

Knowledge Politics and Policies

ECPR Standing Group Newsletter



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Letter from SG Section Convenors

Greetings to all our colleagues as the spring semester is moving faster and the next ECPR General Conference is approaching! As our Standing Group grows, we thank you for your contribution and encourage your continued interest and recruitment of scholars researching international higher education, research and innovation policies.

We have been preparing in the last months for our annual SG meeting, the next ECPR General Conference Section – which will be held in person for the first time since Covid. Our SG section had nearly twice as many applicants as spaces available, which made for difficult decisions but an excellent final lineup with eight panels on a range of [knowledge politics and policies](#) related topics (later in the newsletter).

As with all initiatives, we welcome your input for enhancing the resources and services that the SG can provide to our members.

Martina Vukasovic, Mitchell Young, Inga Ulnicane, Jens Jungblunt and Sara Diogo

SG Activities

Knowledge Politics and Policies SG Section at the ECPR 2022

Our Section on **Knowledge Politics and Policies** has been accepted for this year's hybrid conference at the University of Innsbruck [22-26th August] with 8 great panels on politics and policies of higher education institutions, research, higher education and artificial intelligence. You can find a short description of each of these 8 panels [on the ECPR website](#). This year, our SG section had more applicants as spaces available, which made for difficult decisions but an excellent final lineup with eight panels on a range of [knowledge politics and policies](#) related topics (later in the newsletter).

In the meanwhile, you might want to take this opportunity to renew your membership in the [Knowledge Politics and Policies Standing Group](#) (note that you have to be logged in with your MyECPR account to be able to renew membership).

Recent Publications

Ansmann, M. & Seyfried, M. (2022). Isomorphism and organizational performance: evidence from quality management in higher education, *Quality Assurance in Education*, 30(1), 135-149. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-07-2021-0114>.

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Diogo, S., Gonçalves, A., Cardoso, S. & Carvalho, T. (2022). Tales of doctoral students: motivations and expectations on the route to the unknown. *Education Sciences*, 12(4), 286. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12040286>.

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Graf, L., & Lohse, A. P. (2021). Conditions for cross-border policy transfer and cooperation: Analysing differences between higher education and vocational training. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 16(4): 361–383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17454999211057747>.

Huang, F., Leisyte, L., Kuzhabekova, A., Diogo, S. & Yudkevich, M. (forthcoming). Internationally mobile academics: are they different across countries? In G. Jones, K. Yangson & C. Alper (Eds.), *The Changing Academy – The Changing Academic Profession in International Comparative Perspective*. Dordrecht: Springer Nature.

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Recent Publications

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- Queirós, A., Carvalho, T., Rosa, M., Biscaia, R., Manatos, M., Videira, P., Teixeira, P., Diogo, S., Melo, A., Figueiredo, H. & Mendes, R. (2022). Academic engagement in Portugal: the role of institutional diversity, individual characteristics and modes of knowledge production, *Studies in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2042241>.
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The Europe of Knowledge Blog at Glance

The [Europe of Knowledge Blog](#) is the official blog of the ECPR Politics of Higher Education, Research and Innovation Standing Group. It has now a renewed image as it is hosted at UACES – University Association for Contemporary European Studies. The aim of this blog is to communicate our research findings to the wider international, academic and policy communities. The blog publishes up to 1000 word posts (with links, references and photos) on recent publications, events and policy in the fields of higher education, research and innovation in Europe and beyond. It is a great way to communicate your research to a broader audience of academics and policy-makers.

Please consider contributing to the blog. If you have any ideas for contributing entries, contact Inga Ulicane: ingaulnicane@gmail.com



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Europe of Knowledge



About Europe of Knowledge

Europe of Knowledge is an official blog of the ECPR Standing Group Knowledge Politics and Policies.



The Author

The Standing Group is a follow-up network of the UACES collaborative research network European Research Area (2013-2016). Dr. Inga Ulicane is editing the Europe of Knowledge blog.

How programme directors frame higher education quality in interdependence

Europe of Knowledge | 8 February 2022

Kasja Weenink The study 'We're stubborn enough to create our own world' (Weenink, Aarts, & Jacobs, 2021) addresses how directors of educational programs understand and enact higher education quality in interdependence with its environment. It reveals that the directors' room to play out their quality views depends on their position within the academic hierarchy and [...]

(In) voluntary mergers in higher education: a story from Norway

Europe of Knowledge | 20 January 2022

Martina Vukasovic In 2015 the Norwegian government launched a large-scale re-organisation in higher education. The policy solution proposed, like in many other cases, involved mergers of higher education institutions. There were several formal policy goals, such as robust academic environments, good access to education and expertise, contribution to regional development and effective use of resources. [...]

Towards resilient organizations and societies. A cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary perspective

Europe of Knowledge | 13 December 2021

What is resilience and how do different disciplines and fields approach it? What does resilience mean in different sectors? And what does resilience involve in times of global pandemic? These are some of the questions addressed in a new open access book Towards resilient organizations and societies. A cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary perspective, edited by Rómulo Pinheiro, [...]

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The Europe of Knowledge Blog at Glance

The European Universities Initiative: a game-changer for higher education in Europe?

Europe of Knowledge | 29 March 2022



Marina Cino Pagliarello

The implementation of a common Higher Education policy has been a long-standing objective of the European Union (Corbett, 2005). The launch of the Bologna Process in 1999 with its aim of creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the establishment of the European Research Area (ERA) have been important drivers in the construction of a single market for education, although they can be considered a mixed story of success and failure. As analysed by an extensive body of literature, both the EHEA and the ERA have been characterized by an uneven and fragmented implementation at national level with countries achieving their objectives at different speeds; furthermore, students' mobility does not seem to have substantially increased and, most importantly, both processes have

suffered from the lack of convergence around common European values (Curaj et al. 2020).

As explored [in this recent article](#) (Cino Pagliarello 2022), it is in this context that the recent launch and implementation of the [European Universities Initiative](#) (EUI) – a new hybrid type of collaboration based on transnational alliances among European universities – can represent a game-changer for European higher education due to its innovative policy design. On the one hand, the EUI incorporates the aims of the EHEA and the ERA into a common European dimension by linking education, research, and innovation within a common transnational approach. On the other, the EUI seems to exhibit a strong ideational coherence, political commitment, and a [hybrid type of governance](#) (Capano and Pritoni 2019) combining a European top-down dimension, under the policy coordination of the European Commission, and a bottom-up one, which includes a [multi-actor governance](#) (Vukasovic et al 2018) dimension.

The European Universities Initiative: background, aims, and governance architecture

Originally spurred in 2017 by the French President Emmanuel Macron during [a speech at the Sorbonne University in Paris](#), the proposal of creating a network of European Universities was rapidly endorsed by the European Council and by the European Commission. As of March 2022, the EUI supports 41 university alliances comprising more than 280 universities around Europe. The existing alliances are currently backed up by [€297m](#) from the European budget, with each alliance receiving up to 5m from the Erasmus+ Programme and Horizon 2020/Europe, with

How programme directors frame higher education quality in interdependence

Europe of Knowledge | 8 February 2022

Kasja Weenink

The study '[We're stubborn enough to create our own world](#)' (Weenink, Aarts, & Jacobs, 2021) addresses how directors of educational programs understand and enact higher education quality in interdependence with its environment. It reveals that the directors' room to play out their quality views depends on their position within the academic hierarchy and that they flexibly adjust the notion of quality to limiting circumstances. Whereas quality's plasticity and vague appeal enabled the rearrangement of academic steering relations in the 1980's and 1990's, it currently prevents structural changes at a more fundamental level.

Little is known about how the complex notion of higher education quality is understood and (strategically) handled by a specific group of key university actors: directors of educational programmes. We therefore conducted a framing analysis of in-depth interviews to explore how bachelor-programme directors in Dutch social science departments understand and enact quality, while maintaining multiple commitments. The role of programme director was fulfilled by academics in different institutes, fields and positions, ranging from administrative support staff and assistant professors to associate professor and full professor. Drawing upon the work of sociologist Norbert Elias on human figurations (Elias, 1970), relationships, policies and interdependencies that were considered crucial in their quality work were assessed.

'Quality is not problematic at all'

[The study](#) finds that directors initially share a non-problematic understanding of quality as realising a good educational programme. The continuous alignment with one another of the programme's goals, means and assessment was thereby considered key and the directors 'do not find that problematic at all'.

The Europe of Knowledge Blog at Glance

(In) voluntary mergers in higher education: a story from Norway

Europe of Knowledge | 20 January 2022



Image from shutterstock

Martina Vukasovic

In 2015 the Norwegian government launched a large-scale re-organisation in higher education. The policy solution proposed, like in many other cases, involved mergers of higher education institutions. There were several formal policy goals, such as robust academic environments, good access to education and expertise, contribution to regional development and effective use of resources. The underlying aim, visible both in the formal documents (including the title of the White Paper launching the reform “Concentration of Quality”), and in positions of the actors involved, was that this reform, again like so many others, was about strengthening quality in higher education. In the White Paper, the government clearly stated that its aim is a Norwegian higher education landscape with fewer institutions, and it even suggested which institutions could merge with each other.

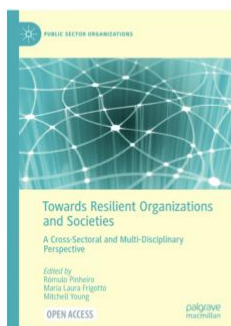
Formally, the final decision whether to merge and with whom was left to the institutions themselves though, as will be discussed below, whether these were entirely voluntary mergers is debatable.

In 2019 a team coordinated by [the Nordic Institute for Studies of Innovation, Research and Education](#), and involving also researchers from Aarhus, Bergen, and Ghent, started [the Re-Structure research project](#), funded by the Norwegian Research Council and tasked with evaluating the process and outcome of this reform.

With regards to the process aspect, through analysis of policy documents and interviews with relevant policy actors, it was interesting to observe (a) how the 2015 reform built on earlier reform initiatives and (b) how important a new approach to policy development relying on asymmetric dialogue was in pushing the idea through.

Towards resilient organizations and societies. A cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary perspective

Europe of Knowledge | 13 December 2021



What is resilience and how do different disciplines and fields approach it? What does resilience mean in different sectors? And what does resilience involve in times of global pandemic? These are some of the questions addressed in a new open access book [Towards resilient organizations and societies. A cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary perspective](#), edited by Rómulo Pinheiro, Maria Laura Frigotto and Mitchell Young. In this Q&A, they tell about origins of the book as well as their findings and lessons for future research and practice.

Q1: What have been the rationales and origins of this book?

The book originates from a 2018 EGOS (European Group for Organizational Studies) [panel](#) on the topic. It became apparent in the discussions that there is a need to connect different streams of research alongside multiple theoretical and methodological traditions to both take stock of developments in the field as well as move forward in the context of a more integrative research agenda. This aim has become even more apparent following the COVID-19 health pandemic, where considerable policy attention has been paid to resilience at multiple levels; individuals, communities, territories, nations, world regions, organizations, and institutions, including political and economic ones. The book represents a first step in the rather ambitious effort to further develop and integrate novel conceptual as well as empirical insights on the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of resilience.

B-ST-A-R: A new dataset to study science diplomacy and global science

Europe of Knowledge | 14 October 2021



The signing ceremony of a science agreement between the US and the UK in 2017. Photo credits: The State Department

Nicolas Rüffin

In a recent paper, Simon Marginson (2021) analyzes four competing narratives commonly used to explain the growth of global science. He concludes that each of the predominant narratives—growth of networks, international arms races, global markets, and centre-periphery models—falls short from fully explaining all facets of the phenomenon of global science. Consequently, Marginson calls for research that is more concerned with the connections between the semi-autonomous scientific system and political and economic actors and interventions.

Science and technology agreements – a measure of science diplomacy?

Calls for Events, Conferences, Projects & more....

New project:

Katja Brøgger, Associate Professor in education policy and governance at the Department of Education Science at the Danish School of Education of the Aarhus University (Denmark) is currently the PI of a new international comparative project – **the Asserting the Nation project**: European universities are increasingly caught between ideals of deeper European integration and protectionist national agendas. Against this backdrop, the project investigates the (Nation) State-University Relationship in Europe, including recent opposition against globalization and re-nationalizing trends in the wake of the Cold War. Centering on universities and their interaction with the (nation) state and international cooperation in Poland, France, the UK and Denmark, the project offers a comparative approach to understanding contemporary trends in European higher education policy making. The project also examines recent actions taken by the EU to deepen European integration and collaboration on education and research.

The project is funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark and is collaborating with the University of Cambridge, Sciences Po Aix, Teachers College Columbia University, and the Adam Mickiewicz University. More information at: <https://projekter.au.dk/en/asserting-the-nation>

The Policy Futures International Webinar Series: The Policy Futures research program runs the Policy Futures International Webinar Series. More information for upcoming events and for registration: <https://dpu.au.dk/en/research/research-programmes/policy-futures>. **Upcoming webinars** include keynotes such as Ben Williamson, Sotiria Grek, Janja Komljenovic, Manja Klemenčič and Donatella delle Porta.

6th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP), August 08-09, 2022 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. More info at: <https://www.ippapublicpolicy.org> | **Events of interest to younger scholars: IPPA - International Summer School on Public Policy - Venezia - Padova Edition.**

Call for Application at <https://www.ippapublicpolicy.org/summerschool/venezia-padova-summer-school-2022/40>
European Integration Summer School (EISS) - Universitetet i Agder. More info at <https://www.uia.no/om-ua/fakultet/fakultet-for-samfunnsvitenskap/institutter/institutt-for-statsvitenskap-og-ledelsesfag/european-integration-summer-school>

5th International Conference on Gender Research (ICGR 2022), University of Aveiro, Portugal. 28-29th April 2022. More info at: <https://www.academic-conferences.org/conferences/icgr/>

Round Table on **Resistance(s) to Gender Equality in Higher Education and Science Institutions.** By Sara Diogo, Carina Jordão & Teresa Carvalho from the University of Aveiro, Portugal; Sandra Karner and Julian Anslinger, from IFZ - Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture, Austria, and Hana Himi and Maya Ashkenazi, from Beit Berl Academic College, Israel.

About the SG Newsletter

Our newsletter is usually published three times annually, and includes summaries of recent events, upcoming events, announcements, calls for papers, a list of recent publications from SG members, and more! This has been a special year in many ways, and also for our SG Newsletter, being published for the first time this year.

The Standing Group on Knowledge Politics and Policies, (European Consortium for Political Research) Standing Group was established in February 2016. We seek to bring together scholars whose work relates to the deeply interconnected fields of higher education, research, and innovation to encourage debates and research on the politics and policies in these areas. We aim to generate comparative insights on all aspects of scholarly research—methodologies, theories, data collection, processing and analysis—into the dynamics and complexities of knowledge policymaking around the world. For more information about the SG and its activities visit our website: <https://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/ecprknowledgepolitics/>.