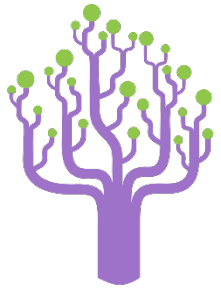


Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

29 – 31 January 2020, Bucharest

Cezar Mihai Haj

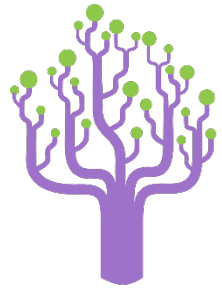


Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

About the conference

- Organized before the Ministerial Conferences (since 2011)
- Publication with the research papers that are presented at the conference
- The publications are available at the Ministerial Conference
- Report from the conference is usually delivered to ministers at the Ministerial Conference
- Report from the conference is delivered to the drafting committee.



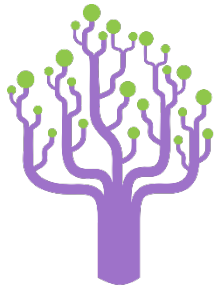
Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

About the conference

Five themes

- 1. Furthering the internationalization of higher education: particular challenges in the EHEA
- **2. Access and success for every learner in higher education**
- 3. Advancing learning and teaching in the EHEA: innovation, links with research, and cooperation with the ERA
- 4. The future of the EHEA – principles, challenges and ways forward
- 5. Bologna Process in the global higher education arena. Going digital?



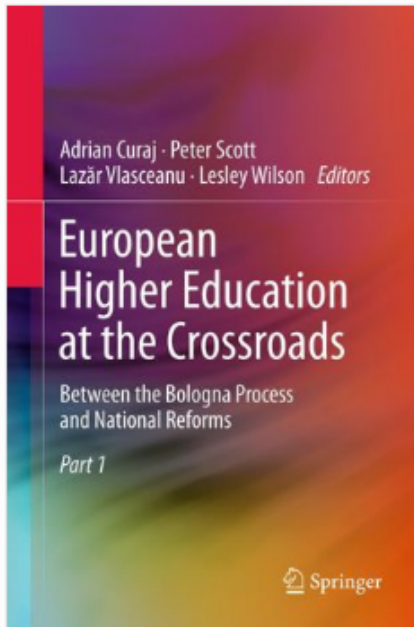
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About the publication

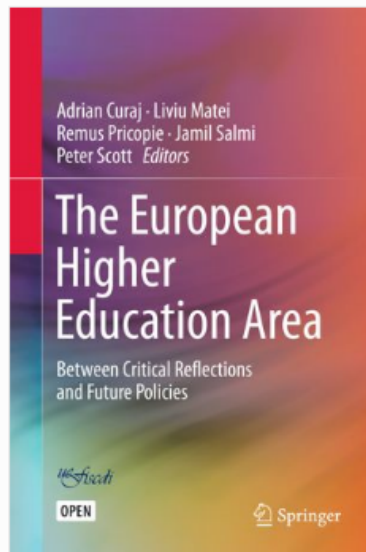


European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future Policies



European Higher Education at the Crossroads

Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms



The European Higher Education Area

Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies

Editors ([view affiliations](#))

Adrian Curaj, Liviu Matei, Remus Pricopie, Jamil Salmi, Peter Scott

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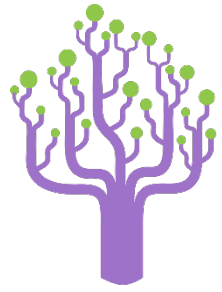
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Readers

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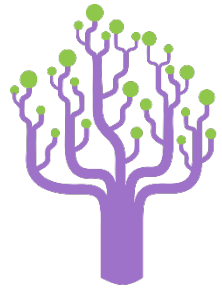


Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

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Theme overview debates

- Unlike other areas of BP, **BP hasn't been a very successful vehicle to determine change in SD**
- In the beginning of BP students pushed themselves in the process and thus it became an inclusive process and they were keen to push actions and measures for the SD
- **For several years, the SD was undefined term** and not until 2007 it was outlined its objective and intentions (students entering, participating and graduating HE, reflecting the diversity of the population and design a policy process)

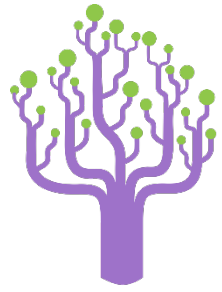


Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

Theme overview debates

- **The ministerial communiques tend to be good on rethorique** why it is important to act to improve the SD, but it is left to the countries to develop national strategies and action plans -> but there is little evidence of these
- The truth: **we haven't become more inclusive though we have more students in nearly every country** (the profile of the students don't reflect the characteristics of the society, but rather they reflect the characteristics of the same population categories represented in HE before);
- **No country has found the solution for including minority population** (even though they are different from country to country);

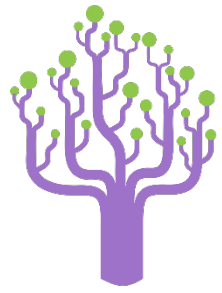


Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

Papers - I

- I. **Strategic approach toward social dimension: strategy development and the efficiency of specific measures (2 papers)**
 - The Bologna Process is still **used for promoting national policies such as strategies (e.g. Austria & Romania)**
 - Bologna Process provides many opportunities for peer learning, trainings, seminars, forums and other such tools which create the possibility to bring upfront best experiences, obstacles and challenges in implementation but also to create a space for dialogue between the different stakeholders (ExpandO , PL4SD)

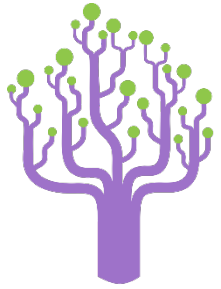


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Future of Higher Education

Papers - II

- There is **little research and information about the actual outcomes of most measures** to increase access to HE.
- the identified studies* **cover a limited number of access measures available in Europe** (e.g. effectiveness of the widespread online platforms – most of them targeting refugees)
- existing **studies do not provide a comprehensive geographical overview** across Europe (exceptions on the studies looking at Roma in CEE countries, most of the identified research explores the context of the UK, Germany, France, Italy or Finland)
- more evidence-based approaches will be necessary to effectively learn from these specific access measures and move forward towards more efficient equity measures

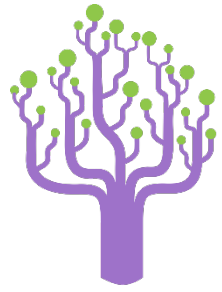


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Papers - II

- The **impact measurement is hampered by the impossibility of isolating the effects** of such policies in order **to attribute cause and effect**, as well as by the difficulty of generalizing particular results.
- The limited amount of research in the European context shows that **the most effective way to tackle unequal access to HE are the measures that combine financial assist with measures that help to overcome non-financial obstacles**
- **Success is also more likely to happen with cooperation** between governments, HEIs or other education providers, NGOs, public authorities, families and/or private companies.

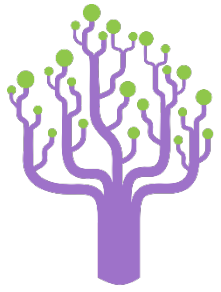


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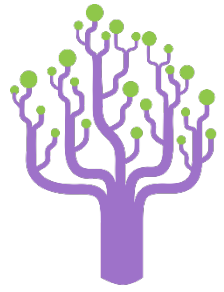
Papers - II

- There is a **lack of adequate, reliable and consistently collected data** about the policy instruments already put to practice.
- **This is often used as an excuse** for the lack of action towards more equitable systems but it also hinders the option of evidence-based policy-making or of measuring the impact of the initiatives already put into practice



II. The impact of students' characteristics on access and transition in higher education

- **staff considered only a relatively small number of social characteristics to be influential** and those that they foregrounded often appeared to be closely linked to the national context within which they were working
- **Staff - Communist narratives about equality influence how they see social characteristics** (*Poland)
- **Students appeared to have a broader, more all-encompassing view of salient social characteristics,**



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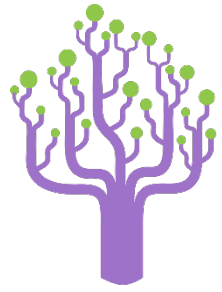
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Papers -III

- **Difficulty of making judgements about the social composition of the student body without relevant data being made available**

Recommendation:

- It may be useful for policymakers to make more use of the student voice.



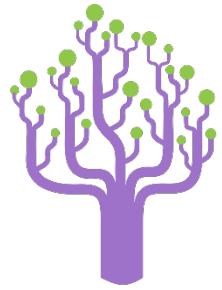
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Papers - IV

Challenges for part time doctoral students

- full and part-time doctoral candidates *reported differences in terms of access to programme-based information and academic and personal support networks during the doctoral process*
- *One of the main conclusion: “one size does not fit all”*
- informal face-to-face networks within the academic institution may be a barrier to accessing accurate and timely information for students
- the study highlights the importance of access to the physical and research environment of the academic institution providing the time, place and space for students to engage in research activities and access supportive networks and opportunities for personal and professional development.



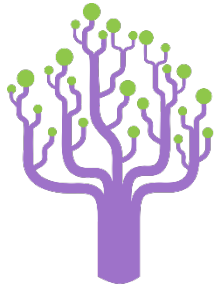
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Future of Higher Education

Papers - V

III. Refugees (Germany and Turkey)

- **Institutional settings should develop more awareness of and adapt to diverse applicants** and students in order to widen access to higher education
- The further an applicant's situation **differs from generally assumed ideal higher education transitions**, the more likely this applicant will confront difficulties or even not complete the transition.
 - **unfitting institutional environment**
- **HEI and educational policy should be aware of the variety of (prospective) students.**

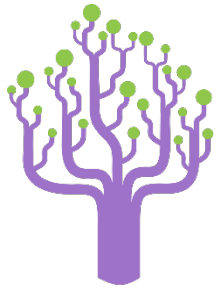


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Future of Higher Education

Papers - V

- Since many students deal with issues that cannot directly or only limitedly be addresses by HEI, such as housing, further networks, **information exchange and cooperation seem to be increasingly important.**
- For refugees **peers, friends and other students were named as important sources of information and in some cases also inspiration.**
- Structural disadvantages for groups that often face transition challenges should be met with structural support

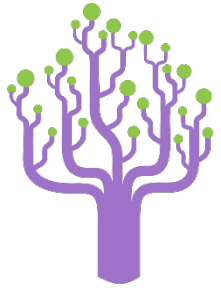


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Future of Higher Education

Papers - VI

- Syrian "elite" groups are vital for future integration policies as "role models," "pioneers," and "bridges." They might play as role models for their community and good examples for the host community to develop positive communication channels.
- **Challenges of integrating Syrian students in a very competitive admission system**
- Challenges: Language, registration process, **meeting the costs associated with higher education** after a major income level drop in the household income

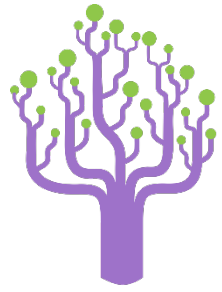


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Future of Higher Education

Papers - VI

- Syrian students still have **strong bonds with their Syrian peers. They do not** share their problems with Turkish colleagues;
- **Access is mainly done through international student quotas offered by universities which have been increased after the mass influx of Syrian refugees to Turkey (53%), competitive Foreign Student Exam (29%) and direct transfer from their institution in Syria (12%)**
- **Future:** Most of the respondents indicated that they would return only if their desired regime is established (55%) while 34% indicated that they have no intentions to return to Syria

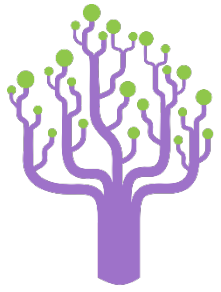


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Final panel debates

- SD – the key “dimension” of the EHEA aimed at HE not deepening the divide, BUT not a lot has improved, some things have worsened;
- National strategies/ actions plans were not developed in many EHEA countries, despite commitments since 2009;
- Missing data, but is it because of research complexity or lack of real political will?
- Vertical integration/ articulation – addressing equity concerns in secondary education;
- Refugee integration is a big problem for some countries, rural vs urban in others. SD might lend itself well for peer-learning, under close European coordination;
- GDPR – for data protection, not blanket excuses for inaction



Bologna Process Researchers' Conference

Future of Higher Education

<http://fohe-bprc.forhe.ro/>

- Abstracts, draft papers and power point presentations are uploaded
- Link to the previous Springer publications – open access

Thank you!

Cezar Mihai Haj