



Dossier d'actualité
(former title: Lettre d'information)
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Since it was created in March 2004, the monthly Lettre d'information of the VST-INRP has gradually moved on. From a simple description of resources, it has become a publication located somewhere between a research literature review, and a documentary summary report.

From today's standpoint, the title Lettre d'information no longer seems appropriate to the actual format and contents of this publication, as certain readers have pointed out.

*This is why, with issue number 29 which begins the 2007-2008, season, the title Lettre d'information has been dropped in favour of that of **Dossier d'actualité**, which we feel is more relevant.*

This change of name aside, we have kept the editorial principles of this monthly review, which aim to offer a summary of the issues involved in a topic relating to education:

- fuelled by a choice of recent works and references;
- published in full on line;
- providing a number of links to scientific documents and/or resources.

*All the writers in the science and technology watch department hope that you will continue to enjoy reading its new **Dossier d'actualité**!*

University "small worlds" in Globalisation

By Olivier Rey

When, in 1984, David Lodge published his famous caustic novel [Small World: An Academic Romance](#), he brought into the limelight the global campus formed by networks of researchers throughout the world, or at least from its richest parts. But the daily round of the large majority of academics, except for certain brilliant scientists well versed in international symposiums, and some others suspected of using and mis-using the charms of "academic tourism", was at that time marked by national realities.

Twenty years on, now that the internet has become a commonplace and with the advent of the knowledge society, Globalisation seems to bound the horizon of all those involved in higher education (HE). Whether it is a question of restructuring courses via Bologna's two cycle degree structure, creating regional centres for higher education, or redirecting university governance towards greater autonomy, most reforms appear to be guided by the concern of answering the challenges of internationalisation. After "Erasmus", the "Bologna Process" or the "Shanghai Ranking" have become familiar concepts for all academics.

What stance does research take with regard to these processes and what light can it shed on this Globalisation of higher education? To what extent are changes in university steering, in the academic profession, or in the development of tuition fees truly "national" or truly "international"? Through a selection of articles, recent works and reports, this issue gives a progress report on these questions at French and international levels.

[The context of research](#) | [University steering](#) | [Being an academic in the age of internationalization](#) | [Tuition fees and the new breakdown of costs](#) | [Resources](#) | [Bibliography](#).

Warning to readers

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- You can inform us of your reactions to this Newsletter, suggest relevant themes or ask for more specific details by leaving a comment beneath the corresponding [post](#) in our blog: "Écrans de veille en éducation".

The context of research into higher education

Research into education has long ignored the question of higher education, particularly in France ([Rey, 2005](#)). This situation has changed as a result of university massification and of taking the processes of education and training into account well beyond the realm of primary and secondary education. Today it can be seen that many questions raised about "the new stu-

dent publics", about the professionalism of HE teachers or about how the level of the disciplines and that of HE institutions are related, are not always couched in a radically different way whether they refer to higher education or to secondary education. Even the topic of the teaching practices of academics ([Romainville & Rege Collet, 2006](#)) is getting more and more attention in the French-speaking world, which was unthinkable not so long ago!

For Europe, research into higher education is an area that is still much more developed in England, in the Netherlands or in Scandinavian countries than in the so-called "Latin" countries, although a number of recent studies in Portugal or in certain Central European countries are to be noted. In drawing up a panorama of this field of research in Europe, Ulrich Teichler ([2005](#)) diagnosed a revival of interest since the beginning of the millennium, in the wake of debates on the Knowledge society, on new ways of steering and management or on the increasing internationalization of higher education. He nevertheless noted that research in this field often suffers from a lack of a solid institutional basis, its essentially thematic and multidisciplinary nature preventing it from "taking advantage" of the framework of a discipline or a disciplinary sub-field. It is a fact that the authors whom we read at the time of this work are of a variety of origins, at the crossroads of political sciences, sociology, economics or educational sciences. In addition, Teichler notes that HE is also a field of expertise where the borderline between researchers and practitioners is fuzzier than in most other areas.

The dynamics of research into higher education draw especially on the notable increase in comparative studies, as well as work looking at university issues from a global, European or international standpoint. We will see a number of significant examples of this kind of work in this issue. Co-operation between young researchers of various countries is in this respect certainly one of the major factors of development, and improvement in the quality of research, bringing as it does national and discipline cultures into confrontation.

University steering in Globalisation

After identifying some outstanding features of what is now referred to as "Globalisation" in higher education, we will take a look at the "Bologna Process" which has led to many studies, both for what it has meant as an original European construction and as a catalyst of national reforms. Finally we will examine the way in which international trends as regards governance are interpreted nationally in certain countries, including France.

Globalisation and higher education

For good or ill, the Globalisation of higher education appears to be a marked trend which has been growing since the nineties. At first sight, the world of the universities has always been more of an "international" sector than the others, the exchange of knowledge never having really been a respecter of State juridical boundaries. However, most observers consider that we have now entered a new stage, and the OECD has just published a working paper by two researchers who have made a summary of the subject. The two authors consider that "*for the first time in history every research university is part of a single world-wide network and the world leaders in the field have an unprecedented global visibility and power*" ([Marginson & van der Wende, 2007](#)). They observe that Globalisation calls into question traditional steering within the framework of the States, through two processes: the "New Public Management" (which goes hand in glove with market steering, plural fundings and the corporatisation of more autonomous institutions), and the growth of cross-frontier communications and activities in which the institutions deal with parties outside the nation.

It is within this context that the efforts of many governments are analysed, in particular in Asia and Europe, to reinforce and focus on policies designed to concentrate research fire-power, public policies which contribute in return to a growing process of investment at world level in universities judged to be of excellent standard. Measured against these criteria, American research universities obviously appear as reference models, their success being put down to their autonomy which makes it possible to multiply multilateral relationships with the local and more remote environment without national or state obstacles standing in the way. And yet, Marginson and van der Wende stress that the American universities are more coordinated than it first appears: they share a solid common culture, a sense of national project and an American "way of doing things" which link them quite as effectively as formal institutional steering would. Consequently, the authors believe that one of the crucial questions for policy-makers is to find the means of coordinating with a sufficiently light touch to allow the universities' autonomy to develop while leading them to pursue common strategic goals.

Two conceptions of the development of higher education move across the field of research concerning these phenomena ([Bleiklie, 2005](#)). The first underlines convergent international trends, to assume that this convergence is the main factor governing evolution in the coming years. **The second lays more stress on supervising changes through existing national forms of logic and configurations which make the changes "path-dependent"**. This explains the variations between countries and the diverse answers, despite common views and ideologies regarding globalisation, massification or "managerialism" at supranational level.

Moreover, the change must be studied in terms of what it achieves concretely at various levels: systems, institutions or individuals ([Musselin, in Bleiklie & Henkel, 2005](#)). From this point of view, solid convergences between public policies may coexist with less radical evolutions at the level of institutions or academics, each entity being able to act semi-independently, although the profession, for example, must now adjust to increasingly powerful universities.

The [preparatory report](#) by Peter Maasen, written for a meeting of higher education directors from the European Union in October 2006, is particularly concerned about the effects of this globalisation on European universities, and offers a statement of the effects of "modernization" over the last 20 years.

In the majority of European countries, reforms have indeed been carried out in the area of university organisation and governance, which have four main aspects in common:

- reduction in direct intervention from the government in higher education and a concomitant increase in institutional autonomy;
- professionalization of institutional leadership and management, and the subsequent adaptation of the institutional governance structures;
- development of mechanisms to assess quality;
- diversification of funding sources.

The author affirms that the institutions are more productive (in terms of research outputs and number of graduates) than they have ever been and that most ministries now manage their higher education through strategic indicators and contractual negotiations rather than through law and regulations. **But this movement towards institutional autonomy does not mean that governments have given up setting the objectives they expect the universities to attain.** On occasion, a larger amount of autonomy in the field of management has gone hand in hand with a tightening of national educational steering, as in Portugal, or with more severe steering by means of indicators, as in Great Britain. This is process that P. Maasen finds to be not without contradictions. So while the development of universities' relationships with their environment justified many reforms, these may have generated tensions within the universities, in particular between the "managers" and the rest of the academic profession, so much so that these disorders have monopolized the institutional agenda and led the universities to focus on internal issues for long periods.

Here again, in the changes are often to be found measures inspired by the private sector, or the paradigm of **New Public Management**, based on contracts, objectives, standardized comparisons and indicators, although the concept is relatively fuzzy and adapted differently depending on national contexts. Moreover, a careful examination of the reforms carried out may lead one to think that the policies remain within the framework of certain public rules, outlining a particular "entrepreneurial European" style.

And yet today the views of the European commission suggest that the modernization reforms have been neither quick enough nor radical enough! Maasen is clearly asking whether the "modernization" in question is really based on convincing data or rather on an ideology which attributes all virtues to the logic of the marketplace. He in fact takes up many critical analyses of an instrumental vision of European higher education, working on various markets like a service industry, whose ultimate objective would be to compete with American universities. This vision of the European commission, centred on the contribution to competitiveness within the framework of the "Lisbon 2010" agenda, is said to take into account only purely economic indicators, by neglecting both cultural and social contributions and the potential contribution of universities to the construction of European citizenship. An approach that questions the Humboldtian ideal of a close union between research and teaching, freedom of studies and research...

Consequently, P. Maasen doubts the relevance of the choice whether European HE is forced to choose between **becoming marketized or marginalized**, and encourages Europeans rather to look to the small countries of northern Europe, which have succeeded in reconciling competitiveness and social cohesion in their HE systems, rather than to try to imitate the dominating American model.

S. Robertson & R. Keeling (2007) also believe that the neoliberal approach of the Lisbon strategy could conceive higher education only in terms of the economic welfare of the Europe region and set it in the context of increasing global competition for minds and for markets. They point out another effect of this globalisation: competition between regional systems and questioning of certain situations that had been taken for granted. Starting out from an examination of the situation in Europe, in Australia and in the United States, the authors note the various grounds for concern that the process of European convergence (in particular the Bologna Process) has raised in the last two of these countries, accustomed as they are to taking the "lion's share" from the HE market, by attracting students and researchers *en masse* from the rest of the world. While, for the time being, politicians have been more challenged than academic heads by the risk of emerging new, European-based HE standards, the two English researchers underline the growing interconnection caused by globalisation, which means that any large-scale policy in one system of higher education will call up strategic and tactical reactions in the others.

Internationalisation European style: the Bologna Process

In a context in which each system of higher education's position on the scene of world affairs is coming under scrutiny, the Bologna process, launched in the late nineties in Europe provides exceptional material for study, both as a large-scale supranational policy which was set up in record time, and as a powerful factor for change in the university policies of each European country.

Among the great amount of work devoted to the subject, that of Pauline Ravinet offers an original and enthralling approach to the genealogy of the process, in order to understand how this largely unexpected European strategy came into being, and to what extent the success it has met with is due to the conditions prevailing at the time.

To achieve this, the PhD student had to reconstitute the reasons and the methods which led to the adoption of the Sorbonne declaration in May 1998, by the four ministers in charge of German, French, Italian and British higher education (Ravinet, 2005). This founding conference was initially prepared in a rush and sometimes "from bits and pieces", primarily by the French minister Claude Allègre and some of his cabinet advisers, far removed from the intergovernmental preparation procedures in force in the European Union. The four initial parties involved had no clear vision either of where they wanted to go, or of how to get there, Pauline Ravinet affirms: each signatory committing to the project with his own motivations which were sometimes quite different from those of the others. The German and Italian ministers saw in it the means of deepening and speeding up the profound internal reforms in progress, the French minister thought he could count on it as a lever to facilitate potential changes, and the English minister signed above all as an inexpensive way to show European good will, given that no changes in the British system were required. In fact, **while there was no pre-existing shared vision of higher education in Europe, the Sorbonne provided the starting point for the construction of this common vision which led to the Bologna process.** The coming-together of a vague European project and the adoption of an instrument of public policy - the aim of organization diploma courses into a common two-cycle structure (3+2) was crucial in helping the vision to gel.

Initially, the reaction of the rest of Europe to the Sorbonne declaration was dominated by indifference or irritation at a method considered to be off-hand and disrespectful to those countries who were not taking part: nothing could have suggested, in late summer 1998, that the Sorbonne initiative was going to be successful - quite the reverse. How can we explain why, a few months afterwards, in June 1999, 25 new signatories became involved in the Bologna conference? A twin mechanism was at work, combining anticipation of what the possible effects might be and the conviction that little risk was involved because few requirements were laid down (Ravinet, 2006). The new signatories were not certain that generalizing the structure of degree courses into two cycles would ultimately be successful, but they wanted to be a part of it in case it worked, so as not to be left out afterwards.

A second phase was set up as of the second half of 1998, in which the Bologna process became a more permanent framework in which others than the Sorbonne initiators became involved. The Austrian presidency of the European Union (in the second

half of 1998), in particular, took hold of the Sorbonne objectives and set up a group to prepare the Bologna conference, which made use of the methods in force in the European Union, as being those most immediately "within reach". **In fact, the arrangements and procedures adopted to prepare Bologna were to endure and become more firmly defined in what followed, creating as they filtered down a constraining framework for those involved.**

The involvement of the signatories in the activities of the "bolognese" organization (working parties, seminars, annual reports) between 1999 and 2001 led to a whole series of consequences which were far from being neutral ones. This was a much more interesting way of explaining how the process gained in strength than the idea of European commission organizers pulling strings behind the scenes, says P. Ravinet.

Also studying how the Bologna process was set up, another young researcher stresses how the European commission took hold of the movement, born outside its province, playing a major part in it so as to move forward towards its own goals within the framework of the Lisbon strategy ([Croché, 2007](#)). She underlines the fact that the process created a new arena for confrontation /co-operation between those involved nationally, in particular people from outside the government, who saw it as the place to develop strategies that could not be developed within their national framework.

In addition, certain researchers wonder whether the initial Bologna objectives, underpinned by the determination to create a European area for higher education, to improve coherence and overall harmonization by making the existing systems converge, are really the same as the new international competitiveness objectives attributed to the European commission.

W. Weymans thus believes that **since 2002-2003 a turning point can clearly be seen in European commission documents, which gives preference to developing differentiation within Europe**, aiming to foster the development of a research and HE elite, set apart from the other universities and largely independent of the cultures of the Member States. This elite would be focused on competition with the United States or Asia ([Weymans, 2007](#)). The commission legitimizes this move from a convergence logic to one of differentiation by spreading catastrophe scenarios about the state of European universities, putting forward a description of a perpetual state of emergency in which academic Europe is said to be on the point of being irremediably sidelined by American or Japanese supremacy (an analysis that has much in common with that of P. Maasen, cf. above).

Many publications can be found which show that the hierarchical model of international economic competitiveness is not easily reconcilable with the bringing into line "with equal dignity" of establishments which bear the flame of academic values that give priority to scientific and cultural missions. As an example, a recent work pools the contributions of several researchers from the countries on the "periphery" of Europe (as they themselves put it) who are critical of the institutional views considered to be a dominating force in Europe ([Tomusk, 2006](#)).

Nevertheless, a majority of published works note above all, as has already been pointed out, that international processes are adapted and interpreted in various ways in national agendas, according to the strategies or the interactions of those who re-appropriate them. J. Witte made a detailed study of the changes and modifications in HE systems in Germany, France, the Netherlands and England between 1998 and 2004, in relation with the Bologna Process ([Witte, 2006](#)). Her analysis obviously deals with the structures of the diplomas, but also with the relationships between the various types of higher education, available training, access to higher education, the transition between university and employment, or funding. She clearly concludes that the convergences observed are slighter than is often perceived on first sight. University policy-makers have taken up the European process as a lever with which to lead university reforms with stakes that are above all national, the importation of European methods being to a great extent influenced by the abilities, preferences and perceptions of those mainly involved.

Thus in the French Community of Belgium, the international and European stakes initially resulted in revitalizing Community affiliations deriving from history and local rationales, which have driven reforms that – paradoxically – support both the concentration of the various types of higher education by academic centres and internal competition between community institutions ([Moens, 2007](#)). The idea of an international agenda which would be imposed on all countries more or less uniformly has thus been largely demolished. From a comparison of the French Comité National d'Évaluation (CNE) and the British Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), it can also be seen that behind concepts, like that of "quality", which are apparently becoming European standards, practices remain heterogeneous: depending on the context, one is not assessing the same thing, nor assessing it in the same way and, above all, not for the same purpose ([Dodds, 2005](#)).

From a study on the setting up of the "bachelor-master-doctorate" model in French universities ([Musselin & Mignot-Gérard, 2006](#)), C. Musselin also wonders about the question of "renationalising" European public policies. While the Bologna Process did not formally deal with the structures of universities nor with how they are steered, but only with the "products" of higher education (training courses and diplomas), it did, in fact, have many, profound consequences on institutional frameworks ([Musselin, 2006](#)).

On the one hand, the French ministry used the bachelor-master-doctorate reform that had been legitimated by the European Process to "drive" its own national targets (without necessarily wanting to control the European Process). On the other, setting up the bachelor-master-doctorate had collateral effects that had not necessarily been planned, related to specifically French characteristics. Among these effects, Musselin notes the return of the academic profession's stranglehold over the offer of training, going against the developments of recent years which aimed at strengthening steering at the level of the institution as against steering by discipline or by the areas of the academics. In other words, a step backwards with regard to the changes brought about in the nineties, which featured a growth in university autonomy, in comparison with the more conventional autonomy of the academics. Another collateral effect was the bringing to light of an unsolved structural problem in the French system, namely the problematic place of the departments within the universities, which give up another portion of their competences as masters degrees become more widespread, their outlines being generally broader than the boundaries of the departments. At the end of the day, the **author asks whether these various forms of re-nationalisation, through local adaptations and the collateral reforms, do not gradually weaken the potential convergence sought by the Bologna Process**, notwithstanding the ritual of official views that reaffirm the commitment of each country to the process.

Developments in steering and management

Although, as we have just seen, the Bologna Process did not formally deal with the structures of universities, even though it may have had an impact on them, one of the observed issues of globalisation is incontestably the question of the government of higher education, often inspired by the doctrines of New Public Management. **In the majority of Western countries, reforms are, or have been, carried out with the clearly-stated aim of increasing universities' autonomy** and of encouraging their capacities for collective action. This is the case in France at the start of the 2007-8 academic year, with the [law on freedoms and responsibilities of universities](#).

A thesis which attempts to decipher the ins and outs of "leadership" in university organizations was recently defended in France by Stéphanie Mignot-Gerard (2006), based on an empirical study (qualitative in four universities, and quantitative in 37 institutions).

Generally, assertion of presidential authority in the universities has intensified the tensions between, on the one hand, the institution administrators and middle managers, and on the other hand, between executive power and the deliberative authorities (councils). The author notes that the French situation particularly features a fairly strong divergence between the rector and the deans, the latter having remained very close to the model of the "primus inter pares" (first among peers). This model refers to a director or dean who represents the faculty community rather than steers it. While in other countries, under the influence of managerial reforms, the gap between those who wield executive power (whether they are chairmen or directors) and academics without responsibilities has widened, the reforms in France since 1968 have only consolidated the presidential function to the detriment of the deans. It is therefore more the case that a "director" has been created than that a coherent, integrated hierarchy has been set up in the university.

The study was an attempt to understand how effective coalitions for the government of a university are built, which implies a choice of possible allies of the president. The author notes diversity in the styles of government and partners that the president of an establishment tends to favour: they are sometimes department directors, sometimes administrative heads, sometimes the elected officials of the board of trustees. Certain presidents work with a close circle of command while others prefer to have varied and changing contact people, depending on the decisions that need taking. Within an identical legislative framework, weak as well as strong presidents are to be observed; department directors who are associated with university government as well as those that are kept at a distance; those who make decisions and others who are content merely to record.

In any event, interventions by the management on university activities and productions seldom get anywhere without the at least tacit assent of teacher-researchers, concludes S. Mignot-Gerard. Conversely, building an effective coalition with the administration can lead the presidential team to take up hard managerial values, thus discrediting the professional and entrepreneurial values in the academic community.

It can therefore be seen that a centralized style of government is not necessarily capable of manufacturing an acceptable collective order from the standpoint of the academic community. **"If the future reform of the governing structures of French universities tended towards a reinforcement of the executive at the expense of the deliberative structures, it would have to invent other intermediate collective arenas to act as sounding boards to the presidential vision and to be used as somewhere to test out disciplinary projects"** (p. 401) warned the author, several months before the announcement of the new French law.

She also underlined that the French presidents studied during the late nineties acted as a buffer between the academic community and outsiders: the State, politicians, economists and the organized forces in society. In order to "manage more effectively", the presidents translated external pressures into "institutional projects", justified by arguments of internal cohesion and fairness. The question which arises, according to the author, is of knowing how long the management of HE institutions can play this role. The work undertaken on Anglo-Saxon universities shows that the latter have a harder and harder time doing it: the "managerialisation" of the university results paradoxically in weakening the academic hierarchy *vis-à-vis* the market.

The "managerialisation" of universities and their increasing subscription to market rules is an important subject of analyses in many countries.

In France, in addition to the changes announced in the mode of university "government", the implementation of the organic law relating to finance laws (LOLF) can be read as an aspect of the introduction of competition into university steering ([Cytermann, 2007](#)). The trends shown in the law on research programming do indeed indicate a method of distributing resources based more on performance. The share of recurring or guaranteed credits within the context of criterion-based distribution will decrease in favour of allocations for projects, in the research sector, or of renovated contractual allocations, in other sectors.

In Portugal, which has recently experienced fairly drastic university reforms, the traditional conception of the student "user" has been replaced by that of the student "consumer" or "customer", whom the university must attract in order to increase its resources in terms of education rights (significantly increased) and public grants, indexed on the number of students ([Cardoso, Carvalho & Santiago, 2007](#)). More and more establishments, especially those which are more "fragile" on the HE market (recent private establishments or polytechnics), are implementing commercial and aggressive communication strategies to try to attract students.

In two very closely-related countries, Germany and Austria, the reforms inspired by the "New Public Management" have not at all met with the same fate ([Shimank, 2005](#)). Austria has, since 2002, been the scene of profound changes impelled by the central government. The universities have become public entities, for which administrative executives are accountable to the rector and no longer to the ministry. They manage their global budgets and each is the employer of its staff under private law contracts. Germany has also experienced changes: global university budgets, competition for research credits, makeover of the role of the deans in the universities (integrated into the hierarchical line-up). These changes remain, however, much less radical than the official views imply and are significantly more moderate than the Austrian reforms. Why is this? Undoubtedly, according to the author, because of the still-significant weight of "Humboldtian" traditions in Germany, and also because of the fact that the Austrian central government can easily intervene directly in Austria, whereas the German federal government must share its authority over the universities with different "Länder".

In Anglo-Saxon countries (the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand...), changes have sometimes gone quite far in transforming universities into knowledge firms (cf Slaughter & Leslie. *Academic Capitalism: Entrepreneurial Politics, policies and the university*, 1997). This has in particular resulted in boosting teaching practices and the management of teaching, better to satisfy the students who are considered as important customers of the universities, sometimes rubbing up against the founding values of the university tradition (McInnis, in [Bleiklie & Henkel, 2005](#)). In order to compensate for the inflation of costs that are not compensated for by public grants, the universities are seeking to improve their teaching or to have it financed by the economic environment. These pressures for more professional- or industrial-oriented training and research are not without effect on the disciplines. The students, who must pay increasingly high fees for their studies, are concerned to make a quick return on their investment and turn readily towards professional courses. These tend to group together to make themselves appear still more attractive to students, and meanwhile the general courses of disciplines that are more difficult to develop get sidelined or are under-provisioned (Beaker & Parry, in [Bleiklie & Henkel, 2005](#)).

J. Enders notes that the tensions between the various forms of teaching and research naturally have to do with the traditional conflict between academic values and the quest for "extra-scientific" relevance, but that in addition, the increasing complexity of effort made by the university generates other forms of tension. These are related to the inclusion of new criteria of "relevance" at the heart of university business (social and economic demands, etc.) introduced as society expresses many different kinds of expectations which exceed the universities' ability to respond (Enders, in [Bleiklie & Henkel, 2005](#)).

The differentiation and specialization of academics' activities and roles are a natural result of increasing pressure to professionalise management tasks, and also of academic leadership activities in the institutions ([Blackmore & Blackwell, 2006](#)). Although the return to the "Humboldtian" ideal does not appear to correspond any longer to the current situation of higher education, the authors nevertheless plead for a "holistic" approach from the academic which would not set "managers" in opposition with "researchers", but would allow a variation of the roles within a common conception of the development of the academic profession.

See also

- Cusso Roger (2006). La Commission européenne et l'enseignement supérieur : une réforme au-delà de Bologne. *Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs*, n° 5, p. 193-214.
- Davindenkoff Emmanuel & Kahn Sylvain (2006). *Les universités sont-elles solubles dans la mondialisation ?*. Paris : Hachette.
- Frolich Nicoline (2005). « Implementation of New Public Management in Norwegian Universities ». *European Journal of Education*, vol. 40, n° 2, p. 223-234.
- Hadji Charles, Bargel Tino & Masjuan Joseph (2005). *Étudier dans une université qui change : Le regard des étudiants de trois régions d'Europe*. Grenoble : PUG.
- Kogan Maurice, Bleiklie Ivar, Henkel Mary & Bauer Marianne (dir.) (2006). *Transforming Higher Education: A comparative Study*. Series: Higher Education Dynamics , vol. 13. Dordrecht, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York : Springer.
- Maassen Peter; Olsen Johan P. (dir.) (2007). *University Dynamics and European Integration*. Dordrecht, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York : Springer, Series Higher Education Dynamics, vol. 19.

Being an academic in the age of internationalisation

Under the impact of globalisation and more managerial conceptions of higher education, it seems that the academic profession is confronted with the questioning of some of the values, whether mythical or real, which were supposed to characterize it. This is the idea that Enders expresses by underlining how the idea of harnessing research for the needs of economic competitiveness, as in the European agenda "Lisbon 2010", challenges the model of scientific freedom within the traditional disciplinary frameworks ([Enders, 2005](#)).

Managerial culture versus disciplinary autonomy?

The academic world remains in many ways a "very small world", in particular in the way that its disciplinary networks operate; but it is coming more and more to the attention of the "large world", i.e. the rest of society ([Rey, 2006](#)). Much is now expected of it, in terms of "human capital" and training for young people, its contribution to competitiveness and the development of "best minds", this new wealth enjoyed by nations in the age of "the knowledge economy". This also means that society, via its representatives, is looking for convincing, quick and easy-to-measure results. Teaching and research are not immune to the new trends in public policies, in which regulation by procedures stand aside to make room for steering by objectives, with the key concepts of responsibility, indicators and imputability.

As higher education and research have become strategic instruments for public policy, it has become difficult to conceive that academics are developing their activity autonomously, in protected and self-regulated communities ([Henkel, 2005](#)). **Control of the community by peers alone is disputed, and the disciplinary culture must now be confronted with the managerial culture, and an increasing presence of stakeholders in the authorities where research funding is meted out.** Researchers now have to interact with the other interests in a "negotiation zone". But Mary Henkel tempers this by adding that "mode 1" ([a concept of M. Gibbons](#)) of knowledge production, that of traditional disciplinary research, remains largely present through the ways in which credits are awarded and research regulated, but also through values and behaviour which are still what make up the profound identity of academics.

As far as teaching is concerned, the setting up of a quality control agency in the late nineties in England has already been referred to; this took place in parallel with the [Dearing report of 1997](#), which, for the first time, called into question the pre-supposition that excellence of research led mechanically to excellence of teaching. Certain researchers believe, however, that attempts at regulation of the practice through audits, measurement of results or direct rewards for teaching had a limited impact on the improvement of teaching in universities ([Trowler & Fanghanel, 2007](#)). By omitting the social and cultural dimension of teaching and learning, while trying to reduce university education to a de-contextualized and technicized task, disconnected from the rest of the knowledge production process through research, certain public policy measures might well have brought in a feeling of being professionally dispossessed among university teachers. We are still rather far away from these debates in France where, although controversies do exist concerning the division between research activities and so-called "administrative" or "bureaucratic" activities ("[Faure, Soulié & Millet, 2005](#)"), teaching activities still come under little

public control. So what really is the impact of globalisation on the academic profession, apart from one or two general trends? What tangible effects does it have on the career of teacher-researchers?

Still very national recruitment policies

Analyzing the academic job markets in three countries (the United States, France and Germany) and two disciplinary fields (history and mathematics), **Christine Musselin highlights the coexistence of common disciplinary features, and also common career management systems which remain deeply rooted in national models** ([Musselin, 2005](#)).

Among the common features, it can be observed that in the three countries the academic profession has kept a monopoly over candidate selection, in other words the judgment phase (who to choose). During this phase, the disciplines stand out from each other by differences in practices, but these come together within the framework of the same discipline whatever the country, notwithstanding the progress of "managerialism".

In history, the model of shaping the job profile beforehand goes hand in hand with a large amount of room left to the specialists in the discipline to choose the right person, the recruitment committee meeting thereby proceeding in an organized atmosphere. A good percentage of the issues are regulated upstream, while the job specification is being defined, at which stage the question of teaching is taken into account, since in history, "one teaches one's speciality". Conversely, in mathematics after the job has been fairly loosely defined, special subjects and sub-disciplines clash quite fiercely in the recruitment committee meeting, because it is in this meeting that issues of research "territories" are thrashed out. According to the speciality of the person being recruited, his or her job will be used to reinforce a particular team on a *de facto* basis. The important thing is therefore to recruit a "good researcher", knowing that teaching tasks, being less specialized, are not here dependant on the scientific profile: the future colleague will in any case be able to find his place within the local educational offer.

Another point that the various countries have in common is that all the recruitment committees take into account three dimensions in assessing the quality of the candidates: scientific competences, obviously, but also their teaching ability and personality, in particular how they will probably adapt to local life, to the staff in place and to the ways their future colleagues habitually operate. While scientific competences tend to be harmonized in international standards, teaching and personality are still largely assessed in context- and location-dependant situations. German and American recruitment committees favour the search for individual competences, whereas the French take the candidate's networking more into account, i.e. collectively-based competences

On the other hand, as soon as one the question of job creation and renewal is broached, it becomes apparent that the **way in which the offer is put together is highly dependant on national contexts and power struggles between the universities, the official authority and the academic profession.**

In Germany, the departments are subject to offer regulation from the Länder ministries (which give priority to such and such a discipline according to student demand). The question then for the departments is particularly to reduce or delay the risk that the positions are not renewed, while pre-empting foreseeable decisions: reconfiguring teaching, developing a more "growth" speciality, etc.

In the United States, establishment policies are preponderant to moderate or accompany the taking into account of general trends, such as student demand or the rates of professional insertion. An institution will, for example, be able to decide to renew a position in a discipline whose numbers are falling, in order to maintain the reputation of a department that is valued for its research. The university is the area in which external constraints, scientific requirements and departments' requests can be reconciled.

In France, in spite of a recent evolution towards more involvement from institutions, the disciplinary departments or teams retain overall control of the renewal of their positions, which are seldom redistributed. But job creation does give rise to slightly rougher confrontation than before between the State, the university and disciplinary departments.

We can complete our panorama by taking a look at Switzerland, where researchers have studied a Confederal programme "to encourage academic changeover" (1992-2004), which made temporary positions available to the universities of the *cantons*. Behind the official objective lay another, more political one: strengthening the capacity of the education authority with regard to disciplines and to faculties. With this programme, the Confederation has created instruments for reducing the problems of managing the academic market, in order to reinforce its role in university governance (Bachung, Felli, Goastellec & Leresche, [2006](#) & [2007](#)).

One profession, many jobs

C. Musselin also strongly draws attention to the difference, in France, between the theoretical, statutory figure of the teacher-researcher, who devotes half of his time to teaching and the other to research, and the reality of the many different ways in which academics invest in their work and divide up their time ([Becquet & Musselin, 2004](#)).

So which model for the academic profession in the 21st century should be taken to guide the large-scale recruitments to come, that will bring in-depth changes to the academic body of higher education?

Through the reports published over the last fifteen years or so, the growing number of academics' tasks and roles have become better known. Even their subjective experience has come under close scrutiny ([Viry, 2006](#)).

Maëlle Guyader ([2006](#)) has analyzed the move from "the academic profession" to "university jobs", while observing how it is that the institutional and organisational changes that universities have undergone have disrupted the work of teachers in terms of their work, their career and their professional experience.

Her investigation concludes that the **traditional model of the "teacher-researcher" still exists and continues to be implemented by academics. What has changed is that this is no longer the only legitimate one: four other reference models have emerged from the analysis, each of which can be embodied professionally.** Any of them may lead to a "successful" career as an academic. These models are not systematically implemented by all. They are merely possible solutions for obtaining academic recognition:

- the "scientific manager" model: his role mainly involves managing a research team, finding funding and promoting scientific production. He works upstream and downstream of the researchers ;
- the "manager administrator" model: his activity features a great deal of involvement in administrative responsibilities for a department, a university or in innovation and the management of new diplomas;

- the “new academic” model: he is typically a teacher from secondary education (specifically, the French *agrégation* diploma) nominated into higher education, and exclusively involved in teaching activities;
- the “pedagogical teacher” model: a teacher by trade or a teacher-researcher, who benefits from educational recognition whenever he interacting with his students (during and after lessons).

Those involved direct their activities towards embodying one of these rival models according to three principles which come together in their experience: available resources (the quality of their research, the excellence of their background and their professional relationships), the organisational context in which they act, namely the discipline and the institution, and their professional strategies. In the end, “an *academic today must be a one-man band, a professional with many strings to his bow*”.

See also

- Deem Rosemary (2006). « Conceptions of Contemporary European Universities: to do research or not to do research? ». *European Journal of Education*, vol. 41, n° 2, p. 281-304.
- Enders Jürgen (2006). « The Academic Profession ». In Forest J.J.F & Ph. Altbach (dir.). *International Handbook of Higher Education*. Dordrecht : Springer, p. 5-22.

Tuition fees and the new breakdown of the costs of higher education

Another dominating topic in the international debate over higher education, the question of funding higher education is often now posed as an issue in diversifying university incomes, and has led to a great amount of literature, to which educational economists have made a major contribution ([Teixeira, Johnstone, Rosa & Vossensteyn, 2006](#)).

Public property or private advantage?

In a context in which there are massive increases in the number of students (throughout the world these have quadrupled between 1970 and 2000), cuts in public spending and the increasing needs of higher education institutions are leading people to look for resources over and above governmental grants. The expected new funding certainly derives from the added value from research, income from in-service training (and other forms of profit-sharing from training or research), but it is more especially income drawn from the tuition fees paid by students. **The cost-sharing frequently mentioned is mainly based on a new breakdown of funding for higher education, reducing the importance of ministerial grants in favour of a greater participation from students and their families.**

Presenting the various economic theories and their implications on this subject, V. Vandenberghe ([2007](#)) stresses that as long as the distribution of the results at the end of secondary schooling remains socially skewed, public funding of higher education – of the kind favoured in most of Europe – goes against the principle of redistribution: it amounts to paying for the studies of children of the middle and higher social categories with public money. In addition, from the international data available, there does not seem to be any clear correlation between the scale of public funding and the rate of access to higher education. On the subject of loan implementation, he shows that in the United States, student loans are granted by private banking, but with significant financial aid from public authorities (federal government or States) in exchange for lower rates; while, in other countries (Norway, Australia, the Netherlands, Hungary, the United Kingdom, New Zealand), public authorities replace the private money-lender.

After studying the policy of cost-sharing in 8 very different countries (Ethiopia, France, Israel, South Africa, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, the United States and Ireland), Gaële Goastellec, observes that three reasons are brought to justify greater financial contribution from students: efficiency, accountability and fairness ([Goastellec, 2007](#)). **A central issue of the debate is the ambiguity between the fact that higher education is traditionally regarded as public property but that the diplomas bring their owners a private advantage in terms of incomes and social mobility.**

As a result, the major trend within the education systems is to develop higher tuition fees, controlled by a system of national ceilings, variation ranges, etc. The system of social compensation, required by the goal of fairness, often rests on a system of loans to be paid back after studies are completed or other devices to reduce costs: grants, exemptions, student jobs, etc.

In countries where universities have a great deal of autonomy, the various loan and grant policies are often used as a means of attracting the best students and of thereby building up a reputation for excellence. In addition, the objective of improving access to higher education for underprivileged social groups or minorities (national, linguistic, etc), sometimes leads to financial incentive policies from the public authorities, credits being determined by the rate of access to university of a particular category of students.

The tendency is consequently for public authorities to take access to higher education into account at the level of individual institutions, to determine to what extent each university contributes to the priorities defined at national level concerning democratization or opening up to traditionally under-represented categories.

Goastellec notes that, as a general rule, creating or increasing tuition fees is easier in those countries characterized by universities that have historically been very autonomous, than in systems characterized by a dominant central control, the United States and France representing, from this standpoint, the two extremes.

Fairness at stake, or a solution for funding?

In any event, the question of the tuition fees remains an important subject of controversy in many countries, whether they have adopted a system of high fees or, on the contrary, kept fees to a reasonable level, far below the true cost of the course followed.

Ireland stands out, in English-speaking countries, by the fact that fees were done away with there in 1995, in direct contradiction to the main trend of the time! The study undertaken by an Irish researcher ([Carroll, 2007](#)) reconsiders the economic and structural reasons for this decision, the supposed effects of this measurement on university democratization, and the state of the debate that this has led to over the last ten years. There has been no shortage of arguments to try to reintroduce fees; a report was ordered from the OECD, but the author expresses her scepticism concerning a univocal conclusion as to the positive or negative effects of the decision on the frequentation of higher education institutions. A lack of data, not enough time having gone by, or the collateral effects of the Irish economic context (the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger):

the article shows that it is a tricky business trying to reach a conclusion just by equating the access rate with the amount of tuition fees.

In Australia, fees for national students were reintroduced in 1988 and have constantly increased since ([Dobson, 2007](#)). While the most university resources still come from "full" fees paid by foreign students, an increasing number of Australian students find themselves being asked for fees which cover educational costs in full, for which they must borrow large sums of money. Financial pressure on the students and their families has thus become a central issue and students from Australian universities come onto the job market with a considerable debt. Studies, Dobson claims, have shown that many graduates put off starting a family and buying a house because of their university debt.

In the United Kingdom, the trend over the 15 last years has clearly been for loans to replace grants, while allowing tuition fees to increase greatly. Claire Callender ([2003](#)) has performed an in-depth study for the association of British universities, and believes that these reforms of financial aids for students have restricted access to university education for students from the lowest-income families (Callender in [Teixeira, Johnstone, Rosa & Vossensteyn, 2006](#)). Paradoxically, the Labour reforms since 1998 were set up with the official objective of broadening access to university, the development of loans in advantageous conditions being supposed to reduce obstacles of a financial nature. In fact, **it seems that the prospect of getting into debt dissuades young people from working-class environments from starting out in higher education, whatever the interest rates and the means of reimbursement.** For those who start a course, the weight of debt reinforces pressure on students and leads the poorest to prefer cheap studying conditions (living with their parents) or finding additional incomes (working at the same time as they study), which are not very favourable to academic success. Since 2004, tuition fees are subject to great variation from one university to another, which is likely to make the fear of debt worse, or to lead underprivileged young people to choose the less prestigious universities, with lower tuition fees, also leading to less well-paid positions. The author, in her conclusion, wonders about the effects to be expected from the recent creation of new grants based on means tests, set up to compensate for the highest fees.

While France is still very far removed from this type of situation, many voices are raised in favour setting up loan systems which would make it possible "to free" tuition fees in universities thereby solving part of their funding deficit. Two economists, Robert Gary-Sore & Alain Trannoy ([2006](#)), defend the idea **contingent reimbursement loans** tested in several countries (including the United Kingdom). This consists of deferring reimbursement to a time when the graduate has found remunerative work ("the good years"), rather than demanding it at a time when he is finding it difficult to enter the job market. But this type of proposal is, for the moment, far from being unanimously accepted in France, and not only by student union organizations. While the Political Sciences School in Paris (Sciences Po) has amply fuelled this debate by setting up a system combining heavy fees and support aimed at the most underprivileged (cf. [Dossier of Sciences Po](#)), its director, R. Descoings, warns in his [latest work](#) against the fantasy of increasing university funding by increasing tuition fees, considering that the income from these fees can only be a counterpart to public funding which should first be raised!

See also

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Resources

Here are a series of links to websites dealing with our subject. The first group of links concerns mainly European networks and research centres, specializing in the topics dealt with in this issue; the second group brings together sites of organizations and institutions which often propose particularly useful documents, data and reports.

Sites and research networks

- [Higher Education Dynamics](#), a collection edited by Peter Maasen of Springer, which publishes very regularly (30 volumes published as of September 15th, 2007) reference analyses on the major higher education topics, generally adopting an international comparative approach.
- [RESUP](#), a study network on higher education coordinated per G. Felouzis (LAPSCAC, Bordeaux 2 university), which offers [various conference documents](#) as well as a [directory](#) of researchers.
- [Euredocs](#), a network of young researchers (PhD students) on the Europeanization of higher education, run by Sciences Po Paris. The network organizes an [annual conference](#), the communications from which can be found on the site. The latest one took place in May 2007 in London.
- [CHEPS](#), a major Dutch research centre in higher education policies, which has impact well beyond the Netherlands. Many documents in English.
- [CSO](#), the sociology centre (Sciences Po/CNRS) which includes the "higher education and research" team directed by Christine Musselin.
- [CHER](#), a consortium of European researchers founded in 1988, currently chaired by A. Amaral, who organizes an annual conference. The latest one took place [in Dublin](#) in late August 2007.
- [CIPES](#), Portuguese research centre in higher education policies (many documents in English).
- [INCHER-Kassel](#), the research centre of Kassel university (Germany), run by Ulrich Teichler.
- [OSPS-UNIL](#), Lausanne research centre, largely focused on higher education and research.
- [SRHE](#), Society for Research in Higher Education, United Kingdom

Institutions and expert organisations

- Eurydice : [Key data on higher education in Europe](#).
- Eurydice : [Focus on the structure of higher education in Europe](#). A comparative analysis of the progress of the Bologna process on 43 countries, which also puts forward measures to facilitate the adaptation of higher education to the objectives of the Bologna process.
- State Education University (École Supérieure de l'Éducation nationale - ESEN): [bibliography and resources for higher education](#).
- [Center for Higher Education](#) : German *Think tank* specializing in higher education, which produces many studies and is also the instigator of a famous [German university award](#).
- [CFE-OECD](#), the future of higher education analysed by the OECD.
- [Hedda](#), a European association, midway between consultancy, expertise and research, founded by research centres in several countries. Has just opened a useful [blog](#) to keep track of current events.
- [EUA](#), European University Association, founded in the early 2000s, in connection with the Bologna process. Many official expertise and study documents on the main European topics of research and higher education.
- [Bologna Process](#), the official site of the Bologna process for the period 2007-2009, supported by the Benelux secretariat.
- [ENQA](#), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- [AMUE](#), the mutualisation agency for French universities proposes a [a file on the three-cycle system](#).
- [European Center for Strategic Management of Universities \(ESMU\)](#).

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Written by: Olivier Rey

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Veille scientifique et technologique

Institut national de recherche pédagogique

19, allée de Fontenay – BP 17424 – 69347 Lyon cedex 07
Tél.: +33 (0)4 72 76 61 00 – Fax.: +33 (0)4 72 76 61 93