Managing the Dynamics of the Bologna Reforms: How Institutional Actors Re-Construct the Policy Framework

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Abstract: How do the constituencies in higher education re-interpret Bologna's function with regard to the European Higher Education Area? This research examines how institutional actors re-construct the policy framework in the light of their own institutional agendas. Drawing on empirical data from a survey of academics, students and administrative and management staff this article focuses on the processes of mediation. It examines how at institutional level actors perceived Bologna whilst themselves being in the midst of Bologna's on-going policy dynamic. It dissects the tensions between macro political processes and the role status and function of the different constituencies and sheds new light on the role played at the institutional level by the three estates in re-interpreting the Bologna Declaration whilst adopting the reforms it introduces.

Gestionando las Dinámicas de Las Reformas de Bolonia: De qué Forma Los Actores Reconstruyen el Marco Político
Resumen: De qué forma las partes constituyentes de las instituciones de enseñanza superior reinterpretan la función de Bolonia desde el punto de vista de la construcción del Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior?. Esta investigación examina como los actores institucionales reconstruyen el marco político a la luz de sus agendas institucionales. Tomando como base los datos cuantitativos referentes a una encuesta a los profesores, a los estudiantes y al personal de administración y servicios este artículo se focaliza en el proceso de mediación. Examina el modo como los actores institucionales perciben Bolonia estando al mismo tiempo en el núcleo de la dinámica política del proceso de Bolonia. Este trabajo analiza las tensiones entre los procesos macro-políticos y el papel y la situación de las distintas partes que constituyen las instituciones de enseñanza superior, iluminando el papel desempeñado a nivel institucional por los actores institucionales reinterpretando la Declaración de Bolonia a medida que se adoptan las reformas que ésta preconiza.
Palabras-clave: Proceso de Bolonia, Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior, Partes constituyentes: Académicos, Estudiantes, Personal de administración y servicios, Percepciones sobre las dinámicas de Bolonia

Gerindo as Dinâmicas das Reformas de Bolonha: Como é que os Atores Reconstroem o Enquadramento Político
Resumo: Como é que as partes constituintes das instituições de ensino superior reinterpretam a função de Bolonha tendo em vista a construção da Área Europeia de Ensino Superior? Esta investigação examina o modo como os atores institucionais reconstroem o enquadramento político à luz das suas agendas institucionais. Com base em dados quantitativos relativos a um inquérito por questionário direcionado a académicos, estudantes e pessoal técnico e administrativo este artigo foca-se no processo de mediação. Examina o modo como os atores institucionais percecionam Bolonha na medida em que estão no cerne da dinâmica politica do processo de Bolonha. Este trabalho analisa as tensões entre os processos macro políticos e o papel e o estatuto das diferentes partes constituintes das instituições de ensino superior, iluminando o papel desempenhado pelo nível institucional pelos atores institucionais reinterpretando a Declaração de Bolonha à medida que são adotadas as reformas por ela preconizadas.
Palavras-chave: Processo de Bolonha, Área Europeia de Ensino Superior, Partes constituintes: Académicos, Estudantes, Pessoal administrativo e de gestão, Perceções sobre as dinâmicas de Bolonha

Introduction

Previous analysis of how the Bologna process is taken up at the institutional level revealed that as academics, students and administrative and management staff embark on this task, so they reconstruct and re-define the policy framework (Neave & Veiga, 2013).

Redefining or, for that matter, refining the policy framework may be viewed from many standpoints: as an inbuilt part of 'the implementation process' (Cerych & Sabatier, 1986; Kallen, 1982) or, alternatively, as a dimension contributing to that inherent feature higher education possesses which Clark (1983) ascribed to its 'bottom-heavy' nature, namely, that decisions taken at

the top are re-negotiated and re-interpreted as they work their way down into the individual institution and on into the base units (Premfors, 1989).

Re-negotiation as a dynamic element in the process of embedding legislative intent into institutional practice is of singular importance in the Bologna Process, not least because the Process itself is indissolubly tied in with what may best be described as a basic assumption grounded in the notion of 'time coercion'. One may, question the reasons that prompted setting the year 2010 for completing what is, without doubt, geographically the most extensive single reform that higher education in Europe has seen since its beginnings nine centuries ago. That in no way detracts, however, from the basic fact that Bologna is effectively a 'time coercive' process grounded in an explicit dateline and urged on by governments' commitment to it. Still less can it be disputed that the concept of 'time coercion' stands as one of the salient, though less noticed, features that are an integral part of the Bologna agenda since its launching in 1999. Whether the Fathers of Bologna anticipated its subsequent unfolding in terms of a rational, linear and legal process, akin to what is often alluded to 'the Engineering model' of policy development (Kallen, 1982) or whether they subscribed to a less tidy 're-iterative model', must remain a matter for future research. Either way, however, if we are to tease out Bologna's impact at the institutional level which is also central to understanding the nature of the unfolding dynamic as policy in higher education migrates from being a statement of intent to becoming established institutional practice, attention should be paid to how policy actors 'make sense' (Välimaa, Stensaker, & Sarrico, 2012) and interpret Bologna at the precise moment when they are actively engaged in those reforms.

Viewed by the *pays réel*, what Bologna is poses foursquare what Bologna ought to be when viewed from the perspective of the *pays politique*. Distinguishing between the *pays politique* and the pays reel draws a line between two spheres of political action (Neave, 2002). The *pays politique* embraces the domain of legislative enactment, its preparation and its accompanying political discourse. The *pays réel* revolves around the act of teaching, learning and the curriculum. It focuses on institutional practice and its institutionally grounded dynamic. What, to the *pays politique*, Bologna ought to be, is shaped by 'time coercion': what ought to be, shall be'. Whereas 'time coercion' is a prime consideration for the *pays politique*, academic time shapes the *pays réel*. The relationship between academic time, which is both essential and conditional for new knowledge, objectives and strategy to be taken up by, and embedded in, the individual university (Neave, 2005) as against the notion of 'coercive time', is one of tension. Moreover, it places particular weight on how Bologna is interpreted by the *pays réel*.

Institutional dynamics as interpreted by Neo-Institutionalism assume that matching up the norms and priorities of higher education institutions and those which reform introduces, is crucial. Thus, at institutional level, constructing the EHEA presumes that the measures to put it in place are seen as both coherent and significant by those who have to accommodate them. The adjustments institutions face seek to advance cooperation, mobility, and employability, whilst at the same time raising the drawing power of the EHEA. For these three objectives to be met requires working across three different operational levels – European, national and institutional. In what way do higher education's three constituencies re-construct the policy framework whilst dealing with European and national policy goals?

Theory gives some pointers to the way institutions adapt and adjust to implementing the Bologna process. Amongst the most powerful is the notion of a shift in the 'logic of appropriateness', which factors in differences in roles and responsibilities across different segments and types of HEI. According to the 'logic of appropriateness', individuals act in the light of what is expected of them (March & Olsen, 1989). Appropriateness determines behavior and individual choice. It is itself grounded in dominant institutional values. Routines generate appropriate behavior.

Rules formalize the logic of appropriateness. Naturally, the interpretation individuals make about dominant institutional values, routines and rules, differ (Peters, 1999). Nevertheless, the logic of appropriateness, grounded in roles, functions, positions and responsibilities, poses foursquare the question: 'What, given my role, is expected of me?' The logic of appropriateness creates expectations as to performance, expectations based on routines, rules and procedures. A clear shift towards the logic of appropriateness emerges once one takes into account interpretations made at the institutional level. Such interpretations, whilst set in established rules and norms, also evolve within both national and institutional contexts.

Within the European Union, themes defining the 'logic of appropriateness' focus on the performance and international attractiveness of Europe's HEIs, raising the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU as well as the modernization of higher education (curricula, governance and financing) (European Commission, 2006). At national and institutional levels, the shift from knowledge to competence(s), and emphasis on mobilizing capacity have become central and, in turn, are resonant with neo-liberal discourses and theories (Magalhães & Amaral, 2009). The decision to set up a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was taken by the 29 Ministers of Education when the Bologna Declaration was signed in June 1999. Every event has its origins. Bologna is no exception. The roots of the Declaration may be traced back to other initiatives, some as far back as the Eighties. The burden of European integration has been to lock together policies that previously focused on education, vocational training and lifelong learning and to align them more closely with economic development through the mutual recognition of study abroad, cross frontiers ties between universities and polytechnics and last but not least, to forge ties between research, innovation and higher education. Such an approach was largely voluntarily that is to say, it relied on initiatives from individual establishments of higher education that in turn largely depended on the level of awareness at institutional level of the opportunities such policies opened up and of the incentive measures promoted at the European level.

Whilst it may be argued that Bologna added momentum to the process of 'Europeanizing' higher education, it is very far from clear whether the Bologna Process envisaged the establishment of the EHEA as a specific priority across all three levels – European, national and institutional. Certainly, there is evidence to hand that suggests Bologna as an instrument of policy has been more effective at the national level (Moscati, 2009; Musselin, 2009; Witte, 2006) than it has as a way of disseminating the "European message" contained in the EHEA. As Musselin pointed out, "… in the case of France, it may be more difficult than in other countries to argue that Bologna is a Europeanization process because the idea of the two-cycle structure has been developed by the French" (Musselin, 2009, p. 183). In a similar vein, Neave pointed out that Bologna's claim to uphold a 'European identity' was considerably diluted by the fact that, as a package deal, it "reflected issues – employability, transparency and readability etc – (that were) already present in the agendas of most of the long-term Member States of the EU" (Neave, 2009, p. 49). Bologna is a multi-faceted process.

At the European level, it serves as vehicle for that part of the European Agenda, which, in the framework of the Lisbon strategy, concentrates on the modernization of higher education. At the national level, it appears to provide a window of opportunity to pursue 'domestic', that is, national agendas in parallel to, though not necessarily in balance with, priorities enunciated at European level. In effect, weighing up the place both the EHEA and Bologna occupy within the broad range of policies for advancing European integration is a particularly complex exercise.

Research on Bologna has developed around two perspectives: analysis *for* policy and analysis *of* policy. The latter seeks to explain the salient characteristics of policy (Gordon, Lewis, & Young, 1997). The former contributes to furthering its development (Gordon et al., 1997) (see for instance,

Bologna Follow-up Group, 2005, 2007, 2009; CHEPS, INCHER-Kassel and ECOTEC consortium, 2010; European Commission, 2012; Crosier, Purser, & Smidt, 2007; Eurydice, 2010; Haug & Tauch, 2001; Reichert & Tauch, 2003, 2005; Sursock & Smidt, 2010; Tuning Management Committee, 2006) by interest groups and their representative organizations.

Broadly speaking, the analysis of policy focuses on the political, national and institutional take up of Bologna. The role of Bologna in policy (see for instance, Amaral & Magalhaes 2004; Amaral, Neave, Musselin, & Maassen, 2009; Amaral & Veiga, 2012; Balzer & Martens 2004; Capano & Piattoni, 2011; Chou & Gornitzka, 2014: Gornitzka, 2006, 2007, 2010; Hoareau, 2011, Huisman & Van Der Wende, 2004b, Keeling, 2006; Neave & Maassen, 2007; Papatsiba, 2006; Ravinet, 2008; Veiga & Amaral, 2006, 2009a, 2012a; Veiga, Magalhães, & Amaral, 2015; Voegtle, Knill, & Dobbins, 2011; Wit & Verhoeven, 2001) and very particularly both its implications and its impact at system level have been widely studied, as a sub set of policy implementation (see for instance, Alesi, Burger, Kehm, & Teichler, 2005; Diaz, Santaolalla, & Gonzalez 2010; Guth 2006; Heinze & Knill 2008; Helgøy & Homme, 2013; Kehm, Huisman, & Stensaker, 2009; Kehm & Teichler, 2006; Magalhães, 2010; Moscati, 2009; Musselin, 2009; Powell, Graf, Bernhard, Coutrot, & Kieffer, 2012; Rudder 2010; Sin, 2012; Tomusk, 2006; Vällima, Hoffman, & Huusko, 2006; Veiga & Amaral, 2008, 2009b; Veiga, Amaral, & Mendes, 2008; Witte, 2006, 2009; Witte, Huisman, & Purser, 2009).

Another approach concentrates on the views and stances taken by bodies representing particular constituencies and stakeholders for example, employers (Humburg, van der Velden, & Verhagen, 2013), students (see for instance, Cemmel 2006; Education International & ESU, 2011; ESIB, 2005, 2007, 2009; European Students' Union, 2012; Michavila & Luis Parejo, 2008, Portela, Sá, Alexandre, & Cardoso, 2009) and academic staff (see for instance, Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2005; Diaz, Santaolalla, & Gonzalez, 2010). However, comparing the views of different constituencies within higher education institutions remains unexplored. Roles, responsibilities and status that identify the constituencies in higher education largely determine their behavior as mediators of policy. As such, mediators of policy relate policy to context (Ball, 2006). Relocating the three constituencies within a dynamic policy framework underscores both the importance and the place that interpretation and re-interpretation, both play in change.

Roles, responsibilities and status that identify the constituencies in higher education largely determine their place in implementation, enactment and embedding measures of adjustment. As Ball has noted, mediators of policy relate policy to context (Ball, 2006). Relocating the three constituencies within a dynamic policy framework underscores both the importance and the place that interpretation and re-interpretation, both play in change.

Institutional actors, whilst taking the dynamic of the Bologna reforms on board, also re-shape the rules of 'appropriate' behavior towards the policy objectives set by governance structures at European, national and institutional levels. We analyze the perceptions of higher education's three constituencies – academic, student and administrative and management staff – to ascertain whether the way Bologna's reforms is viewed at institutional level does not entail a fundamental re-definition of its function vis-à-vis the EHEA.

Survey Instrument

This article draws on secondary analysis to understand the institutional dynamics within the Bologna reforms. It analyses data from seven higher education institutions through a survey to elicit perceptions of the three constituencies of higher education institutions (Veiga, 2010). The seven higher education institutions accepting to take part in the survey are located in Germany, Italy, Norway and Portugal. Whilst the Bologna Process is formally endorsed by some 47 States including

the Vatican and Turkey, the survey concentrates on institutional level responses within Western Europe more specifically from establishments involved in Bologna from its outset. Four countries were chosen to reflect both geography and size of system, between higher education in Northern and Mediterranean areas and between large and small-scale systems, respectively Germany and Italy, Norway and Portugal. Higher education institutions were selected on a simple random sample with the purpose of examining from a comparative perspective how far the constituencies within higher education institutions contributed to advancing the Bologna Process.

This article eschews exploring between-systems differences. Rather, it brings together three groups of actors – academic staff, administrative and management staff and students – to examine how these three interests perceive and respond to key adjustments Bologna called for at the institutional level. Extending the analysis across four systems offsets national variations. It affords a broader perspective to the way these actors perceive the consequences of Bologna within the setting of their own establishments, whilst leaving aside national system differences. We do not assume any homogeneity across systems in respect of the three stakeholder groups nor do we exclude that changes at institutional level relate to domestic reform (Neave & Veiga, 2013; Veiga, 2012). However, a focused analysis of overall perceptions held by institutional actors, who both take up and shape Bologna reforms, yields a firmer grasp of institutional level dynamics within the Bologna Process. Clearly, the way students respond to the promise of Bologna will differ from academia and administration both in degree and in the items endorsed or rejected. Put succinctly, this examination sets out to gauge how a Europe-wide reform is viewed and interpreted by those who have the ultimate responsibility both of reforming and of 'being reformed'.

Accordingly, this exploration of institutional level perceptions of the Bologna agenda draws on data gathered in 2008 with a questionnaire distributed to students, academic, administrative and management staff in seven European universities (Veiga, 2010). The questionnaire was administered by a researcher associated with the project and responsible in each university for distributing it to members of the three constituencies. Three dimensions of the Bologna Process were singled out: its impact as policy; its implementation at the individual university; its influence upon teaching/learning and research. Given the exploratory nature of the enquiry, each university was assigned a quota of 120 academics and 240 students. First year students in first cycle programs were excluded due to their likely unfamiliarity with the Bologna Process. In addition, 25 administrative and management staff, drawn from Academic Affairs, Quality, Informatics and Information Systems Divisions and International Offices at each university were included.

In all, 2,695 individuals were contacted, and 947 valid questionnaires were completed and returned – a 35% response rate. Table 1 presents the response for each constituency.

Table 1
Break Down of the Answers by Constituency

	Sample	Number of responses	Response rate
Academic staff	840	321	38 %
Students	1680	551	33 %
Administrative and Management staff	175	75	43 %

Source: Veiga, 2010.

Whilst the sample size poses limitations on the generalization, the data gathered provide nevertheless an appropriate pointer to issues emerging from the dynamic involved in implementing Bologna comparing the perceptions of academics, students and administrative staff. Even when these caveats are born in mind, however, this examination of the perceptions Bologna's impact has

an on-going process within the institutional level sheds further light on that more general issue, namely the influences that shape the 'embedding' of European policy into grounded institutional practice.

The questionnaire covered 29 items, each accompanied by related statements which respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale. Three of these points called for an opinion, which depending on the topic, ranged from 'disagree' to 'fully agree', from 'no impact' to 'major impact' and from 'not implemented' to 'fully implemented'. If familiar with the issue but with no formed opinion respondents could answer 'no opinion'. If the issue raised was not familiar, respondents could answer 'do not know.'

Perceptions of institutional participants, on the one hand, are shaped within the framework implementing the Bologna process, thereby underlining the role of formal structure in driving the logic of appropriateness. On the other, perceptions reflect the management dynamics such reforms generate since both practice and context within the individual institution are influenced by the role of formal structure. Hence, this article examines how the three constituencies made sense of Bologna. The empirical differences between the choices exercised by the three constituencies are important. Each occupies a different niche within the process of policy mediation. These processes tie in to the impact Bologna makes as a policy framework, as a vehicle of implementation and as a re-forming influence upon teaching/learning and research as they are 'mediated' by informants.

Descriptive statistics singled out the prevailing issues within each dimension in the light of responses by academics, students and administrative staff. Non-parametric statistics (assuming a two-sided significance of 5%) tested the hypothesis that no significant statistical difference existed in the perceptions held by the three constituencies. The views of different groups of respondents were compared using the Kruskal-Wallis two-tailed test. Additionally, based on the mean rank result of each group of respondents it was possible to identify which group tended to agree more with the statements where statistically significant differences were detected. The Chi-square test was subsequently employed to ascertain if there were any differences between those expressing "no opinion" or who "did not know" against those who held an opinion. To retrieve the group of respondents contributing more with "no opinion" and/or "do not know" and the group of respondents who had more rated opinions the adjusted residual ≥2 was used.

Conformity, interpretation and disagreement are then the key dimensions this article sets out to clarify.

Conformity

The absence of statistically significant differences between the views endorsed by different constituencies suggests a degree of agreement on a given issue or topic (see table 2). Those surveyed revealed no divergence in perceiving Bologna as a pedagogic reform or as a reform in governance. Nor were there any significant departures from the view, which construed Bologna as a vehicle for improving the efficiency of the national higher education system and increasing the mobility of students and graduates. That implementing Bologna called for the development of supranational governance institutions likewise commanded consensus. That implementing the Bologna Process contributed to the policy of internationalization and the mobility of European students and staff, also received general agreement. Nor was the impact of national initiatives, for instance the drawing up of the legal framework, and at the European level, the establishment of rankings, league tables, and typologies of higher education institutions, subject to marked disparities in the way the three constituencies perceived them.

Yet, the way the three constituencies viewed Bologna reveals a perceptual framework that builds out from a number of elements. It is constructed around the setting up of supranational institutions that define and uphold common European standards of quality, rankings, league tables and typologies of higher education systems and establishments. Also included in this perceptual framework are governance reforms, the efficiency of national systems, policies of internationalization and mobility and, last but not least, pedagogical reform. These shared elements of perception shape the framework within which Bologna is interpreted at the institutional level.

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies

3. In [Your] highe*r* education system do you agree that implementing the Bologna process is…

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
3.2 a pedagogic reform (e.g. competence and skills based learning)	0.075	37 4%	144 16%	163 18%	247 27%	273 30%	60 6%
3.4 a governance reform (e.g. university autonomy, strategic partnerships, quality assurance)	0.050	93 10%	143 16%	128 14%	244 26%	195 21%	118 13%

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

4. In [Your] higher education system would you agree that implementing the Bologna process is focused on the…

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
4.3 development of supranational governance institutions (e.g. promotion of common European quality standards)	0.672	100 11%	99 11%	163 18%	263 28%	196 21%	106 11%

5. In [Your] higher education system which of these items do you reckon have changed as a result of implementing the Bologna process?

	P value	No change	Little change	Moderate change	Large change	No opinion	Do not know
5.3 Internationalisation policy	0.100	71 8%	44 5%	103 11%	310 34%	294 32%	103 11%
5.5 Mobility of European students and staff (e.g. academic and administrative and management staff)	0.351	51 6%	54 6%	138 15%	267 29%	330 36%	81 9%

Table 2

Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

6. In your university how do you rate the impact of the following initiatives launched at European level for implementing the Bologna process?

	P value	No impact	Little impact	Moderate impact	Major impact	No opinion	Do not know
6.3 Studies by the European University Association (e.g. Trends I – Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education, Trends II – Towards the European Higher Education Area – survey of main reforms from Bologna to Prague, Trends III – Progress towards the European Higher Education Area, Trends IV – European Universities Implementing Bologna; Bologna Handbook – Making Bologna Work)	0.092	141 15%	86 9%	156 17%	148 16%	58 6%	324 35%

Table 2

Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

6. In your university how do you rate the impact of the following initiatives launched at European level for implementing the Bologna process?

	P value	No impact	Little impact	Moderate impact	Major impact	No opinion	Do not know
6.4 Studies by Bologna working groups established on specific topics (e.g. qualifications frameworks, social dimension, stocktaking, external dimension)	0.807	144 16%	84 9%	164 18%	156 17%	62 7%	303 33%
6.5 Recommendations of European professional associations relevant to your area of specialization	0.892	142 16%	116 13%	160 18%	155 17%	54 6%	284 31%
6.6 Establishment of rankings, league tables, typologies of higher education institutions	0.258	121 13%	86 9%	152 17%	253 28%	88 10%	212 23%

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

7. In your *university* how do you rate the impact of the following provisions developed at national level for implementing the Bologna process?

	P value	No impact	Little impact	Moderate impact	Major impact	No opinion	Do not know
7.1 Legal framework (e.g. laws, rules and regulations)	0.207	92 10%	44 5%	118 13%	291 32%	222 24%	151 16%
7.2 Recommendations of professional associations relevant to your area of specialization	0.561	115 13%	107 12%	195 21%	204 22%	70 8%	220 24%
7.3 Networking and exchange good practices with national higher education institutions	0.433	95 10%	98 11%	205 22%	286 31%	75 8%	155 17%

8. How do you rate all these items as they reflect the European dimension of the Bologna process in your university?

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
8.2 Significant European content of courses and curricula	0.346	63 7%	136 15%	158 17%	248 27%	215 23%	100 11%

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

8. How do you rate all these items as they reflect the European dimension of the Bologna process in your university?

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
8.4 New active and substantial partnerships and consortia activities and curriculum development between higher education institutions in Europe (e.g. joint degrees)	0.084	119 13%	134 15%	129 14%	206 22%	153 17%	177 19%

9. In your *university* which of these items do you reckon have changed as a result of implementing the Bologna process?

	P value	No change	Little change	Moderate change	Large change	No opinion	Do not know
9.7 Recognition procedures of European and foreign degrees	0.072	106 12%	51 6%	140 15%	296 32%	154 17%	167 18%
9.10 Research (e.g. networks across Europe, management of international research activities)	0.983	109 12%	126 13%	188 20%	221 23%	87 9%	192 20%

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following

	P value	Not implemented	Little implemented	Moderately implemented	Fully implemented	No opinion	Do not know
10.1 The Bologna degree structure	0.427	64 7%	38 4%	67 7%	278 31%	311 34%	152 17%
10.2 Pedagogic reform (e.g. curriculum reform and teaching/learning methods)	0.192	69 8%	38 4%	166 18%	342 38%	185 20%	108 12%
10.4 Credit system (ECTS)	0.209	68 7%	31 3%	98 11%	215 24%	387 43%	108 12%

16. In my *university* difficulties of implementation are related with frailties on the…

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
16.2 consistency of institutional policies with policies and strategies developed at national level	0.68	130 14%	51 6%	79 9%	214 23%	267 29%	172 19%
16.3 participation of higher education institutions in the decision-making process and agenda setting of Bologna	0.221	121 13%	50 6%	73 8%	223 25%	265 29%	175 19%

Table 2
Statements in the Survey Where No Disparities Were Found Between the Three Constituencies (cont.)

16. In my *university* difficulties of implementation are related with frailties on the…

	P value	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
16.4 adaptation of different field of specialization to the Bologna degree structure	0.558	117 13%	73 8%	85 9%	215 24%	273 30%	143 16%
16.5 dependency on additional changes (e.g. legal framework, resource allocation)	0.628	105 12%	34 4%	58 6%	195 22%	350 39%	163 18%

Source: Veiga, 2010.

How a policy is perceived identifies those components shaping the frame of reference. The perceptions of policy may reveal discontinuities expressed either by the absence of awareness – or by their non-recognition by those having to take the reforms – thereby reflecting the 'non significance' in which such items are held. Here too, an element of consensus emerged from certain items that hint at a degree of fragility in the take-up of the Bologna Process.

These items ranged from the consistency of institutional policies with policies and strategies developed at national level, the participation of higher education institutions in the decision-making process and agenda setting of Bologna, the adaptation of different fields of specialization to the Bologna degree structure and the dependency on additional changes. Seen within the institutional setting, implementing Bologna reforms appears to lack consistency between policies developed at institutional and those stressed at national, level. The absence of higher education institution's participation in the political arena, the burden of adapting different fields of specialization to the Bologna degree structure and further that the Bologna Process itself is dependent on other policies which in turn draw in further dimensions of change also tell against it. The limited nature of participation was evident in the formal absence of academia from the Bologna Follow-up Group. In short, the 'Bologna strategy' is not independent of the broader policy context in which it is set, even though those examining it tend to do precisely this. Precisely because the reform of governance and institutional management are pursued in parallel to Bologna, how far decisions reached in these parallel domains may not require re-interpreting Bologna's functional relationship to the EHEA, is not unimportant.

Interpretation and Disagreement

To pursue the issues of re-interpretation and dissent further, those who held definite weighted views were compared with those who abstained, had "no opinion" or "did not know". The academic constituency was more forthcoming in expressing weighted views. For neither the student nor and the administrative constituencies was this the case.

The relationship between a rated opinion and the constituency voicing it reflects the formal responsibilities and involvement of academics within the institution. They are familiar with the topics raised. They are engaged in the decisions, adaptations and adjustments required by implementing Bologna.

The statistical relationship, however, did not echo the level of agreement expressed by academics. Despite the association established between a particular item and the expression of a rated opinion, the perceptions of academic staff were no more enthusiastic than the views of other groups of respondents. Administrative staff tended more to agree with the propositions than academics and students. The professional role and the status of the three constituencies in policy mediation might explain these variations.

Position and professional responsibility are important in ascribing meaning to Bologna just as they are to the adjustments in process and structure inherent in the reforms. Academics, students and administrative and management staff subscribed to different views on the establishment of the EHEA, differences that were statistically significant. At the institutional level, 'making sense' of Bologna suggests that the perception of the reforms did diverge and in diverging, gave rise to widely different views. To substantiate this, the analysis concentrates on both the individual statements that gathered higher percentages of weighted perceptions and on those items that distinguished between the degree to which each of three constituencies endorsed them.

The Views of Academic Staff

For the academic constituency, quality assurance and the success factors associated with implementing policy enjoyed a clearer endorsement. Academics, more than the two other groups, tended to agree with the assertion that quality assurance mechanisms introduced in the wake of the Bologna reforms were implemented in the university as a means to make progress on accreditation (see table 3). From an institutional perspective, not only had national policy stressed accreditation as the major instrument for quality assurance. At the European level, the European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies has both published and set its standards and guidelines into the Bologna framework, both of which lent prominence and urgency to quality assurance procedures, found ready echo at the institutional level. Such awareness may well reflect the presence of a common terminology in the area of evaluation (Magalhães, Veiga, Ribeiro, Sousa, & Santiago, 2013). How far awareness of progress achieved in the domain of accreditation is bolstered by the regulative or normative policy instruments that accompany it, is not clear even though regulation obviously ran in parallel with policies, which at national level, laid out the legal framework.

Table 3
Statements in the Survey where Academics enjoyed Clearer Endorsement

14. In your university quality assurance mechanisms are implemented…		N	Mean Rank
14.2 to enhance academic standards (e.g. institutional quality culture)	**Academics**	**209**	**306,87**
	Student	337	285,67
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	39	281,99
14.3 to progress on accreditation	**Academics**	**176**	**296,15**
	Student	312	245,62
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	39	265,96
17. In my university the most important successfully factors to implement the Bologna process are…		N	Mean Rank
17.2 support structures (e.g. administrative, information and communication systems)	**Academics**	**167**	**263,40**
	Student	283	225,98
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	27	224,57
17.3 adequate resources (e.g. financial and administrative)	**Academics**	**140**	**235,99**
	Student	261	212,32
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	41	230,49
17.4 adequate level of institutional autonomy	**Academics**	**184**	**274,62**
	Student	302	259,50
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	45	274,41

Source: Veiga, 2010.

National context plays an important role in shaping awareness. In Norway, Quality Reform was fully implemented; in Portugal the Evaluation and Accreditation Agency was set up in 2007; in Germany accreditation was perceived as the lever for quality assurance to advance the paradigm of increased differentiation or competition (Witte, 2009, p. 230). In Italy, delays in evaluation policy blunted reform. And, as Moscati pointed out, in the absence of evaluation, institutional autonomy did not beget any genuine quality system (Moscati, 2009). At the national level, accreditation was assumed to be sufficient on its own to lay out a broad range of educational standards (Westerheijden, 2007). From the institutional perspective, setting out common criteria backed with the weight of legal procedures gave greater impetus to the drive towards accreditation.

Further pressures working down from European to national level across Europe added further depth and momentum. Adopting European standards and guidelines are expected to inject further consistency into quality assurance across the EHEA by providing common reference points for both higher education and quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA, 2005; 2009). Chronology and geographical scope are, not surprisingly, important elements in shaping awareness. Accreditation, however, brings a "common grammar through which reforms are legitimated and show a considerable degree of convergence" (Magalhães et al., 2013, p. 10).

For academic staff, evidence of success in the unfolding Bologna saga focused on the emergence of support structures – effectively retooling administrative procedures, information and communication systems. Institutional leadership was likewise thought to be an example of Bologna succeeding. However, whilst the academic constituency looked more positively on support structures, the administrative constituency looked towards institutional leadership as a significant factor in implementing policy. If held as a general instance of success, how far did support structures apply to the operational domain? How far did the perceptions the three constituencies entertained of the support system as a factor of success also extend to the Diploma Supplement and to the credit system?

For the academic constituency, changes in support structures were important if only to cope with the increasing academic administrative workload. The perception of support structures as a factor of success requires backing up by further measures of an operational nature.

The resource aspects of Bologna have a very special significance. The development of support structures did entail change, thereby underlining the significance of internal dynamics within institutional settings. They underscore the notion that the particular context, a university occupies, is an important facet in the implementation of policy designed to forward both European and national goals.

Perceptions academics entertain of changes in teaching and learning that follow from implementing Bologna have their own significance as pointers to understanding better how policy goals shape the interpretations of that constituency (see table 4). Academics acknowledged large change in a wide range of elements related to teaching and learning: in pedagogies (34%), in the development of flexible learning paths (33%), levels of student participation in activities of learning/teaching (31%), evaluation of students (31%) and the development of learning competencies (30%).

Table 4
Perceptions of Academic Staff about Transformations, Changes, and Impact of Bologna on Teaching and Learning

20. In your *university* how do you assess the changes associated with implementing the Bologna process in the teaching/learning area?

	No change		Little change		Moderate change		Large change		No opinion		Do not know	
20.1 Pedagogies	27	6%	67	15%	105	24%	152	34%	57	13%	35	8%
20.2 The development of flexible learning paths	30	7%	62	14%	111	25%	144	33%	66	15%	24	5%
20.3 The development of learning competencies	33	8%	64	15%	111	26%	128	30%	56	13%	39	9%
20.4 Number of formal contact hours	26	6%	56	13%	109	25%	126	29%	82	19%	35	8%
20.5 Level of participation of students in learning/teaching activities	23	5%	64	15%	114	27%	132	31%	64	15%	29	7%

Table 4
Perceptions of Academic Staff about Transformations, Changes, and Impact of Bologna on Teaching and Learning (cont.)

20. In your *university* how do you assess the changes associated with implementing the Bologna process in the teaching/learning area?

	No change	Little change	Moderate change	Large change	No opinion	Do not know
20.6 Evaluation of teachers by students	25 6%	74 17%	115 27%	124 29%	46 11%	43 10%
20.7 Evaluation of students by teachers	20 5%	63 15%	105 25%	131 31%	60 14%	41 10%
20.8 Student workload to obtain the final approval	20 5%	46 11%	94 22%	121 29%	101 24%	39 9%

22. In your *university* the implementation of the Bologna's degree structure and curricular reform…

	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
22.1 develops students' research skills	25 6%	135 32%	77 18%	97 23%	52 12%	31 7%
22.2 develops students' professional competencies	37 9%	117 28%	86 20%	97 23%	54 13%	30 7%
22.3 narrows professional profiles of graduates	51 12%	92 22%	77 19%	92 22%	58 14%	45 11%

23. In your *university* the implementation of Diploma Supplement…

	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
23.1 promotes the access of graduates to the labour market	38 14%	60 22%	50 18%	43 15%	19 7%	69 25%
23.2 facilitates academic recognition	33 12%	45 16%	35 13%	51 19%	51 19%	59 22%
23.3 improves the information given to all stakeholders	52 19%	42 16%	25 9%	29 11%	19 7%	103 38%

Table 4
Perceptions of Academic Staff about Transformations, Changes, and Impact of Bologna on Teaching and Learning (cont.)

24. In your *university* the implementation of the system of credits based on student workload…

	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
24.1 facilitates academic recognition	28 10%	43 15%	49 18%	86 31%	47 17%	27 10%
24.2 fosters the adoption of ECTS grading system (e.g. the system ranks the students on statistical basis A, B, C, D, E)	29 11%	17 6%	39 14%	87 32%	78 28%	26 9%
24.3 makes flexible the curricular organization	20 7%	64 23%	44 16%	82 29%	50 18%	19 7%
24.4 prevents overloaded curricula and undue burden on learners	27 10%	53 19%	44 16%	86 31%	44 16%	24 9%
24.5 facilitates the participation in lifelong learning activities	29 10%	61 22%	39 14%	71 25%	42 15%	37 13%

28. How does implementing the Bologna process is modifying your academic role…

	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
28.1 Increases the time to teaching/learning activities (e.g. including tutorial activities)	11 4%	45 17%	38 14%	69 25%	96 35%	12 4%
28.2 Increases academic standards	16 6%	98 36%	67 24%	55 20%	18 7%	22 8%
28.3 Increases academic administrative workload	19 7%	17 6%	16 6%	74 27%	133 49%	15 5%
28.4 Increases time for writing research proposals	27 10%	72 26%	36 13%	49 18%	73 27%	16 6%
28.5 Increases the pressure to publish	20 7%	76 27%	36 13%	58 21%	73 26%	15 5%
28.6 Increases time spent on entrepreneurial activities	39 14%	86 31%	33 12%	44 16%	41 15%	32 12%
28.7 Increases the level of job satisfaction	19 7%	122 45%	53 19%	44 16%	19 7%	16 6%

Table 4
Perceptions of Academic Staff about Transformations, Changes, and Impact of Bologna on Teaching and Learning (cont.)

29. Here are some statements about implementing the Bologna process in your *university* vis-à-vis your academic work, what are your views?

	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No opinion	Do not know
29.1 Bologna induces a new equilibrium between values and practices in the way I conduct teaching and research	25 9%	59 21%	31 11%	79 29%	61 22%	20 7%
29.2 Bologna is part of the new equilibrium between values and practices in the way I conduct teaching and research	27 10%	60 22%	35 13%	79 29%	50 18%	23 8%
29.3 Bologna does not impact core values and practices embedded in the way I conduct teaching and research	27 10%	70 25%	55 20%	54 19%	57 21%	14 5%

Source: Veiga, 2010.

Turning to particular features in the Bologna degree structure and curricular reform, the highest percentage of replies partially dissented from the statement that the Bologna degree structure develops students' research skills. However, differentiation in the profile of qualifications was held to have less impact on the Bologna degree structure. Nor was students' professional competency seen as improving under the Bologna degree structure, indeed, 28% of the academic constituency partially disagreed with this statement. Whether such a judgment points to the attainment of employability as a key Bologna objective is less straightforward than was once expected, cannot be ruled out. That a significant share of students across the EHEA continue their studies on to the second cycle, gives further weight to the rider the Commission itself appended – namely, that the first cycle may not yet have been developed as a qualification giving access to the labor market (European Commission, 2012).

When asked to assess the worth of the credit system and the Diploma Supplement, the level of opinions suspended was marked. Views on the purposes and value of the credit system as a vehicle to achieve policy goals at European and nation-state level seem curiously muted. Certainly, the academic constituency was well aware of the impact the credit system held out for comparability. But this in no way prevented it from withholding judgment as to its worth – in all likelihood because, as the Commission once again noted: "ECTS credits can be allocated for different purposes thus rendering an understanding of the diplomas difficult" (European Commission, 2012, p. 10). Such an assessment was not greatly different from the view, expressed by the same source that whilst "the Bologna Process has transformed the face of European higher education" (European Commission, 2012, p. 7) "it appears that the tools are mostly, formally in place. However, their

successful implementation depends on them being used in a systematic way." (European Commission, 2012, p. 11).

Changes in the role of academia were seen largely in terms of time devoted to teaching and learning activities, both of which were deemed to be rising, as was the academic and administrative workload. Neither academic standards nor, for that matter, the level of job satisfaction showed improvement– some 52 % of academics – reckoned that implementing Bologna did not raise the level of job satisfaction. Clearly, the possibility cannot be dismissed that Bologna may well modify the role of academics, albeit subtly and incrementally.

The views of academics have considerable implications for attaining the objectives of the EHEA. Thus, the notion of 'coercive time' becomes singularly important given the apparent absence of impact Bologna has upon the academic constituency – or estate. In effect, 'coercive time' serves to underline the significance of non-impact yet further. That Bologna has no impact on the core values and practices of academic staff, an opinion held by 39% of academics surveyed, would seem to call for a fundamental re-assessment of Bologna's function vis-à-vis the EHEA. Furthermore, if the extent to which pedagogic reform has been embedded and factored in, bearing in mind that such embedding squares uneasily with the degree of demurral over how far the credit system has effectively been set in train, clearly some revision to hitherto heady hopes seems in order.

The Views of Students

For the student constituency, a statistical relationship emerged from its expressed and rated opinions and those statements that associated Bologna with administrative reform, with the legal framework as reflected in the Bologna degree structure and with the convergence of degree structures that reflect the European dimension to Bologna (see table 5). These three items underline at one and the same time an organizational dimension to the reforms, the role of national regulatory instruments and, finally, those normative mechanisms put in hand at European level to drive towards convergence. The statistical relationship between Bologna as a statement of administrative reform and student views is also worth underlining, if only because academic staff tended to endorse more the interpretation of Bologna as an administrative reform than the two remaining constituency groups. This suggests a similarity between the views of academic staff and those of students: both see Bologna as an administrative reform in marked contrast to the views administrative constituency who interpret Bologna more in terms of governance reform. The identification of policy goals by both academic and student constituencies stands apart from the perceptions of administrative and management staff.

The student interpretation rested on the managerial and organizational components of Bologna, just as the views of academic staff did in relation to quality assurance linked to accreditation. Yet, the student interpretation also called attention to instruments of policy implementation thereby reinforcing the idea that dominant institutional values rely on both legal aspects and normative elements. Frustratingly, the student perspective tended to suspend opinion on the very elements that constitute the heart of Bologna as promulgated at the European level. Indeed, neither the establishment of EHEA nor recognition of changes in policies with impact on the mobility of European students and staff – features that were to the fore at national and European levels of Bologna – were taken up by the student constituency, which also viewed progress in respect of pedagogic reform as doubtful.

That the student interpretation had "no opinion" or took refuge in the reply "do not know", points towards two possible explanations. First, that Bologna did not fire student opinion with enthusiasm; second, such detachment calls for further discussion because as a step towards establishing the EHEA, Bologna explicitly plays up mobility, employability and attractiveness as

traits overtly to win the backing of students. The levels of those suspending opinion were very high, pointing to the likelihood that students are unmoved by this bid to win their attention. In particular, when asked for views on two central elements in the Bologna Declaration – mobility of European students and staff and attraction of foreign students and academics – a very substantial minority had no opinion. Effectively, these two items were not associated with the changes the Bologna Process brought about. One possible explanation could be that student mobility programs were not only up and running well before the Bologna process moved to center stage, but in their earlier form, mobility programs were joint initiatives by both the European Commission and by individual establishments of higher education (Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004a). Mobility programs were already under way within higher education institutions and accompanied by less interference or institutional mediation at national level.

Table 5

Students Contributed More With Rated Opinions and With More 'No Opinion' and/or 'Do Not Know' Answers on Each Item of the Question

Rated opinions with an adjusted residual ≥ 2	
3. In [Your] higher education system do you agree that implementing the Bologna process is… 3.1 *an administrative reform* (e.g. establishment of degree structure and establishment of recognition and mobility procedures)	3,1
7. In your university how do you rate the impact of the following provisions developed at national level for implementing the Bologna process? 7.1 *Legal framework* (e.g. laws, rules and regulations)	2,8
8. How do you rate all these items as they reflect the European dimension of the Bologna process in your university? 8.1 *Degree structure converging with other European degree structures* (e.g. length of studies and designations)	2,3
No opinion and/or do not know with an adjusted residual ≥ 2	
2. In [Your] higher education system do you agree that recent reforms… 2.1 *are being implemented to establish European Higher Education Area*	2,0
5. In [Your] higher education system which of these items do you reckon have changed as a result of implementing the Bologna process? 5.5 *Mobility of European students and staff* (e.g. academic and administrative and management staff)	3,6
10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following items? 10.2 *Pedagogic reform* (e.g. curriculum reform and teaching/learning methods)	3,5

Note: Veiga, 2010.

The views of the student constituency pose further challenges at different levels of analysis. At the institutional level, those polled did not stand out as more enthusiastic than other constituent groups in assessing those statements that registered the highest percentages of rated opinions: namely pedagogic reform, the impact of European programs, the impact of Bologna degrees on enhancing student mobility. Lack of student concern and interest in the Bologna reforms may well reflect the relative marginality of students within higher education institutions. At the national level, however, recognizing the impact of the legal framework, while underlining its value, requires further regulation to link it clearly to establishing the EHEA. From the European level, securing comparability and compatibility between European degree structures remains a doughty task, which

the Commission itself admits will not be all plain sailing "There is no single model of first-cycle programs in the EHEA. Most countries have a combination of 180 ECTS and 240 ECTS and another duration in the first cycle" (European Commission, 2012, p. 33).

The student constituency's assessment of Bologna's impact raises the issue as to whether Bologna as currently perceived does not demand reassessing how precisely it is to shape the EHEA.

The Views of Administrative and Management Staff

Of the three constituencies examined, administrative and management staff were the most supportive of the statements, which commanded high levels of agreement: for instance, developing a competitive European higher education market, the impact of European programs funded by the European Union, full implementation of the Diploma Supplement, of quality assurance mechanisms, assessment of teaching quality, changes as result of the Bologna process enhancing control by central administration, improving information/communication systems and creating new structures (see table 6). Such a stance may be attributed to constituency members interpreting their responsibilities as 'key mediators of policy' (Ball, 2006). Re-construing their role in this way may well reflect the managerial dynamic of the reform itself as well as demonstrating how at institutional level established rules and norms appear to shift as policy objectives are enacted. As a result, the way Bologna's impact is viewed by administrative staff may anticipate a significant re-interpretation of its function vis-a-vis the EHEA.

Administrators and management were more affirmative about the role of institutional leadership as one of the success factors in policy implementation. Within the Bologna framework, strengthening institutional leadership went hand in glove in with the rise of institutional management, as part of a broad strategy to move "higher education towards greater economic effectiveness by increasing the entrepreneurial spirit of institutions in a more competitive environment" (Amaral, Fulton and Larsen, 2003, p. 297).

The administrative estate perceives embedding the Bologna program into higher education in terms of increasing the control of central administration and, within the universities scrutinized, greater intervention from governing boards. Thus, the management dynamic of the Bologna reforms seemingly reinforces tensions between academic and administrative and management staff, though whether the same dynamic slows down the acceptability of the idea of EHEA or puts a brake on the development of a shared rationality, must for the moment remain a moot point. Whether these same developments bear any relationship, direct or indirect, with the negative effects the academic constituency held to apply to academic work itself, deserves similar caution.

Table 6

Questions in the Survey where Administrative and Management Staff Enjoyed Clearer Endorsement

		N	Mean Rank
4. In your higher education system would you agree that implementing the Bologna process is focused on the… *4.4 development of a competitive European HE market (e.g. attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area to foreigner students and researchers)*	Academics	210	288,94
	Student	333	285,03
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	**39**	**360,53**
6. In your university how do you rate the impact of the following initiatives launched at European level for implementing the Bologna process? *6.2 European programmes funded by the European Union (e.g. Socrates programme, ECTS and Diploma Supplement labels, Erasmus Mundus programme*	Academics	220	287,55
	Student	294	260,59
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	37	**329,81**
10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following items? *10.1 The Bologna degree structure*	Academics	139	228,01
	Student	270	219,31
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	38	**242,66**
10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following items? *10.2 Pedagogic reform (e.g. curriculum reform and teaching/learning methods)*	Academics	229	306,26
	Student	332	303,12
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	54	**345,37**
10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following items? *10.3 Diploma Supplement*	Academics	149	242,07
	Student	269	211,26
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	29	**249,34**
10. In your university how has implementation progressed in respect to the following items? *10.5 Quality assurance mechanisms*	Academics	226	332,51
	Student	350	295,36
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	51	**359,91**
15. How far in your university are working procedures of its internal quality systems implemented? *15.1 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes*	Academics	226	324,58
	Student	360	305,06
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	41	**334,21**
15. How far in your university are working procedures of its internal quality systems implemented? *15.2 Assessment of teaching quality*	Academics	214	327,78
	Student	361	299,17
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	50	**349,60**
17. In my university the most important successfully factors to implement the Bologna process are… *17.1 institutional leadership (e.g. clear objectives, strategies and guidelines)*	Academics	152	265,16
	Student	293	225,42
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	37	**271,59**
18. In your university how do you assess the changes implemented as result of the Bologna process? *18.1 Increased management and administrative workload*	Academics	159	256,47
	Student	259	197,85
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	29	**279,52**

Table 6
Questions in the Survey where Administrative and Management Staff Enjoyed Clearer Endorsement (cont.)

18. In your university how do you assess the changes implemented as result of the Bologna process? *18.2 Increased control by central administration*	Academics	214	314,99
	Student	293	250,26
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	60	**338,23**
18. In your university how do you assess the changes implemented as result of the Bologna process? *18.3 Improved information/communication systems*	Academics	244	340,97
	Student	370	323,54
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	57	**395,64**
18. In your university how do you assess the changes implemented as result of the Bologna process? *18.4 Improved or created new university support structures (e.g. services of students counselling)*	Academics	236	361,56
	Student	403	328,94
	Adm. & Mgmt staff	**51**	**402,07**

        Statements, which sought to ascertain how far Bologna could be characterized as a 'policy process' – its rationale, its strategic goals, the targets of reform and their foci, policies changed in the wake of Bologna implemented, received but low levels of agreement. The way rationales and strategic objectives were perceived by higher education's three constituencies reveals a lack both of consistency and of clarity especially when such objectives, evolved as policy, were perceived and interpreted. By contrast, however, administrative and management staff showed a proactive approach towards Bologna qua policy process. They, more than the two other constituencies, were more positively receptive to reforms and changes the Bologna process brought in its train. Whether the views of the administrative estate are seen by academics as part of the 'high costs' of retaining the status quo, it remains unclear. So, for that matter, does the very real possibility that the administrative estate, by aligning on the Bologna priorities, also aligns with the time-scale set for them. In short, the administrative estate moves over to becoming an instrument of 'coercive time' within the institution, thereby widening the gap between the rhetoric of the *pays politique* and the embedded practices of the *pays réel.*
        Administrative staff was more positive towards the creation of a competitive European higher education market and changes that followed from the internationalization agenda. They also saw European programs, launched at European level, as having major consequence for implementing the Bologna process. Yet, the different response patterns of the administrative constituency may serve as a species of litmus paper for detecting changes taking place in the underlying rationale of student mobility within the EHEA. Within the framework of European programs, student mobility has become rapidly embedded as accepted practice, progressively institutionalized and seen as a positive asset (Huisman & Van der Wende, 2004a). Originally, the rationale for mobility, set out by European programs, promoted a period of study abroad and later extended across different study cycles (Prague Communiqué, 2001). More recently, mobility, at the European and nation-state levels, has been redefined as a vehicle to boost the attractiveness of European higher education systems for non-European students and to harness mobility to an economic rationale. This latter is evident in the weight attached to competitiveness and attractiveness: that is, the development of a European higher education market where competition and globalization intermesh. One illustration of such 'cross coupling' between policies may be seen in the European Commission initiative, Youth on the Move – Europe 2020. Its purpose is to raise both performance and the international drawing power of European higher education by grounding it in the broader 'Modernization agenda' of the European Union (European Commission, 2005).

To the administrative constituency, Bologna as 'policy under implementation' reflected the changes individual universities undertook to accommodate the recognition procedures of European degrees, to foreign degrees and to the Diploma Supplement. Such adjustments were perceived as advancing student and graduate mobility. Both dimensions were fully in keeping with the way the administrative constituency construed Bologna as a policy process. Indeed, both dimensions reflected a European scope and in doing so, extended the scope of Bologna as a policy process beyond the Nation-State level. Indeed, the pattern of response from members of the administrative constituency bore this out. When asked whether administrative reform figured amongst the Bologna agenda, they preferred to suspend judgment. More than either the academic or the student constituencies, administrative and staff took shelter by having "no opinion" or "not knowing" about this issue.

For the administrative constituency, changes introduced by the Bologna process, which altered both organization and structures, were looked upon with enthusiasm.

Conclusion

Institutional actors surveyed entertain different views on the ways norms and values permeate across European, national and institutional levels. They would appear to interpret Bologna according to their own lights, thus generating variation, if not disagreement and tensions. Clearly, such activity has implications for the ultimate fulfillment of policy objectives that rest on the principle of convergence. Such activity represents a powerful diluent to that basic feature that accompanied the Bologna Process, namely the concept of 'coercive time'. Furthermore, it reveals different interpretations and weighting set upon the logic of appropriateness as well as marked variations within it.

This examination suggests more attention should be paid to the role institutional actors play in shaping policy, an issue of particular interest and one recently raised in a comparative study of the Bologna Process, viewed from both the European and Latin American perspectives (Teodoro & Guilherme, 2014). From a European standpoint, implementing the Bologna Process is not merely a structural, managerial and operational undertaking alone. It also calls for a closer alignment between 'coercive time' and 'academic time'. With the possibility of creating regional dimensions in higher education coming to the fore as it is in Latin America, this study suggests added weight should be put on the observation made some four years back by Fernandez Lamarra:

> convergence should be the result of a process of agreement and consensus building among all the different institutional actors and with the prevalence of universities, rather than an inter-ministerial agreement as it is the case in Europe (Fernandez Lamarra, 2010) (Gorostiaga, J., Cambours de Donini, A., & Pini, M., 2014, p. 172).

In their handling of the dynamics of the Bologna agenda, informants at institutional level certainly reflect the rules of 'appropriate' behavior. They show hope and enthusiasm. They make very clear that they are by no means convinced that the operational consequences while held to flow from institutional take-up, necessarily follow. Administrative staff took the former stance. Students plumbed for the latter.

For the administrative constituency, changes in organizational structure and in institutional leadership responsibilities were successful illustrations of policy as implementation. Such a 'positive attitude' is not entirely divorced from self-valuation by that constituency which saw its role as managing the dynamics of reform. By the same token, arguably the administrative constituency was more accessible – or receptive – to the norms and values of the reforming impulse, whether at European, national and institutional levels.

Within individual universities, what lent substance to European policy were very precisely the views of administrative staff. Though authority in higher education has tended to be fragmented (Becher & Kogan, 1992; Clark, 1983), there remain basic units, driven by peer-group norms and values even when organizing curriculum and research to meet social, economic and cultural requirements (Machado & Cerdeira, 2012; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010; Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010). Of late, however, "professional staff are becoming more specialized in terms of their expertise, while at the same time are becoming involved in cross-boundary areas such as teaching and learning support." (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2010, p. 130). Within the general setting of the Bologna reforms, administrative staff appeared to assume the mantle of Elijah "as authoritative interpreters of principles, rules and situations" (Olsen, 2001, p. 328), reinterpreting principles, re-stating frames of understanding and justification that reinforced their own role and sustained their capacity to act. However, the logic of appropriateness is also aligned upon 'coercive time'. In short, it is determined by the imperatives of the knowledge economy and productivism both of which are in tension with academic time.

The student constituency, by contrast, demurred. Its views reflected lack of confidence in the institutional outcomes of the Bologna process, whilst calling for greater student involvement in implementing Bologna's objectives. Greater student involvement at the institutional level is, not surprisingly, a substantial issue made more delicate still by the fact that at European level, their representatives, in the shape of the European Students' Union, have been instrumental in adding the 'social dimension' to the Bologna Process (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

The academic constituency was mixed in the views held. Its opinion on the range of issues Bologna posed varied. Furthermore, the rationale setting out the objectives of the EHEA in terms of the compatibility and comparability of Europe's systems of higher education was far from being clearly reflected in the perceptions of academia.

Such differences in approach towards establishing the EHEA may be explained in terms of institutional roles. To take this line of argument, however, raises one question in particular. Was the administrative constituency better positioned at institutional level to advance the furtherance of the EHEA by cleaving to a specific logic of appropriateness? For those universities surveyed, the professional capacity of the administrative constituency to take such initiatives was not reflected to any significant degree. The views the administrative constituency underlined its status as privileged interlocutors and as transmitters of influence. However, such a status was not sufficient to offset the lack of enthusiasm of the academic constituency and still less student indifference vis-a-vis the operational consequences of the Bologna program and the establishment of the EHEA. Capacity to bring about change at institutional level – in effect, the strength of institutional leadership together with more elaborate support structures – was certainly a prior and necessary condition. But the burden of this study suggests that at the institutional level both were insufficient to implement Bologna. Could the administrative constituency influence institutional policy processes and subsequent implementation?

Administrative staff appeared to reflect some of the habitual tensions between academics and administrators. As Amaral et al. noted "Central administration tends to cling to power, and even when they nominally decentralize responsibilities to operating units, they may still try to retrain the ultimate control" (Amaral et al., 2003, p. 284). Set against this backdrop, implementing the Bologna process is but one specific element in a broader context. That broader context is the changing nature of governance and management in higher education. By interpreting the role of administrative staff as providing an essentially technical contribution to Bologna implemented, 'the mode of evaluating Bologna' shifts from being a matter of values and process to one of technical procedure and results. In short, within Bologna's management dynamic there emerges a very different 'logic of

appropriateness'. The setting in place of support structures may certainly be seen as a measure both institutionally appropriate and indispensable if the Bologna degree structure, credit system and Diploma Supplement are to take on operational meaning and purchase. There are, as Neave (2012) argued, certain advantages to be had by attending to the 'logic of appropriateness' construed in terms of technical procedure rather than as process and values. The procedural and results-oriented logic of appropriateness lends itself more easily to 'creating a common terminological architecture'. It allows the apparent reconciliation between differing and often deeply-held values, visions and priorities to which they give rise. Thus, the shift in the logic of appropriateness from values to focus on procedure as the technical means of validating performance accelerates mechanical change (Veiga & Amaral, 2006, 2009b).

If this 'shift in the logic of appropriateness' from process and values to technical procedure and results was held by European and national agencies to be a necessary step in establishing the EHEA (Veiga & Amaral, 2009a), it is clear that the way university administration and management construe Bologna's impact represents a situation both fundamentally different and paradoxical to the relationship between Bologna and the EHEA "Bologna is itself viewed as an end, rather than as a means with the result that the EHEA as the end result appears like the man who met the Boojum, 'and softly and silently vanished away' " (Neave & Veiga, 2013, p. 74). Once again, the notion of 'coercive time' resurfaces, this time driven forward on a spate of ideas justifying further political action to offset the apparent lack of impact Bologna has had in legitimizing the establishment of the EHEA.

Bologna's management dynamic strengthened the influence of European programs of mobility, to cite but one example. But Bologna's role as the focal point or instrument for leveraging a more comprehensive program, though up to now acting as the means to this end, is far from being certain or even assured. Regardless of whether Bologna may be interpreted through the logic appropriate to values and process or via the logic that rests on disseminating technical procedures and results, both the acceptability of the former and the effectiveness of the latter are dependent on resources and where they are applied. This, as the European Students' Union recently pointed out, is an issue that hovers in the wings of Europe's higher education policy. It raises the uncomfortable dilemma of having to decide whether, in the drive to mobility, the management dynamic of Bologna is to continue as a means of building a EHEA or whether the priorities laid upon the latter are to be divorced from it.

> While the EHEA is turning welcome attention to balancing mobility flows internally within Europe and externally with other regions, the key issue that remains to be solved is funding of mobility. This has undoubtedly been the most contentious issue on the agenda, especially driven by the debate on new mobility programmes in the EU and a strong demand for more robust solutions. Lack of proper and adequate funding is the most significant obstacle to mobility, especially for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. (European Students' Union ESU, 2012, p. 6).

Whether this vision of Bologna's function vis-a-vis the EHEA will limit the dynamics of reform as they apply to students, must remain a matter of speculation. Whether the outreach of European higher education policy and the pursuit of broader policy objectives entail abandoning earlier objectives, whether fulfilled or not, must similarly remain an open issue.

What may we retain from this exploration of the perceptions academia, administrators and students have of the agenda that launched Bologna? How institutions of higher education 'embed' a European-wide policy agenda into grounded practice is not simply the forging of new structures, methods of working or teaching. It is also how those elements are perceived by those who have the burden of adapting them both within and to, institutional circumstances. Those who have reform

done to them are by dint of the way they construe that reform, also its shapers. Succinctly stated, faced with an agenda of change and adaptation, Europe's policy-makers do well not to discount the 'bottom heavy' nature of higher education (Clark, 1983). Further progress in successfully embedding at institutional level the aims Bologna set for itself may indeed depend on recognizing this.

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Acknowledgement

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