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Abstract

This paper provides a research framework for the study of internationalisation of higher education in the European Union. In a first step, a justification of research in this field is presented including a comprehensive literature review. Although many processes like ‘Europeanisation’ and ‘marketisation’ have become conventional wisdom in the academia, empirical evidence for respective effects is still rare. In an attempt to gain empirically testable hypotheses the second part of the paper discusses and defines ‘marketisation’, ‘Europeanisation’ (and others) as dependent variables. For the measurement of these politico-structural phenomena I present significant indicators. Theory and methodology form part of the overall research design which is outlined in part three. The paper concludes with some suggestions for the further study of HEP in the European Union.

Keywords: higher education, European Union, marketisation, Europeanisation
1. Introduction

There is no doubt that higher education systems in the European Union have been undergoing profound transition for about the last 10 years (see Wende 2001a, Wende 2001b, European Commission 2003a). Domestic structural and economic factors such as de-industrialisation, sectoral change and unemployment on the one hand and the increase of knowledge based workplaces on the other have obviously made it necessary for governments to apply new strategies in higher education policy – HEP. Aiming at improving both qualitative and quantitative university output (researchers, students, intellectual property) governments have been introducing reform packages that include increased R&D budgets, improved access regulation and new infrastructure.

As a second contributing factor to this policy change we observe a rapidly progressing international environment (for a comprehensive assessment see Friedman 2006). There is evidence for an emerging global market in education which triggered competition amongst students, researchers and sponsors alike (Glennerster 1991; McMurty 1991; Taylor 1997; Marginson 1999). The ‘currencies’ of this market are efficiency, equipment and academic reputation, its success indicators are professorial salaries, student flows and international ranking positions (European Commission 2001). Ultimately, it is the Anglo-Saxon model that sets the new international standards.

The European Union as the intermediate organisation between state and international environment plays a central role in this process of adaptation and competition in Europe. Despite having no legal competence in education matters, the EU Commission has occupied a key position in the process of HEP reform. The Bologna process and the Lisbon agenda (with its aim to creation a European knowledge economy in 2010, see European Commission 2003b; 2003c) are the central reference points for the establishment of a European Higher Education Area – EHEA (Rakic 2001; Corbett 2003; Wende 2002; Papatsiba 2006). The timing of the ECPR workshop on education policy almost coincides with the Bologna conference in London 16-18 May 2007 which is seen to set new landmarks for the process.

Once the last bastions of national (identity) politics, education policy has become increasingly subject to multi-level governance. There is no doubt that knowledge, intellectual property and qualification form increasingly important economic resources for the post-industrialist societies in Europe; therefore, it is not surprising that education has become a public good with international dimensions (see European Commission 2004). The intensified processes of Europeanisation, economisation and marketisation of higher education are interlocking phenomena which occur on national, transnational and international level (Witty and Power 2000; Vught et al. 2002).

The emergence of such a novel, highly dynamic and multi-dimensional policy area demands academic attention and offers manifold research opportunities. The task should be to identify relevant actors and structures of the new policy area by separating political and economic interests, preferences, pressures, processes and power resources.

The research presented here is at its earliest possible stage; with this paper I provide the outline of a research design for a funded project I envisage to realise in the coming months.
The research focus is on comparing and contrasting the processes and effects of Europeanisation and Marketisation on HEP in the European Union. The central hypothesis states that the causes for domestic change are best explained by a three-level model, which includes the international, European and domestic level. These causes notwithstanding, policy outcomes are expected to reflect solely national preferences and international bargaining. Methodology and theory are subsequently founded in Liberal Intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1998). Three main working hypotheses for this project are: [H1] Marketisation of HE has asymmetrical effects on EU member states; [H2] Europeanisation in HE is created as a buffer against Marketisation; [H3] transgovernmental cooperation displays incompatible national positions in HEP.

(NB: For the purpose of this conference paper the original research outline has been shortened, simplified and streamlined; the structure is considerable different from that of the research application).

2. Research on Europeanisation and Marketisation of HE in the EU

Until about the year 2000, EU education policy studies constituted a remote niche in mainstream political science which attracted only a small number of researchers. The fact that the EU has no assigned political competences in education matters made it obviously far less attractive than emerging EU policies in judicial and police cooperation or foreign and security matters. Only with the emergence of an EU social policy regime, the launch of the Bologna process and the declaration of a European ‘knowledge-based’ economy in Lisbon the issue attracted broader scholarly attention (for a comprehensive review see Teichler 2005). Specialised economic and educationalist accounts on HE in Europe exist already since the beginning 1990s when key contributions appeared in peer reviewed and established journals such as Higher Education Policy (since 1951) Comparative Education (since 1965), Higher Education (since 1971), Studies in Higher Education (since 1976), Journal of Education Policy (since 1985) (these are now SSCI periodicals), Higher Education Quarterly (since 1946), European Journal of Education (1964), Higher Education in Europe (since 1975). A number of newer journals include Tertiary Education and Management (1995).

Mainstream political science has merely started establishing an own body of literature (Beukel 2001; Walkenhorst 2005; Bache 2006, Martens and Wolf 2006, Walkenhorst forthcoming). However, several indicators strengthen the view that EU education policy is now becoming an established study field in mainstream political science: in 2007, the newly established European Education Policy Network will hold its first meetings; the ECPR joint sessions in 2007 hold for the first time a session on ‘Reforming Education Policy: internationalisation - privatisation – governance’.

The sub-discipline of HEP in the European Union is covered by a still considerably concise number of scholarly articles in international journals. The current debate relates back to the works of Trondal (2002) and Field (2003). Whereas Trondal tried to capture the emergence EU HEP with the available conceptual tools of Europeanisation and multi-level governance, Field’s approach includes a stronger empirical view on harmonisation and integration. The newly introduced open method of coordination created the theoretical puzzle of capturing transgovernmental cooperation as integration approach (Barkholt 2005, Gornitzka 2005), legal basis (Ertl 2006), ‘soft governance’ (Lawn 2006) ‘soft Europeanisation’ (Walkenhorst 2005). New research perspectives emerged with the 2004 accession (Marks and Tesar 2005) and issues of increasing globalisation (Smeby and Trondal 2005) Marketisation (Bache 2006, Keeling 2006) within the Europen Area of Higher Education. A first economic data analysis
on HE in the European Union has just recently been published by Jacobs and van der Ploeg (2006).

The research project that forms the basis for this paper aims to provide the first profound three-level HE policy analysis in the European Union by exploring preferences of political actors, institutional constrains and incentive structures for transgovernmental cooperation. Also, the conceptual distinction of transgovernmental cooperation, Europeanisation and marketisation processes is expected to allow more specified and grounded research in the area in the future.

3. Methodology

Marketisation and Europeanisation of HE in Europe are defined as the two macro level dependent variables. De-industrialisation/sectoral, internationalisation and European cooperation are identified as the most important factors responsible for policy change and, accordingly, represent the independent variables. Since the European Union itself has no higher education system, it is necessary to conduct the empirical analysis on national level, which represents the micro level in the research design. The dependent variables on this level are HE system change, HEP change and transgovernmental framing or cooperation. It is assumed to find considerable variation among national HEP preferences; capturing these requires a range of explanations, which cover systemic (degree of sectoral change, the nature of the HE system) economic (transaction, adaptation and transformation costs) and political (type of government, number of veto players) variables.

The research methods follow a mixed method approach with the general aim of generating inferences (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). In order to gain sufficient reliability the data-gathering strategy includes a diversity of instruments such as surveys (OECD, UNESCO, Eurostat, CHEPS), document analyses (EURYDICE, EUR-lex, national archives), public opinion polls (Eurobarometer) and semi-structured elite interviews. Marketisation and Europeanisation are to be measured upon a set of indicators that are presented further down. The interviews target political decision-makers, administrators and experts from member states, the European Commission and European Parliament. An in-depth comparative analysis will be carried out upon five different European countries.

The main questions guiding the policy analysis are: (a) how can we explain changes in HEP in Europe from a three-level perspective? (B) Given measurable effects for Europeanisation and Marketisation in HE, how are the processes related spatially and over time? (C) What explains commonalities and variations of domestic responses to these processes on national level? (D) What are the political and economic rationales of transgovernmental cooperation in HE?

The results shall provide a comprehensive data set on HEP in the European Union which includes student flows, enrolment, funding, tuition and legislation. Furthermore, the results will map policy preferences, international cooperation and institutional choice. For the analysis I apply an analytical toolset I have developed to distinguish between domestic, European and international impacts on EU member states policy making. This will allow for an assessment of the European dimension of HEP in the EU and a prediction about the future of the EHEA, whether it develops as façade for incongruent national policies, a door-opener for US-dominated Marketisation of as a political buffer against internationalisation.

The theoretical evaluation tests the validity of Liberal Intergovernmentalism as the underlying principle of transgovernmentalism by contrasting the dynamics of Europeanisation and its conceptual difference to multi-level governance.


**Expected contribution to research**

The proposed project aims to advance research in political science (sub-discipline European politics) in the following four areas:

1. Following Anderson’s (2002) and Falkner’s (2003) call for strictly systematised research the project will begin with a robust and generalisable operationalisation of Marketisation and Europeanisation in the realm of education policy. This is crucial because processes like globalisation and internationalisation are often treated as similar phenomena (see Teichler 1999; Enders 2004). The debate on Europeanisation in particular has greatly suffered from a lack of empirical evidence and conceptual rigidity. The proposed research may prevent that similar problems appear with regards to Marketisation for which merely normative arguments have been brought forward (McMurty 1991; Duclaud-Williams 2004; Bache 2006).

2. The three level assessment provides for a comprehensive account of the changing environment of HEP in the European Union in the last 10 years. In order to identify the cross-national problems of and pressures for HE reform the analysis will have to assess the new parameters of HE policy making in the EU member states. In doing so the evaluation relies on recently published data from OECD (2005, 2006) and UNESCO/EUROSTAT (2006). These will be re-coded and collapsed into a single data set on EU HE which is followed by the creation of Marketisation and Europeanisation indices. Results allow reviewing conventional typologies of national HE systems in the European Union.

3. There exists no ‘thick’ empirical study on national preference formation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice in EU educational policy cooperation so far. Since Europeanisation studies often suffer from selection bias, the cases for this research proposal will be carefully chosen. Among the five countries, Germany and England have been identified as crucial cases along a ‘most-likely vs. least likely’ openness to Europeanisation ratio. The two systems represent the two contrasting poles of the HE spectrum in the EU which is displayed in the dichotomies of ‘federal vs. unitary’, ‘Anglo-Saxon vs. continental’, ‘state-funded vs. ‘non-state funded’.

4. The theoretical part aspires to contrast Europeanisation to Liberal intergovernmentalism. This task will be facilitated by applying Guailini’s (2003) proposition to employ Europeanisation not as explanans but explanandum, i.e. as the problem to be explained and not the solution to the problem (Radaelli 2004). This approach allows to explain Europeanisation of HE in the EU as rational actor behavior (the logic of consequence) rather than by norms and rules (logic of appropriateness, see March and Olsen 2004).

**4. Externalities of HEP change in Europe: definitions and indicators**

In this part the most common factors attributed to recent changes in HE in Europe shall be discussed and defined. In most part of the literature, these externalities – also denoted as ‘processes’, ‘pressures’ or ‘factors’ – are only loosely defined. Although globalisation, internationalisation, economisation, Europeanisation and privatisation in European HE have long become conventional wisdom and standards in the academic discourse, there neither exist any proper operationalisations nor testable hypotheses. In the following, a conceptual synopsis is provided which is hoped to lay the basis for proper operationalisation.

**Globalisation**

Marginson (1999) explains globalisation as a formation of world systems, in areas such as finance, trade, communications and information technologies; it has effects on migration and tourism, global societies, linguistic, cultural and ideological convergence. It is believed that
Globalisation does not remove the nation-state but changes policy environment and opportunities. Beerkens and Derwende (2007: 62) in a different approach define Globalisation ‘as a process in which basic social arrangements become disembedded from their spatial context due to the acceleration, massification and flexibilisation of transnational flows of people, products, finance, images and information’. With regards to HE Stromquist refers to ‘homogenising tendencies in the administration, teaching, and research practices of universities’ (2007: 83). Similarly, Enders regards globalisation in HE as increasing interdependence which leads eventually to convergence. Notwithstanding these effects, Enders adds that competition and exclusion form necessarily part of globalisation (2004: 365). Teichler (1999) also warns that globalisation in HE is only promoted by the ‘winners’, i.e. the powerful actors on the account of the less powerful (1999: 6).

Critical voices, however, doubt the effects of globalisation. Enders asks if it is possible, that globalisation in HE is a merely a discourse label rather than a social phenomenon (367) which is being used to generally describes all changes that affected HEP since the 1970s: new information technology, international mobility of staff and students, new public management credit transfer in higher education and international recognition of degrees. Enders warns that in this respect ‘globalisation’, ‘internationalisation’, ‘regionalisation’ and ‘de-nationalisation’ become interchangeable.

For measurement purposes globalisation needs be distinguishable and testable. I suggest to operationalise globalisation in HE not as a force of convergence (since there is neither a global model of HE nor a global institution which could impose it) but rather as a process of openness and access. Valid indicators for globalisation in HE are international student flows, increased access to HEIs worldwide and decreased legal and financial discrimination for access to HE.

Internationalisation

In contrast to globalisation, internationalisation is understood as a process where the state remains the central unit. This makes internationalisation much more institution and government driven. Teichler (1999) as one of the first scholars observed internationalisation of HE and studied it accordingly; by doing so he distinguished two different levels: firstly, the increase of cross-border initiatives on university level, and secondly (and more substantially) in the view of supranational policies on governmental level. The latter actions result in converging institutional patterns, study programmes or curricula (Marginson 1999: 363).

Beerkens and Derwende (2007) and Stromquist (2007) treat internationalisation of HE as a response to globalisation. Here globalisation is imaged as a powerful and uncontrollable third force that HEI have to accommodate for. As indicators the authors regard increased student flow and international cooperation among universities, such as HE consortia (Beerkens and Derwende 2007). Whereas Enders (2004) sees internationalisation of HE as a process of state-directed cooperation, Stromquist distinguishes between internationalism (in the sense of cooperation) and internationalisation, the latter resulting in competition for students (i.e. income) rather than providing services for the less advantaged. Enders (2004) highlights internationalisation of HE as trend that influences ‘the social, cultural and economic roles of higher education and their configuration in national systems of higher education’ (362). Huisman and Van der Wende, in contrast, demand cautiousness when using these terms: ‘Despite all the research demonstrating the growing importance of internationalisation, and even more the rhetoric in this respect, higher education institutions’ behaviour (including their internationalisation strategies) are (still) mostly guided by national regulatory and
funding frameworks. For internationalisation in particular, historical, geographic, cultural and linguistic aspects of the national framework are of great importance’ (Huisman and Van der Wende, 2005, p. 206, cit op. Beerkens and Derwende 2007: 62). Similarly, Yelland (2000) observed that internationalisation in HE was used as an idea rather than a subject of policy implementation) which often serves as legitimisation of rather than a trigger for domestic change (see also Teixeira et al. 2003).

What Beerkens and Derwende (2007: 62) describe as a paradox – i.e. universities facing global opportunities while being embedded in national systems – I would simply describe as national strategies towards internationalisation in HE. Naturally, these individual strategies have to be different. Whereas some HE systems adapt quite well to the Anglo-Saxon model that seems to dominate the discourse on internationalisation as a frame of reference, some regions in the world may need other measures of adjustment. St. George largely recognises ‘neo-liberal strategies’ in the Western hemisphere and state-centric models in Asia. We should also expect cross-regional levels of internationalisation, for example, that ‘better’ universities who aim for prestige will aim at a higher degree of internationalisation than local HEIs.

Valid indicators for internationalisation in HE are increased inter-institutional and inter-governmental activity, institutionalisation on international level (OECD, UN, EU) and agreements on common standards (evaluation, assessment, monitoring).

**Europeanisation**

Whereas globalisation and internationalisation of HE seem to have the same assumed direction of causality (i.e. a top down process) where processes on supranational/international level are responsible for changes in the domestic environment, there is no common agreement upon the nature of Europeanisation and its relation towards globalisation in HEP. There are at least three possible ways of constructing a relationship: The first view holds that there is no relationship between Europeanisation and internationalisation/globalisation. Hahn (2003) for example argues that these are parallel processes with different sources and different effects. For Enders (2004: 368) Europeanisation is a form of regionalisation which even stands in contrast to globalisation. Secondly, Europeanisation can be treated as an extension (and intensification) of internationalisation of HE, leading primarily to the ‘de-nationalisation’ or ‘de-etatisation’ of HEP (see also Martens and Wolf 2006). Whether and in how far this is state-driven or state-controlled remains open; however, the European Commission is clearly marked and held responsible as the main supranational actor for new paradigms in HEP, especially in terms of marketisation and economisation. Many Commission documents indeed reveal an economically weighted neo-liberal language behind HE reform (see Martens and Wolf 2006), which should not come as a surprise as the main competence and power of the Commission lies within international trade. Ultimately, it should not be forgotten that the member states governments will have the final say in HEP matters and there is a good record of resistance from national actors (like universities, academic interest groups, student representatives, but also unions, MPs and ministers) to turn the EHEA into a free market ruled by social Darwinism and Manchester Capitalism. For sure, the reasons are manifold, ranging from ideological, political and cultural to financial concerns, which can be especially observed in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Greece) but also in ‘Norway, France, the French-speaking community of Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland and the UK’ as the Commission Bologna mid-term review notes (European Commission 2003d).
Taking these concerns into account, the third interpretation of Europeanisation in HE is that of a buffer, deliberately created (or rather turned into during the process) by the member states against a radically shifting and radical HE environment as to secure for a protected European Area of Higher Education (see Bache 2006). This reading highlights the political feature of Europeanisation. Smeby and Trondal (2005) distinguish between ‘deliberate’ Europeanisation and ‘random’ Globalisation. For them Europeanisation entails primarily the effect of political initiatives of the European Union and its subsequent HE projects. The problem with this view is certainly the non-binding nature of all education related issues in the European Union, bar the important exception of ECJ rulings. Because of a lacking regulatory framework, Europeanisation in education has often been linked to ‘soft power’ (Lawn 2006) or been described as ‘soft Europeanisation’ (Walkenhorst 2005). These shortcomings notwithstanding, there is already a considerable amount of institutional Europeanisation in HE, such as the ‘Bologna Secretariat’ at supranational level, ‘Bologna steering groups’ or think tanks on national level or the introduction of ‘Bologna Coordinators’ at university level (European Commission 2003d).

Possible indicators for Europeanisation in HE can be found in primary and secondary EU law, ECJ rulings on HE and EU common frameworks and programmes.

**Economisation**

Contrary to Europeanisation, economisation clearly denotes the power of market forces and increased influence of economic interests on HEP. In highly economized HE systems the value of education is reflected in its price; economisation forces output oriented HE strategies, economic functionalism and profitability. Positive attitudes towards economisation note systemic flexibility, better relations between public educational sphere and private economy and more demand orientation, accordingly.

In the new HE reforms Marginson (1999: 28) recognizes a paradigm shift from ‘old education policy’, which is determined by ideological issues of class and access towards ‘new politics’, which have changed from opportunity and equality orientation to a system of social competition. According to Teichler there has been a de-nationalisation of HEP due to the introduction of non-governmental agencies and the influence of the European Union, OECD and others (2005). This trend is not necessarily an indicator for de-politicisation but rather a sign of new de-regulatory policy strategies. The economisation of HE is captured by the term *knowledge economy*, which in a narrower definition depicts a knowledge-based economy. The knowledge economy has become a key word in many official publications about the new role of HE in a post-industrial society. Promoters of this concept regard the strengthening of public education policy to economic policy the upgrading of education towards a key policy for economic prosperity. Critics fear the narrowing down to an ‘economisation of knowledge’ where moral and societal norms become inferior to issues of functionalisation and profit maximisation.

Possible indicators for economisation in HE are introduction of economies of scale in HE, quantification of HE and in and increase of closer industry-HE relations.
Privatisation

Privatisation and marketisation are two sub-categories of economisation in HE. Privatisation clearly denotes the rise of a non-governmentally controlled HE sector which offers an alternative to publicly state-owned institutions. The discussion about privatisation is centered around the question if education is essentially a public good. Indicators of privatisation in HE are non-public sources for financing (tuition fees) and greater autonomy for HEIs (Steier 2003)

In contrast to Europeanisation and Internationalisation, Privatisation (and to some extend, Economisation ) is not a phenomenon of the new transnationalisation in HEP and therefore also not part of the Bologna agenda. Private HEIs have existed in practically all HE systems for a long time, in different numbers and under different national legislation, that is to say. However, the recent debate on privatisation in HE is unquestionably linked to the issues of economisation and globalisation. Institutionally, privatisation entails high levels of regulatory autonomy and financial independence from state funding. A highly privatized HE system shows greater variety of HEIs and necessarily bears greater levels of competition.

Possible indicators for privatisation in HE are the increase of non-governmental actors and agencies, de-regulatory policies and the increase of private HE institutions

Marketisation

The key element of marketisation is competition. As competitions only works on the basis of comparability, in the realm of HE it enforces quantification, statistical comparison and sophisticated models of assessment. Some of these quality indicators are part of the Bologna process.

Enders (2004) explains competition in HE as a result of decreased government funding. Until the 1980s, he argues, intra-university competition was cushioned by sufficient HE state budgets, whereas nowadays HEI have to compete not only for external funding but also as a result of new research and learning technologies which makes performance comparable. Globalisation, therefore, is a force that triggers marketisation in HE on state level. Jongbloed (2003) in his key article assessed the conditions for marketisation in HE. He defined ‘marketisation ‘ as policies promoting competition and de-regulation. Jongbloed argues in favor of a liberalized HE sector in which governments frame conditions and facilitate interaction, thereby fulfilling a new supervisory role as opposed to the traditional role of controller.

Like all other concepts discussed in this paper, marketisation should not be seen as a replacement of ‘old’ HEP strategies but rather as an additional feature. Whereas opponents of changes in HEP often radicalise these influences, one has to note clear limitations of total marketisation efforts. These are typically national veto players but, as Steier (2003) explains, also shortcomings of the market principles itself (‘market failures’) and the embeddedness in a public service realm. As a result, he argues, governments are forced to introduce regulatory measures, yet different compared to the traditional ones. Ultimately, Enders notes, market and state are rather contradicting than complementary concepts, and although the role of the state might change in the new millennium, it will not be simply made redundant.

Indicators for marketisation are increased controlling mechanisms (Dill 2003), increased competition in student recruitment and hiring on professorial level (Stromquist 2007).
6. Conclusion

With the beginning of the 21st century, higher education systems in Europe have become subject to unprecedented change. Altbach and Teichler (2001, 24) recognise a historical dimension of change by stating that the universities have probably never achieved such a level of internationalisation since the medieval period. This is astonishing for several reasons. Firstly, one of the most ponderous systems nations have established – i.e. education systems – collectively undergo a reform process almost literally ‘over night’. Second, it appears that some of the trajectories of the reform processes are very similar, as the subchapters of the Bologna process reveal. Thirdly, there is no obvious immediate pressure for the creation of a European Higher Education Area until 2010, probably the most ambitious international project in HE in modern history. Fourthly, on closer examination, the national preferences and domestic HEPs remain strikingly different. And finally, the main source for reform pressure seems located outside Europe, cause by a non-actor/non-structure agent called ‘globalisation’ (which in the following I will treat as a superordinate concept for internationalisation, neo-liberalisation etc.). The short time span and the geographical spread of the new transnational HEP seems to indicate strong forces and motivations at hand that might even justify the term ‘revolution’. Ultimately, not only the HEPs, HEIs and HE systems are subject to change but also the values, norms, philosophies and visions upon which they were built. What is probably most astonishing about this major transformation is that it does not come as a surprise at all. In the contrary, in a globalising world one would probably be surprised if one public sector was not subject to fundamental change.

This kind of expectation poses a considerable threat to researchers and politicians alike as it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy (see Hay 2006). Treating ‘globalisation et al.’ as non-negotiable external economic constraints turns them into automatisms that commentators - almost ‘Pawlow-like’ – make responsible for any changes in the modern world (the alternative being international terrorism). This is possible because there exists no common agreement on what globalisation actually means and entails. For researchers, four (closely related) problems arise from these considerations: Firstly, the conceptual overstretch of globalisation limits its use. Second, these concepts are being applied rather than tested. Thirdly, as conventional wisdom these concepts replace empirical evidence. Fourthly and finally, instead of empirical descriptions of change we deal with normative patterns for its creation (see Weingart 1986).

The growing literature on comparative HE in Europe suggests that studying ‘Internationalisation’ has become the latest ‘fashion’. Since we know that this lies within the nature of all research and it can be very useful. In order to avoid the ‘Globalisation bias’ researchers need to avoid looking in only one direction. For the realm of public policies and HEPs in particular, I suggest to not only focus on the ‘international’ as dependent, explanatory or independent variable but also to look at what remains strictly ‘national’, which is equally important. For the realm of HE in Europe, it might help to distinguish policy change, institutional change and system change. Looking at the domestic level we will find out that the domestic responses to the new pressures for HE reform are considerably different. When analysing convergence in HE in Europe it is as important to explain the non-converging parts. Identifying relevant actors, structures and agents on European, national, regional and institutional level promises a more complete picture of Europeanisation in HE.

Again, we should exercise great caution when using concepts like ‘internationalisation’, ‘globalisation’, marketisation etc. We should not treat these concepts as given processes, we need to carefully study them and apply with utmost rigidity. For example, Commission and OECD publications are often quoted as indicators of the new transitionalisation and neo-
liberalisation of HE in Europe. The pamphlets, however, describe an institutional wish-list rather than a road-map for implementation. Ultimately, I argue, it will be the national governments that regulate their HE systems and therefore the evidence must come from there. As with the European welfare, we should not be surprised that the effects of globalisation are limited and the expected level of convergence rather low (see Hay 2006).

The key to limit the inbuilt fuzziness of the globalisation concepts around us is to find suitable and valid indicators, which can be used to refine the concepts and to test our hypotheses. I hope with this paper I will be able to make a contribution to a more empirically oriented research in HE in Europe.

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