

# WP HES Working Papers in Higher Education Studies

*Working Papers in Higher Education Studies (WPHEs)* is an international, peer-reviewed, open-access e-journal of working papers published on behalf of the Erasmus Mundus Programme Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education and the Master Programme in Higher Education Studies and Development.

## **Thematic focus**

The Journal focuses on studies in higher education and aims to publish research articles that explore the topic from a broad array of academic disciplines, methodologies, and perspectives. The Editors particularly encourage submissions of research that discuss current changes and interactions within the 'knowledge triangle' of research, innovation and higher education. The Editors also welcome suggestions for special issues on particular topics as well as contributions in the form of book reviews.

## **Scope of contributions**

WPHEs aims to reach a wide international audience and encourages contributors from different higher education systems to submit work for publication. While authors from any stage of their career are welcome for submission, preference is given to emerging authors, as WPHEs intends to provide a space for students, early career researchers, academics and young professionals to present their works in progress to a broad readership and connect with established experts.

The series intends to incorporate and develop papers from international post-graduate programmes and, more generally, to stimulate debate and exchange of research ideas that are in an early stage of development.

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**Editorial**

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**Editorial:**

**WORKING PAPERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES JOURNAL**

Welcome to the third issue of WPHES!

Due to the growing number of public and private higher education institutions (HEIs), competition has become fiercer. Furthermore, this is the driving force behind a plethora of institutional changes and the birth of a new European Higher Education Area. Consequently, this has triggered a reform of Higher Education (HE) regulations in many European countries. A stronger market and stakeholder orientation has led to a more competitive HE system and underlines the necessity for HEIs to adjust their profiles accordingly and implement innovative management strategies. In sum, HEIs need to modernise their strategies and approaches in order to survive the competition.

The question of how, exactly to implement such changes and innovations is a particular challenge faced by expert organisations in developing their organisations. At the same time, the problem is exacerbated by a visible resistance from HEIs to reform and adopt new models. In many cases, Humboldt's ideal of autonomy runs counter to Machiavellian objectives and adds limitations of state and governmental influence. Thus, there is a conflict of priorities between the impulse for renewal and the necessity for control at a political, institutional, instrumental and individual level.

The university's autonomy and governance, the Bologna Process, the Excellence Initiative, and also the changes in the funding of HE - to mention but a few of the main issues - have led to a critical discussion on the role and responsibilities of HEIs. The changes range from comprehensive system reforms to institutional change processes, which are often expressed and propagated with headings like "from government to governance" or "from research to innovation". These represent a necessary change and a new alignment of a social contract for HEIs, for example new financing models; trends such as the expansion of tertiary education; or the right of active participation in the process of lifelong learning.

But these new developments and changes lead to the same question: alongside teaching and research are there other responsibilities for a modern university in a knowledge society? If so, then the existing social contract between HEIs and society must be renegotiated. Politicians, decision-makers and university administrators are in search of a new identity and a new strategic anchoring of the modern university in society.

In order to address this issue, we must first understand the university's institutional role. Implicit in the concept of a university is its uniqueness as an organization. Its primary function as an institution is to operate with a specific mission in teaching and research, however there

are many different forms of implementation; research-intensive, regional specialisation, teaching-oriented, further education institutions, private and public, virtual, technical and applied sciences universities. Such diversity makes comparisons difficult, as such, some form of classification is needed. Thus, differences can be uncovered, but sometimes also developed and protected. This comparison is inevitable, on the one hand because of increasing competition and scarce resources, but on the other hand for institutional profile-building and to provide differentiation within the market.

Amidst the new societal demands, there have been various devised academic career models, including the UK's probation of the job model, Central Europe's two-tier promotion and habilitation model, France's state approbation model and North America's tenure-track model. In an attempt to transfer these models into different contexts, Habtamu D. Garomssa and Nowreen Yasmin pose fundamental questions: What are the necessary components of existing academic career models? What would be an optimal academic career model for developing countries? The authors analyse pertinent elements of the advanced academic career models together with a contextual analysis of Bangladesh and Ethiopia. They suggest a hybrid tenure-track system which integrates common yet feasible characteristics of multiple academic career models so as to enable developing countries to address their own challenges.

In reference to the Bologna Process, many countries have strived to be involved in these European initiatives for the last decades. Suzana Papadhopulli and Heliona Miço examine the adoption of Bologna Declaration at national level in Albania and its impact on their higher education system there. In addition to giving a general picture of a reform in Albanian higher education, the article provokes an important discourse on how to surmount the challenges to successfully implement the Bologna Declaration. Now that a number of tertiary institutions in this era have increasingly dealt with comparable difficulties, this inquiry would be meaningful not only to Albanian universities but also to others.

Our third article deals with MISH, a liberal education program developed in Poland at the University of Warsaw, and later adopted by other Polish universities. Later it was also implemented in other countries such as to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Author Daniel Kontowski explores the European tradition of liberal education. He aims to create an inductive definition of liberal education, one grounded in the institution rather than imposed externally. The author claims that in the case of MISH, the aim (active, engaged and trusting academic community) and principles (critical thinking, communal thinking, and operational independence) are related to values (opposition, republicanism, autonomy). The article advocates for greater emphasis of diverse ideas of liberal education in the pluralist European higher education landscape.

University governance, autonomy, competition and funding are still some of the "hot" issues in European HE. Olesya Gladushyna takes us to Ukraine and explores new developments in HE governance in this country. She uses the governance equalizer to show some major developments happening in Ukrainian HE since the adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2014. The global and national trends are presented and their connection to the higher education system in the country is outlined.

Quality assurance represents an issue for government officials and universities respectively especially in those countries where higher education sector is expanding, such as China. Ruixue Chen, Damaris Clark, and Sofya Kopelyan looked into this issue in the Chinese context. Their paper focuses on how to enhance the performance of the external quality assurance bodies in China's higher education in terms of reforming the current external quality assurance system, with the help of examining the practices from the U.K. and Russia. Their suggested quality assurance model expects to meet the demand of the transformation period, and to minimise the possible resistance usually encountered by any reform in higher education.

Finally, academic writing is always an important topic, both for senior and junior academics, because in many cases the career advancement for both groups is linked to the quality of academic writing and publishing in peer reviewed journals. Aleksandar Avramovic did a review of Helen Swords' book – *Stylish Academic Writing*. This book addresses the “elements of stylishness” and provides advice for academics on how to write in a more interesting and engaging way. What is more important, the book offers a wide range of exercises for academics to try. Aleksandar concludes that readers can find this book very useful, and that it can help academics to build their writing style in a way that can impress everyone. They only have to be brave, challenge traditional beliefs and experiment more.

The Editors:

*Attila Pausits*, Economist and Head of the Centre for Educational Management and Higher Education Development, Danube University Krems, Austria.

*Patrício Langa*, Sociologist and Associate Professor of Higher Education Studies at the Institute for Post-School Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa and Faculty of Education, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique.