cummings, 2012; Rostan et al., 2014; Finkelstein et al., 2013). The independent variables are grouped into variables related to *institutional focus on research excellence*, *institutional focus on internationalisation* and *the outcomes of internationalisation in research*.

Based on the results[1] of the factor analysis (see Table 22.7 in the Appendix), we create two indices: *institutional support of internationalisation* and *institutional focus on research excellence* and analysed separately *research funding coming from international funding agencies*, *collaborating with international colleagues*. To present differences in sample characteristics, as well as to improve prediction and to control for structural differences between the studied countries with regression modelling, we select three key variables: *gender*, *discipline*[2] (*STEM-BHASE*[3]), and *rank* (*senior-junior*[4]) (Pekşen et al., 2020; Perkmann et al., 2013).

[1] We then tested these new measures for reliability using Cronbach alpha test (see Table 22.8 in the Appendix) and confirmed that we could use them as reliable derived variables in further analyses.

[2] Statistics Canada (2021). Variant of CIP 2016 – STEM and BHASE groupings. Retrieved from https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=401856

[3] STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics, BHASE: business, humanities, health, arts, social science, and education (Statistics Canada 2021). We decided to use these groupings of disciplines due to the specifics of the coding of *academic discipline* categories in the APIKS questionnaire and data. In practice, the classification closely resembles Biglan's hard sciences-soft sciences categorisation.

[4] *Senior academic*: full professor, associate professor, senior researcher; *junior academic*: assistant professor, lecturer, researcher, junior researcher.

22.2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is carried out using SPSS 23.0 software package, while some of the results are visualised using MSOffice Excel. We conduct descriptive analysis, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis. To test for statistically significant differences at the bivariate level, we carry out a Chi-Square test and ANOVA with Games-Howell post-hoc test. At the multivariate level, we use dimension reduction and reliability tests (factor analysis and Cronbach alpha), as well as regression analysis. We used the regression modelling to answer research questions: ordinary least squares (OLS) regression/multiple linear regression (RQ1-3), ordinal regression (RQ1-3), and binary logistic regression (RQ3).

22.3 Results

22.3.1 Characteristics of the Samples

The composition of variables between the studied countries is presented in Table 22.2.

Table 22.2 show substantial differences in the composition of our samples.[5] Fewer females are represented in the Slovene sample, compared to Croatia and Lithuania. The Slovenian and Croatian samples are more similar in the proportion of senior and junior academics, while Lithuania stands out as the country with a very high percentage of senior academics. The differences are statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. Lastly, the differences between the studied countries are

Table 22.2 Distributions of key sample composition variables across countries

Variable/category	Country		
	Croatia *(n = 1038)*	Lithuania *(n = 389)*	Slovenia *(n = 1035)*
Gender****			
Female	58.9%	58.5%	50.5%
Male	41.1%	41.5%	49.5%
Rank****			
Junior	61.9%	17.2%	58.4%
Senior	38.1%	82.8%	41.6%
Disciplines****			
BHASE	49.7%	45.9%	43.9%
STEM	50.3%	54.1%	56.1%

*$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.01$ (Chi-Square test)

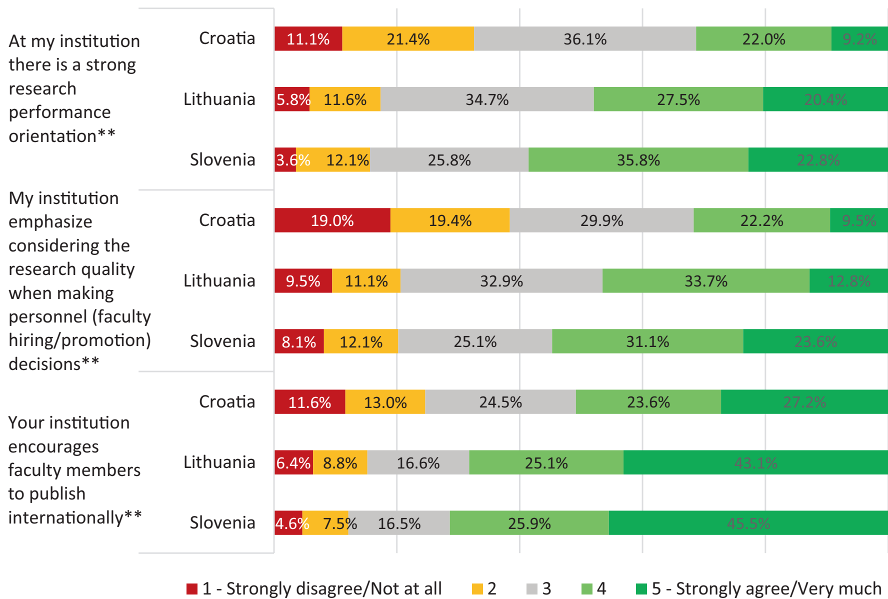
[5] We tested for statistical significance of differences between countries using the Chi-Square test.

smaller but still statistically significant for disciplines – with slightly fewer academics from STEM in the Croatian sample.

22.3.2 Institutional Focus on Research Excellence

To answer research question 1 (RQ1), we investigate potential differences in institutional focus on research excellence between Slovenia, Lithuania, and Croatia. The results are presented in Fig. 22.1.

Slovenian and Lithuanian academics reported statistically significantly higher *institutional focus on research excellence* than their Croatian colleagues. The evidence shows that about 7 out of 10 Slovenian and Lithuanian academics agreed that their institution encourages academic members to publish internationally, compared to only about one-half of Croatian academics. Lithuania can be placed between Slovenia and Croatia in terms of their *institutional research performance orientation*. While almost 6 out of 10 Slovenian academics agree with a strong research performance orientation at their institution, less than 5 out of 10 Lithuanian academics, and only about 3 out of 10 Croatian academics agreed with the same statement.



$*p<0.05$, $**p<0.01$ (Chi-Square test)

Fig. 22.1 Distributions of indicators of institutional focus on research excellence (HR, LT, SI). *$*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$ (Chi-Square test)*

In addition, we carried out multiple linear regression analysis with *institutional focus on research excellence* index as the outcome variable. This new variable was derived from indicators presented in Fig. 22.1. Besides *country*, three additional predictors were included to control for the structural differences in the academic samples presented in subsection 5.1.

The evidence from Table 22.3 supports the findings from the previous analysis of national differences in individual indicators of *institutional focus on research excellence* (Fig. 22.1). Slovenian academics reported the highest institutional focus for the combined index, as well as individual indicators. Lithuanian academics reported lower institutional focus for two out of the three indicators. Croatian academics reported the lowest *institutional focus on research excellence*, which is rather consistent across all three analysed dimensions.

Academics from STEM also reported higher *institutional focus on research excellence*, albeit the differences were not as great as between the countries. For rank, statistically significant differences occur only in regard to institutions emphasising the research quality when making personnel decisions, with seniors agreeing

Table 22.3 Regression analysis (OLS, ordinal), predictors of *institutional focus on research excellence*

	Institutional focus on research excellence index[a]		*At my institution there is a strong research performance orientation*[b]		*My institution emphasises considering the research quality*[b] *when making personnel decisions*		*Your institution encourages faculty members to publish internationally*[b]	
Predictors	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*
Country								
Slovenia	0		0		0		0	
Croatia	−0.644***	0.044	−1.111***	0.086	−0.992***	0.085	−0.851***	0.086
Lithuania	−0.201**	0.063	−0.392***	0.120	−0.520***	0.120	−0.088	0.122
Gender								
Female	0		0		0		0	
Male	0.034	0.041	−0.091	0.079	0.095	0.078	0.121	0.08
Rank								
Junior	0		0		0		0	
Senior	0.086*	0.043	0.156	0.081	0.384***	0.081	−0.084	0.082
Disciplines								
BHASE	0		0		0		0	
STEM	0.159***	0.041	0.197*	0.078	0.310***	0.078	0.258**	0.079
Adjusted R squared	*0.107*							

We considered the assumptions of different regression modelling. We tested the OLS model for normality of residuals, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and outliers

Note: Significance level: * < .05; ** < .01; *** < .001

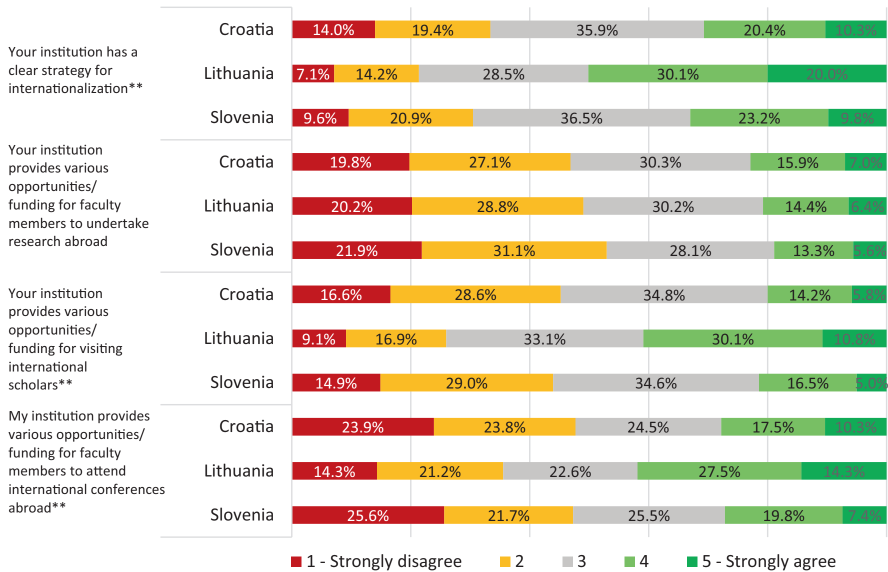
[a]= multiple linear regression model, [b]= ordinal regression model

more with the statement than juniors. This is also reflected in the statistically significant differences for the combined index. On the other hand, no differences in *institutional focus on research excellence* can be attributed to gender. We explained 10.7% of variability of the main response variable/index with the selected binary predictors.

22.3.3 Institutional Focus on Internationalisation

To answer research question 2 (RQ2), we examine how academics perceive the focus on internationalisation at their higher education institutions in the three studied countries to provide evidence. In Fig. 22.2, we are presenting cross-national comparative results for four items measuring *institutional focus on internationalisation.*

The opinions of academics differ significantly regarding their institutions' internationalisation strategy. Croatian and Slovenian academics see their institutional support in internationalisation in a similar way, their Lithuanian colleagues reported significantly more institutional support. While slightly more than 3 out of 10 Slovenian and Croatian academics agree or strongly agree that their *institution has a clear internationalisation strategy*, more than half of the Lithuanian academics



**p<0.05, **p<0.01 (Chi-Square test)*

Fig. 22.2 Distributions of indicators of institutional support of internationalisation (HR, LT, SI). **p < 0.05, **p < 0.01 (Chi-Square test)*

agree with the same statement. The difference is even greater for *institutional support for visiting international scholars*, where about 2 out of 5 Lithuanian but only about 1 out of 5 academics from Croatia and Slovenia agreed with this statement.

In addition, we carried out multiple linear regression analysis with the *institutional support of internationalisation* index as the outcome variable (Table 22.4).

The results of multiple linear regression analysis with *institutional support of internationalisation* combined index as the outcome variable confirm that there are no statistically significant differences between Slovenian and Croatian academics, but the Lithuanian academics generally reported more institutional support, especially for *international scholar visits* and *support to attend conferences abroad*. The results of ordinal regression analysis reveal minor differences between Slovenian and Croatian academics for two out of four indicators, which cannot be observed after combining indicators into *institutional support of internationalisation* index.

Senior academics state significantly more often that their *institution has a clear internationalisation strategy* than their junior colleagues. Concerning the individual measures to promote academic mobility, there are statistically significant differences for *initiatives for visiting scholars, international conference visits* and *international publications*. *Support for visiting scholars* is perceived significantly more often by junior academics and academics from the BHASE. Also, in comparison, junior academics, BHASE academics and men more often perceive support for *international conference visits abroad*.

22.3.4 International Research Activities

To answer our third research question (RQ3) on international research activities, we will compare averages and/or variability of five survey items measuring publications, research funding, collaborations and networks related to internationalisation.

We study the effect of internationalisation on enhanced research activities (Table 22.5) as the only attitudinal variable studied in this section.[6] The results show statistically significant differences between the studied countries in academics' perception on enhanced research networks as an internationalisation outcome. Slovenian and Croatian academics observe the effect on enhanced international research networks at their own institutions to a greater extent than Lithuanian academics. There is a much smaller but still statistically significant difference between Slovenian and Croatian academics as well. The results on the effect of internationalisation on enhanced research networks (Table 22.5) show significant differences between the studied countries in academics' perception on enhanced research networks as an outcome of internationalisation, internationalisation.

The results from Table 22.5 reveal that Slovenian academics generally stand out with a higher involvement in international research collaborations compared to their Croatian and Lithuanian colleagues. The differences are statistically significant for *publishing in a foreign country, co-authoring with a colleague located abroad,* and

[6] 5-point Likert scale.

Table 22.4 Regression analysis (OLS, ordinal), predictors of *institutional support of internationalisation*

	Institutional support of internationalisation index[a]		*Your institution has a clear strategy for internationalization*[b]		*Your institution provides various opportunities/ funding for faculty members to undertake research abroad*[b]		*Your institution provides various opportunities/ funding for visiting international scholars*[b]		*My institution provides various opportunities/funding for faculty members to attend international conferences abroad*[b]	
Predictors	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*
Country										
Slovenia	0		0		0		0		0	
Croatia	−0.001	0.043	−0.165*	0.084	0.187*	0.084	−0.101	0.084	0.045	0.083
Lithuania	0.386***	0.061	0.557***	0.12	0.205	0.119	0.954***	0.122	0.744***	0.119
Gender										
Female	0		0		0		0		0	
Male	0.056	0.041	−0.067	0.079	0.099	0.079	0.074	0.079	0.179*	0.078
Rank										
Junior	0		0		0		0		0	
Senior	−0.081	0.042	0.210**	0.081	−0.147	0.081	−0.251**	0.082	−0.298***	0.081
Disciplines										
BHASE	0		0		0		0		0	
STEM	−0.095*	0.040	−0.074	0.078	−0.013	0.078	−0.173*	0.079	−0.285***	0.078
Adjusted R squared	*0.021*									

We considered the assumptions of different regression modelling. We tested the OLS model for normality of residuals, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and outliers
Note: Significance level: * < .05; ** < .01; *** < .001
[a]= multiple linear regression model, [b]= ordinal regression model

Table 22.5 Descriptive statistics, variables measuring *international research activities* (HR, LT, SI)

Countries	Statistics	*Percentage of publications in the last 3y published in a foreign country (%)*	*Percentage of publications in the last 3y co-authored with colleagues located in other (foreign) countries (%)*	*Research funding coming from international funding agencies (%)*	*Do you collaborate with international colleagues? (% of Yes)*	*Enhanced research networks as an outcome of internalisation at own institution (%)***
Croatia[a]	Mean	52.6[bc]	17.3[c]	10.6[c]	79.2[b]	45.8[bc]
	Median*	50.0	0.0	0.0		
	Std. Dev.	38.2	27.3	23.7	40.6	49.8
Lithuania[b]	Mean	45.6[ac]	14.2[c]	9.1[c]	71.4[ac]	29.1[ac]
	Median*	40.0	0.0	0.0		
	Std. Dev.	39.2	26.5	22.5	45.3	45.5
Slovenia[c]	Mean	61.6[ab]	22.1[ab]	16.5[ab]	82.9[b]	57.5[ab]
	Median*	72.0	10.0	0.0		
	Std. Dev.	36.0	29.1	28.4	37.7	50.0

[abc]*Indicator of statistically significant differences between the groups (e.g.,* [ab]*=Slovenia is different to both Croatia*[a] *and Lithuania*[b] *for that particular variable), ANOVA, Games-Howell post-hoc test, at $p < 0.05$ level*
**Median was not reported for a dichotomous variable*
***% of answers 4 and 5 on 5-point scale (where 1 = Not at all and 5 = Very much)*

research funding from international funding agencies. The analysis of medians shows even more substantial differences for *publishing in a foreign country*. While more than half of all academics in Lithuania published 40% or more of their publications abroad and Croatian academics publish abroad 50% or more of their publication, this share in Slovenia is over 72%. Lithuanian academics *collaborate with international colleagues* less in comparison to their Croatian academics, but there are no statistically significant differences between the countries in *co-authoring with a colleague located abroad,* or *research funding from international funding agencies.*

To extend this descriptive analysis, we carried out multiple linear regression analysis with the first three outcome variables presented in Fig. 22.2, and binary logistic regression modelling with *collaboration with international colleagues.* Besides *country* and standard controls (*gender, rank, discipline*), we included *institutional focus on research excellence* and *institutional support of*

internationalisation as predictors to determine the main reasons behind their involvement in international research collaborations.

The evidence from Table 22.5 suggests lesser direct involvement of Croatian and Lithuanian academics in different aspects of internationalisation. Besides, Lithuanian academics are less involved in certain aspects in comparison to their Croatian colleagues, i.e., *publishing in a foreign country*, *collaboration with foreign colleagues,* and *enhanced networks as a result of internationalisation*. While the country-specific differences remained fairly consistent after including controls in our multivariate models, the other predictors helped explain more variability of the outcome variables.

There were no statistically significant differences in international research and collaboration between male and female academics, but there were some notable differences between junior and senior academics, as well as BHASE and STEM academics. Comparing coefficients for Croatia/Lithuania with those for STEM, we can conclude that *discipline* seems to be a better predictor of *publishing abroad/in co-authorship with foreign academics* than *country.* Supporting also the findings of other scholars, that international research collaboration varies by academic discipline (Kwiek, 2018, 2019; Hakala, 1998).

We found little evidence on the institutional effect on direct involvement in different aspects of internationalisation. The effect of *institutional focus on research excellence* on *collaboration with international colleagues*, was the only identified positive effect of the internationalisation research output. Contrary to our expectations, *institutional support of internationalisation* had no effect on either *co-authorship* and *collaboration with foreign research,* or *funding from international funding agencies*. We actually found a negative effect of institutional support on *publishing in a foreign country*. In total, we explained between 1.5% and 14.9% of variability of response variables with the selected predictors in multiple linear regression models. On the other hand, we can observe a statistically significant effect of *institutional focus on research excellence* and of *institutional support of internationalisation* on *enhanced research networks as an outcome of internalisation* (Table 22.6).

22.4 Discussion and Conclusions

As the internationalisation is one of the major reform issues with the contemporary higher education area, we investigate universities' internationalisation strategies in the three small peripheral higher education systems (Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania). In addition, as the most important actors in the implementation of internationalisation strategies are the academic staff, we looked at the academics' international research activities in the studied countries.

First, we asked how the focus on research excellence compares in Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania. Results show that Lithuanian academics report the highest institutional support for internationalisation, but the emphasis that their institutions

Table 22.6 Regression analysis (OLS, binary logistic, ordinal), *Predictors of academics' international research activities*

	Percentage of publications in the last 3y published in a foreign country[a]		*Percentage of publications in the last 3y co-authored with colleagues located in other (foreign) countries*[a]		*Research funding coming from international funding agencies*[a]		*Do you collaborate with international colleagues?*[b]		*Enhanced research networks as an outcome of internalisation at own institution*[c]	
Predictors	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*
Country										
Slovenia	0		0		0		0			
Croatia	−7.42***	1.88	−4.15***	1.44	−6.41***	1.37	−0.10	0.14	0.03	0.09
Lithuania	−19.20***	2.59	−8.87***	1.99	−6.97**	2.20	−1.23***	0.18	−1.65***	0.13
Gender										
Female	0		0		0		0		0	
Male	0.28	1.67	0.52	1.28	−1.48	1.24	0.24	0.12	−0.12	0.08
Rank										
Junior	0		0		0		0		0	
Senior	9.58***	1.72	4.86***	1.32	1.50	1.26	1.12***	0.14	0.16	0.08
Disciplines										
BHASE	0		0		0		0		0	
STEM	24.34***	1.68	14.97***	1.29	−1.86	1.25	−0.12	0.12	0.08	0.08
Institutional focus on research excellence	0.82	1.03	−0.44	0.79	−1.37	0.77	0.15*	0.08	0.73***	0.05
Institutional support of internationalisation	−2.23*	1.06	−0.41	0.81	−0.35	0.78	−0.13	0.08	0.69***	0.05
Constant	46.88***	3.76	13.67***	2.89	23.03***	2.79	0.98***	0.27		
Adjusted R squared	*0.149*		*0.087*		*0.015*					

We considered the assumptions of different regression modelling. We tested the OLS model for normality of residuals, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and outliers

Note: Significance level: * < .05; ** < .01; *** < .001

[a]= multiple linear regression model, [b]= binary logistic regression model, [c]= ordinal regression model

put on research excellence is in their opinion somewhere between the emphasis reported by Slovene and Croatian academics. Further, the internationalisation research activities for Lithuanian academics regarding their publications abroad or with colleagues from abroad and international research funding is much lower than in Slovenia or Croatia. According to the perceptions of academic staff, Croatian HEIs give the least emphasis on research excellence. But considering their publications published abroad or co-authored with their foreign colleagues as well as in regard to their institutional support for internationalisation, Croatian academics position themselves in the middle of the three countries surveyed. In Slovenia, the universities emphasise research excellence the most while providing less support for international academic mobility than Lithuanian institutions. However, Slovene academics are among the studied countries the most involved in international publishing and receive more international research funding, as the research excellence in Slovenia is more pronounced through the quantifiable indicators (Warren et al., 2021; Mali et al., 2017).

As part of the second research question, we analysed the institutional focus on internationalisation in the three studied countries. In Lithuania, universities have a clear strategic focus on internationalisation and academics get much more support from their institutions to foster their international contacts and mobility. Croatian higher education institutions on the other hand seem to have less emphasis on research excellence, but still a higher share of academics publish abroad or have co-authored with colleagues from abroad. This is consistent with previous findings that indicated how international collaboration has been identified as a predictor for higher publication rates in Croatia (Drennan et al., 2013). This supports the arguments made by Warren et al. (2021), that the academics manage their own behaviours in line with the demands of publication metrics, especially if a limited recognition is given to non-English language publications. The research performance evaluation system in all three countries is highly quantitative for promotion purposes and the internationally relevant publications are an important element. These systems focus on ISI Web of Science indexed journal articles, irrespective of the journal impact factor, thus there is a lot of leeway in publishing in national languages and national journals that are indexed in the relevant databases.

Lastly, we asked to what extent academics are involved in international research activities in Slovenia, Croatia and Lithuania. The data show that academics who perceive more institutional support of internationalisation also report that they have enhanced their research networks (as an outcome of internationalisation). We however, cannot confirm statistically significant relationships between the institutional support for internationalisation and other outcomes of research internationalisation analysed in this study (such as share of publications published abroad, collaboration and co-authored publications by colleagues from foreign countries, and share of international research funding).

Our findings provide some elements that could be also used for practical implications in the future institutional internationalisation efforts. Our findings also support the literature, that even though internationalisation is one of the major reform issues in the three studied peripheral higher education systems, the academic staff is the

most important actor in its implementation. Results show a gap between the actual institutional support on internationalisation, and how much the academics are actually involved in international research activities based on this support.

There are pronounced differences between the three countries, when comparing their internationalisation agendas. Slovenia shows a strong emphasis on research excellence and, due to the research evaluation systems, international publications are very significant for academics. This is also supported by the data from the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS, 2019), where Slovenia has the highest index among the three studied countries regarding the international scientific co-publications and scientific publications among top 10% most cited (Table 22.9). In Lithuania, the main focus is on establishing an institutional internationalisation framework and internationalisation strategies at universities, including funding short-term academic mobility. In Croatia, the internationalisation agenda emphasizes teaching at universities, the larger part of the internalisation agenda in strategic documents is seen through the lens of teaching, and therefore mostly related to the Erasmus programme. Public universities in Croatia are, in reality, still mainly teaching-oriented, due to the heavy teaching workload of the academics. At the same time, academic publications trends show, that the share of the international co-authorships on publications in Croatia and Lithuania increased considerably in the last decade (EIS, 2019; Prpić & Brajdić Vuković, 2009; Brajdić Vuković et al., 2020). This is due to the more governmental incentives to publish international, that also constitute an important element in academic rankings and promotions. As a consequence, this results in a stronger push for research excellence (fostering international research projects, international publishing and international collaborations) through performance-based funding at the national and institutional levels. This is very much the case currently in Slovenia, where the performance evaluation system is more pronounced (compared to Croatia and Lithuania) and has become highly quantifiable through bibliometric indicators (Brajdić Vuković et al., 2020; Flander et al., 2020; Leišytė, 2022).

As also Zgaga and his colleagues underlined (Warren et al., 2021), there is a need for a sustained research agenda that focuses specifically on the non-core regions of Europe, to improve our understanding of the impact of research performativity on academic practice and identity. Therefore, our paper investigates how internationalisation of research and the academics approach to it impacts on the more peripheral regions of Europe and what are the results of it.

Through our analyses, we present that an institutional support on internationalisation does not mean there is more internationalisation in research, which shows the loosely coupled nature of the university unfold in practice. Through our analyses, we present that an institutional focus on internationalisation does not mean there is more internationalisation in research, which shows the loosely coupled nature of the university unfold in practice. We also observed a small effect of focus on research excellence on internationalisation of research, and the evidence is fairly mixed; for two of five indicators of internationalisation of research we identified a positive effect of research excellence, albeit at $p < 0.05$ level (and not at $p < 0.01$ level) for one of those two indicators . Academic systems in all three countries suffer from the

symptoms of the post-socialist transition (Mali et al., 2017) and historical legacies. Lithuania and Slovenia also joined the EU much earlier (2004) than Croatia (2013), which gave them a much earlier access to EU funds to stimulate international academic mobility and international research cooperation.

Our findings are also in line with the findings of Wagner et al. (2018), that governmental or institutional focus and funding do not necessarily result in enhanced international research activities. This further supports the assertion that international collaboration has become an independent factor in the self-organization of the sciences (Persson et al., 2004; Wagner & Leydesdorff, 2005). While research has always been built on international recognition, cooperation and mobility, universities are deeply rooted in national, regional and local contexts, and funding structures are still mainly organised along national boundaries (Leišytė & Rose, 2016).

Beside the country differences regarding internationalisation of research outputs, there are also differences between ranks and disciplines. Senior and STEM science academics report a much higher share of publications published in a foreign country in the last 3 years as well as publications co-authored with colleagues from abroad. This is in line with the previous findings that 'internationality' seems to play a greater role for research biographies in the natural sciences than in the social sciences and humanities (Rončević & Rafajac, 2010; Hamann & Zimmer, 2017).

These findings are well aligned with similar studies, reporting on the difference across different academic fields (i.e., BHASE vs. STEM sciences), as well by academic generation as well as by country and discipline (Hakala, 1998; Kwiek, 2018, 2019; Stephan & Levin, 1992).

Our results support the findings of Zgaga and other scholars that individual academic behaviours, attitudes and values can have a decisive influence on the implementation of internationalisation and research (Zgaga, 2014, 2015; Kwiek, 2019; Flander & Klemenčič, 2014; Elken et al., 2011; Clark, 1983). Within an institution, academics form tightly knit social networks through which the perceptions of what constitutes academic roles and university operations are diffused and perpetrated. In order to understand the implementation of higher education reforms, it is therefore crucial to understand both the culture and climate of the academic community (Flander & Klemenčič, 2014).

Our findings contribute to Zgaga's work with adding some empirical evidence to support his propositions that there is a lack of evidence-based policy about higher education internationalisation strategies in peripheral countries.

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Appendix

Factor Analysis (Table 22.7)

Table 22.7 Factor analysis with indicators of research quality and internationalisation support

Variables	Factor[a]	
	1	2
At my institution there is a strong research performance orientation		.717
My institution emphasizes considering the research quality when making personnel (faculty hiring/promotion) decisions		.658
Your institution has a clear strategy for internationalization	.464	.461
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for faculty members to undertake research abroad	.813	
Your institution provides various opportunities/funding for visiting international scholars	.788	
My institution provides various opportunities/funding for faculty members to attend international conferences abroad	.563	
Your institution encourages faculty members to publish internationally		.628
Primary research international in scope or orientation		
Initial eigenvalue	*3.35*	*1.21*
% of variance	*41.8%*	*15.1%*

[a]Extraction method: Maximum Likelihood, rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, loadings presented if >0.4

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test (Tables 22.8 and 22.9)

Table 22.8 Cronbach alpha for indexes derived based on factor analysis

Index/construct	Factor[a]	Variables	Cronbach alpha
Institutional support of internationalisation	1	4	0.725
Institutional focus on research excellence	2	3	0.798

[a]see Table 22.7 for more information

Table 22.9 Summary innovation index (European Innovation Scoreboard, 2019)

	Performance relative to					
	EU 2012 in 2012	EU 2019 in 2019	EU 2012 in 2012	EU 2019 in 2019	EU 2012 in 2012	EU 2019 in 2019
	Croatia		Lithuania		Slovenia	
International scientific co-publications	59,30	69,30	39,30	64,60	159,90	147,70
Scientific publications among top 10% most cited	19,05	26,08	21,00	50,10	59,10	73,30
Foreign doctorate students	13,02	47,00	2,00	23,07	54,10	49,40

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