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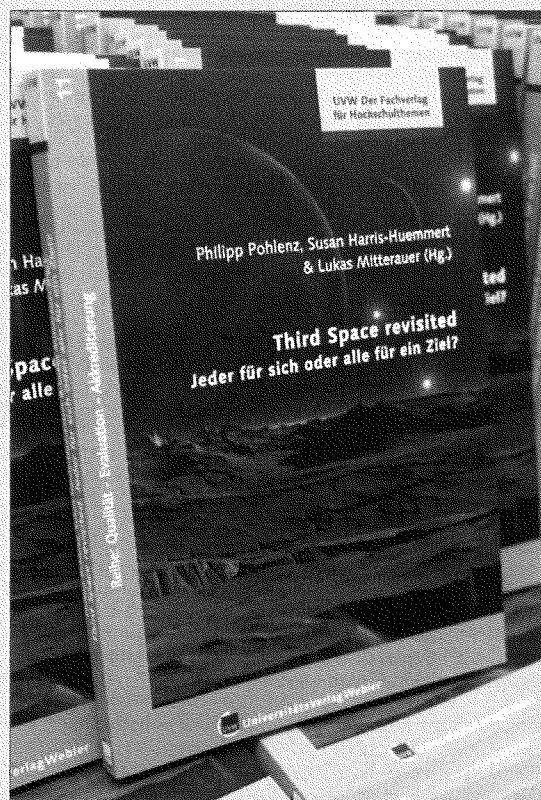
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NEUERSCHEINUNG!

Philipp Pohlenz, Susan Harris-Huermann & Lukas Mitterauer (Hg.)

Third Space revisited

Jeder für sich oder alle für ein Ziel?



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Akteure in Hochschulen, die sich mit Themen der Qualitätsentwicklung, der Lehrevaluation, der Hochschuldidaktik und weiteren konzeptionellen Aufgaben im Leistungsbereich Studium und Lehre befassen, wurden in der letzten Zeit unter dem Label „Third Space“ beschrieben. Damit ist gemeint, dass sie zwischen der klassischen Verwaltung und dem Wissenschaftsbetrieb angesiedelt sind und dass ihr Aufgabenprofil dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, dass sie zwar durchaus wissenschaftlich arbeiten, aber keine Forschung im engeren Sinne durchführen. Die Zuständigkeiten der verschiedenen Bereiche innerhalb des Third Space sind vielfach voneinander getrennt. Dadurch entsteht zumindest potenziell die Gefahr einer „Versäulung“ dieser Arbeitsbereiche und einer Atomisierung ihrer Aktivitäten. Durch eine produktive Nutzung von Schnittstellen kann sich eine größere Wirksamkeit für das Ziel der Qualitätsentwicklung entfalten, etwa dann, wenn verschiedene Akteure ihre Kompetenzen für ein gemeinsames Entwicklungsziel einbringen und dafür z.B. evaluationsmethodische und hochschuldidaktische Kompetenzen für eine evidenzbasierte Planung von Interventionen in der Weiterbildung zusammenbringen.

Dieser Band, welcher aus Beiträgen der Frühjahrstagung des AK Hochschulen der DeGEval 2016 hervorgegangen ist, beschäftigt sich mit Fragen zur Auswirkung der unterschiedlichen institutionellen Verortung von Einrichtungen der Qualitätsentwicklung in der Hochschule, und stellt dar, welche Mechanismen für eine „Lost“ (uncoupled) oder „Found“ (coupled) Situation dieser Tätigkeiten in der Institution sorgen.

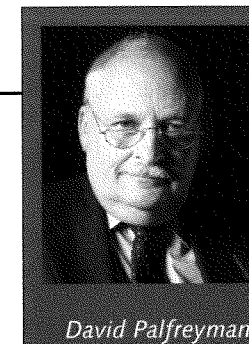
Reihe: Qualität - Evaluation - Akkreditierung

Susan Harris-Huermann & David Palfreyman

Impacts on Higher Education from a British and German perspective



Susan Harris-Huermann



David Palfreyman

Higher education in both Germany and the UK has undergone numerous changes in the last two decades. It seems worthwhile to examine how varying forms of HE governance and pan-European influences have played out upon these two national systems. Of note in particular are Bologna, European Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance, and various accreditation regulations. In this article we postulate to what extent these two systems may or may not be able to move forward in the imminent future. Is German higher education, for example, becoming more autonomous if it can display that its own systems of quality control are working well (system-accreditation)? Has British higher education relinquished autonomy, as both research and teaching domains are subject to external review (REF/TEF)? What can we learn about the transformational impact any of these mechanisms are having? This chapter addresses these issues and asks which benefits or disadvantages are to be gained by the different systems in article.

Introduction: The changing idea of the university

The university is an ancient institution which has managed to endure, more or less successfully, since the Middle Ages (Barnett 2016; Palfreyman/Temple 2017; Wittrock 2006). This is noteworthy. From early beginnings in Europe (e.g. Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Heidelberg) to the present day, the university has been an institution in which predominantly young people acquire personal, subject and intercultural knowledge and skills, which help them to take up important roles in society, and in which research (in more recent centuries) has been undertaken, thereby leading to social and scientific innovation, usually for the common good. Universities have become 'key institutions both for knowledge production and for strengthening a sense of national and cultural identity' (Wittrock 2006, p. 321) that have served 'as the loci for cultural discourses which helped make the world of modernity, of industrialism and urbanism, intelligible and meaningful' (ibid., p. 331). The university has been 'a place for genuine discourse and non-manipulative interaction' (ibid., p. 332), a place where thoughts were allowed to develop freely and without constraints, in which people of varying disciplines and cultural backgrounds could challenge norms, challenge paradigms and break new ground. It is a widely-held view that those who go through a university education become something more than what they were upon entry: higher education provides them with opportunities for learning about a subject in depth, but possibly even more importantly, for learning about themselves and society overall. This idea has remained largely unchallenged, but is arguably not always fulfilled, as we can ask ourselves to what extent students in the mass universities of today are being given enough space and time in which to really learn about themselves, and not just about the subject of their choice (Trow 1973).

While it has become the university's role to train for certain professions such as those in engineering, social work, and health, this was not always the case. The university's 'remit' has therefore changed over time and remains in a state of flux. Although ideas of the university such as those proposed by Newman (1899) and Humboldt (1810) are still in use, the idea of the university and its function in our globalized and internet-linked society has come increasingly under scrutiny. We have been witnessing increasing debate about the function, purpose and impact of higher education. With increasing access to higher education, in many families it is now regarded as a given that children will progress into higher education, whereas in the past this was only true for a small percentage of the school-leaving population. HE expansion has led to larger campus sites, more graduates and tighter budgets, as HEIs grapple with concomitant problems (Scott 1995). Indeed, it could be argued that society is becoming over-academicised, as fewer young people are training for non-graduate careers since they seemingly believe degrees will promise higher incomes and greater social status. Opinions on the matter diverge: whereas some authors pessimistically claim that the university is by now 'in [...] ruins' (Readings 1996), others appear more optimistic and have started attaching descriptors to the word 'university' in the quest for defining this institution, including, amongst others: innovative (Slaughter/Lesley 1997; Christensen/Eyring 2011), supercomplex (Barnett 1998), physical (Temple, ed. 2014), and entrepreneurial (Foss/Gibson, ed. 2015). The university can perhaps be any or all of the above-named descriptors, so it seems somewhat churlish to state that a university should restrict itself to being just one thing or another. This simply does not do justice to the multidimensionality and complexity of the place we term 'university'. All universities are supercomplex and, as already mentioned, in a state of flux, as they consist of manifold research areas and disciplines, some

of whose cultures may diverge and not prove compatible. While some parts of universities may be particularly entrepreneurial, encouraging the foundation of spin-offs or patent applications, others may be chosen to present research results in monographs that may only be read by the few and be of little impact.

However, the fact that university descriptors are being debated, in addition to many discussions about the significance of rankings and other forms of academic measurement (Frey/Osterloh 2011), is an indication of the greater changes which the university environment throughout the world has been and still is experiencing. With the ever-growing demand for university education, an increase in scientific fields of development and the impact of globalization in the higher education arena overall, which has seen increasing numbers of mobile academic staff and cross-border research projects, we are being challenged to consider more fundamentally what it is that the university should be achieving. What place does it have in society overall? What should the virtues of a higher education or its impact be? What are society's expectations of what higher education can achieve? Should students have to pay for their education? Are they consumers? And, if they are consumers, how should the universities, as suppliers, be regulated to protect such consumers (Palfreyman/Tapper 2014)? Are universities fulfilling what society expects of them? We will now investigate some of the factors that have been of impact in British and German higher education, reflecting from four vantage points – history, legislation, governance and quality management. In so doing we will attempt to draw out implicit and explicit (and shared) understandings of what higher education in these two countries should be and where these systems stand today. The article will conclude with a brief consideration as to future impacts on higher education in these countries.

The German HE context: past events, present dilemmas, future directions

German universities were among the first to have been established in Europe (Hammerstein 1987). The first in Heidelberg was founded in 1386, followed by Cologne (1388), Leipzig (1409) and Rostock (1419).¹ Similar to counterparts elsewhere, many initially served as training loci for priests and lawyers; however, other subjects would enter the curriculum and most of those universities founded from the Middle Ages onwards developed into what is today known as the 'Volluniversität', which provide training and research in the Arts, Sciences and Humanities. In addition to its universities, Germany also possesses specialist institutions for musicians (conservatoires), agriculture, farming, and business and technological colleges. The latter group in particular expanded greatly in the 20th century. In 1976 a first higher education framework law was passed, which extended these colleges the same legal framework as their university counterparts.² Higher education institutions at this time included universities, teacher training colleges, art and music academies, and technical colleges. In accordance with the Bologna Reform, which designated the doctor-

ate as the final tertiary education qualification, technical colleges and business schools were granted university status, and some became Universities of Applied Science. The legal foundations upon which Germany's higher education is established reflect older traditions held up to and including the Second World War. Humboldt's famous treatise on the relationship between higher education and the state endures until today and has been emulated around the world, although very few institutions have actually managed to realise Humboldt's ideals. For him the central notion was that the university should unite research and teaching and be independent of state control. Germany's higher education straddles two main pillars. The first applies to the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), in which Germany's fundamental democratic principles were established post World War II. Art. 5(1) ensures freedom of speech, whereas Art. 5(3) ensures freedom in the arts, sciences, research and teaching. However, it also states that freedom of teaching does not exclude loyalty to the constitution, in which all persons are regarded as equals. Art. 12(1) states that all Germans are free to choose where they wish to work and study, which means that in theory anyone with the *Abitur* may enter higher education. The *Abitur*, or its more precise definition *Hochschulreife*, translates as 'maturity for higher education', the premise here being that anyone who possesses the *Abitur* is able to meet the demands of studying in any subject of his or her choice. For many years there were no other selection mechanisms. As the majority of Germany's older universities were *Volluniversitäten*, offering all disciplines, the tertiary sector was generally held to be entirely comparable, with no underlying notions of elitism or competition between different loci. Differences were evident in the individual interests of professors, who might appear more or less equally (un-)attractive to prospective students. Prior to the Bologna Reform students were free to pick and choose their own courses, even in different disciplines, and transfer easily from one university to another during their degrees in a kind of university transfer bazaar³. A large increase in student numbers and ensuing space limitations have forced universities to address the question of admissions, albeit reluctantly. Today, many degree programmes have a *numerus clausus* attached to them.⁴ This has led to a change in perception among students, as some universities set higher NC standards than others, so only those students with very good *Abitur* grades are offered places at certain institutions, not only in typically demanding courses such as medicine,

¹ See https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Hochschulen_in_Deutschland for list of German HEIs. Erfurt and Würzburg were founded in 1389 and 1402 respectively, however, they were not in continuous operation, with Würzburg being reopened in 1582.

² The first higher education framework (Hochschulrahmengesetz) was passed on 26th January 1976. See <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/hrg/gesamt.pdf> (21.02.2017).

³ A short examination of the vita of many of Germany's older academics exemplifies this point, as many studied in two or even three universities before completing their degrees.

⁴ The *numerus clausus* (NC) is the required entrance level *Abitur* grade which is fixed each year and by each university individually according to the number of applicants and their respective grades.

but also in teacher-training qualifications for junior school which have seen a steep rise in NC levels. The increase in NC-defined degree programmes has impacted upon the manner in which school-leavers have to go about the entire HE admissions process, which sadly most teachers are ill-equipped to advise upon as they have neither personal experience of Bologna-type degrees nor do they have an overview of the increasingly wide range of courses available (Harris-Huermann 2015). This may be one reason exacerbating ongoing high levels of drop-out or course changes in the first years of German higher education.

In reference to Art. 5(3) German students in state-financed institutions are provided with free higher education (no tuition fees). They are merely charged small bench fees for termly administrative costs and use of local public transport networks with term tickets. Tuition fees (ca. €500 termly), which were still levied a few years ago, have since been removed and each federal state (*Bundesland*) has met most, if not all, of the costs which have arisen. Private institutions and some executive Master degrees within the otherwise state-financed system do levy tuition fees. In contrast with counterparts elsewhere German students do not hold consumerist attitudes towards higher education, a point already identified by Max Weber during his visit to the US (Nolan 2016, pp. 108-109). In Germany there is little discourse about value for money in the higher education sector as higher education is an expected free and common good. Quality is expected nonetheless, and teaching evaluations are widespread and embedded in quality management systems as a means of checking on the quality of courses. However, the effectiveness of teaching evaluations as an instrument of actually improving teaching quality is still being hotly debated (Mitterauer et al. (eds.) 2016). It is only when these are embedded in official feedback loops and controlling mechanisms that ensure information is passed and acted upon that evaluations become effective.

The second legislative pillar in German higher education is the higher education law (*Hochschulgesetz*), which each of Germany's 16 federal states have passed. These determine the structures, commissions and posts which state-financed institutions are obliged to establish and follow. One example of federal differences is in the definition of the person at the head of an HEI: the president or Rektor. Presidents may be elected from outside of academia, whereas Rektors are chosen from within the ranks of an institution's own professors (Kluth 2013). In both cases, however, it is the institution's Senate which is the ultimate governing body shaping the direction and future of the HEI in question. Because of *Länder* differences, it is not possible therefore to provide an overall assessment of German HEI governance structures, which can vary. Some HEIs, for example, are even able to operate successfully without chancellors, who elsewhere are responsible for all administrative personnel. One disadvantage to non-chancellor systems, however, is that there may be less engagement with staff development. German HEIs are admittedly less able to stipulate which training an academic staff member should pursue because of academic freedom, which disallows specific regulations over and above those given in the *Hochschul-*

gesetz. In terms of assessing applicant professors and the quality of their teaching, which is not regulated by any national authorities, many applications now require some form of evidence of engagement with HE teaching pedagogy and other skills (teaching certification) and evidence of good teaching evaluations also. However, such certificates can vary in both content and quality as there is no national body that checks certification to ensure compatibility of standards (cf. fellowship of Higher Education Academy in Britain). The influx of new digital learning methods and techniques in German HE, as elsewhere, too, has also meant that teaching staff need to familiarise themselves with new teaching methods (e.g. flipped classroom etc.), also in consideration of whether learning aims are in so-called alignment with course contents and the acquisition of competences (Biggs/Tang 2011).

A fairly recent innovation in the German HE sector has been the introduction of various pacts, contracts and target agreements (*Zielvereinbarungen*), which might be viewed as a form of external contractual HE steering. The states of Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony and Berlin were the first to introduce target agreements in 2004, which have since been adopted by the whole tertiary sector. HEIs in the state of Hesse, for example, defined their next set of targets for 2016-2020, comprising the following types⁵:

Pacts: These are agreed upon at national level between the state and all of its HEIs concurrently, usually for a period of up to 10 years. A well-known recent example is the *Qualitätspakt Lehre* (Teaching Quality Pact, 2011-2020, with a budget of 2 billion Euros), which is aiming to improve the standard of teaching in all German HEIs. HEIs apply competitively for the funding of projects in support of this target.⁶

Contracts: These have target agreement character, which are signed by individual HEIs and their respective ministry. They can include all HEIs in the state, but are individually signed, and can encompass the finances of the whole institution.

Target agreements: These are agreed upon by individual HEIs and their ministry, but do not encompass the finances of the whole institution, but pertain to only a few specific targets (König et al. 2003/2004, p. 2).⁷

Pacts have forced the Germany's HE sector into a quasi-market for competitive additional funding, and larger HEIs have been more successful at first bid stage than smaller counterparts, because they usually have greater internal support mechanisms available to help them through the application process. Although pacts such as

⁵ See Hesse state website for 2016-2020 HEI/Ministry targets: <https://wissenschaft.hessen.de/wissenschaft/hochschulpolitik/zielvereinbarungen/zielvereinbarungen-und-ergaenzende>

⁶ In the first round until 2016, 186 HEIs received funding, including 78 universities. In the second round until 2020 156 HEIs were supported, including 71 universities. See <http://www.qualitaetpakt-lehre.de/de/qualitaetpakt-lehre-und-studienbedingungen-verbessern-1764.php>

⁷ See König/Schmidt/Kley (2003/2004) Zielvereinbarungen und Verträge zur externen Hochschulsteuerung in Deutschland, Institut für Hochschulforschung Wittenberg, p. 2.

the Teaching Quality Pact do put a focus on developing a particular aspect of HE, there is a certain amount of wastage in the system, with any number of HEIs developing instruments which are almost identical to each other, even if this does help institutional development overall. Another element that has been of considerable impact in German higher education was the German Universities Excellence Initiative (*Exzellenzinitiative*), which was introduced in 2005–2006⁸. Former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder initiated the process in 2004 when he first used the word 'elite' when talking about the prospect of some German HEIs becoming as famous and successful as those in the UK or in the US (e.g. Ivy League) (Palfreyman/Tapper 2009). At the time this proposal was highly controversial as most German universities had until then all been regarded as essentially the same and any notions of elitism still smacked of negative undertones from the Second World War. However, with growing competition through globalization and the internationalization of HE, the introduction of the *Exzellenzinitiative* thrust German higher education into a nationwide competition for specific research funding (research projects, graduate clusters etc.). Elite status was granted to only a handful of HEIs, with much otherwise excellent research in some long-established and world-famous ancient universities so far failing to make the cut.

The Excellence Initiative is currently being modified into a permanent Excellence Strategy, which from 2018 onwards will see HEIs receiving a total of €533 mil. per annum (hitherto €80 mil.) on an ongoing basis. Funding will be shared by state (75%) and individual *Länder* (25%) (BMBF website). However, although HEIs that have received funding benefit not only from the money and the label, this does not mean that they are excellent in every domain. In Britain, an institution that has been granted top marks in the QAA, REF and TEF (see next section) may lay a more robust claim to being truly excellent, as the label excellent in Germany only pertains to particular research being conducted in a handful of institutions. Much German research that is undoubtedly of worldwide importance does not carry such a label and it is arguable whether the label will be of any further impact within the German HE sector. Indeed, it is debatable whether the initiative has really achieved its aim of creating a small cluster of 'world-class' research institutions (Imboden Commission 2016). It remains to be seen whether those HEIs granted 'excellent' status will improve their world rankings or enjoy long-term benefits. For students the label actually seems fairly irrelevant as the quality of research is not of immediate concern when seeking out a university for a first degree. The notion of branding, therefore, and its wider implications, still needs further exploration.

The rise in various forms of national competition for additional HE funding has been of major impact in German higher education, and improvements to teaching quality have been achieved, which can be directly measured in terms of how many students successfully complete their degrees within the expected timeframe. At local level, some HEIs also choose to distribute funding to academics who have displayed high quality (*leistungsorientierte Mittelvergabe* – LOM), as it is thought that such

incentives motivates towards higher quality in teaching or research. However, in his investigation of the effect of LOM on professors and the quality of their work Tadsen (2017) has concluded that many additional *non-monetary* elements play a fundamental role motivating individuals to be good at what they do.

The success of students has already been mentioned and the effects of the Bologna Process (Nickel 2011), with the introduction of Bachelor and Masters degree programmes, are even now being felt in German academia, which was reluctant to make the transition from Magister and Diploma qualifications to Bachelor and Master degrees (Pick 2008). The entire sector was forced to examine issues of curricula and workload, with many degree programmes initially overloaded with too much material. Numerous processes came under scrutiny and various aspects of New Public Management such as benchmarking, project management and service-orientation introduced (Schimank/Lange 2009). Considering that most of Germany's university administrators are civil servants, this was a major change and required a paradigm change in some cases where the will to reform was absent.

In this context it is also appropriate to mention the effects of programme accreditation, an official seal of approval for all EU degree programmes, and more recently and influentially a different form of external accreditation – system accreditation – whereby an HEI's quality assurance system in its entirety is externally assessed. Whereas programme accreditation merely checks whether minimal quality standards are being maintained at course level, HEIs preparing for system accreditation are required to present their quality management systems and show that their own internal checks and balances in all areas of teaching and learning are sufficient to maintain or surpass minimal quality standards. This form of accreditation allows HEIs to take on responsibility for their own accreditation practices. As a result, German HEIs have developed a number of different forms of quality management systems dependent on the individual institution. There is a clear autonomy gain and concomitant increase of individualism, as no two QM systems are identical. Although system accreditation requires a far greater amount of effort by the whole institution and it takes up to eight years before an HEI can submit an application to enter the system accreditation process, the benefits are that the whole HEI becomes deeply involved with quality issues overall, not just at local programme level, and the process of applying for system accreditation encourages greater institutional identity, a characteristic previously less apparent in German HEIs.

Although ministries are the major funding bodies and HEIs have to report back on the manner in which they operate and fulfil any aims which have been mutually agreed upon, and although some HEIs have gained more autonomy over their management by undertaking system accreditation, some states, e.g. North-Rhine-West-

⁸ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Universities_Excellence_Initiative

falia, have recently had their higher education law modified to increase ministerial influence again. One example here can be seen in §16, paragraph 1a, which was altered in 2015, which states that if an HEI does not fulfil its planning duties, the ministry is entitled to carry out planning either entirely or in part.⁹

Finally, rankings have become an established part of the German higher education arena and for some HEIs they have become significant as higher ranks can generate more interest, both in terms of recruiting the most able students, but also in terms of recruiting particularly able academic staff and funding. Osterloh & Frey (2015) have, however, cast a negative view on rankings and their ability to reveal the actual quality of any HEI. Although some HEIs, such as the larger institutions in Munich (LMU & TUM), appear in the top 100 HEIs worldwide, due to the financial restraints of being predominantly state-financed, there are limits as to how strategic German HEIs can be in terms of recruiting the best academic staff, which will be of immediate impact on publications, research collaborations and therefore rankings overall. Anglo-Saxon HEIs seem able to pursue far more strategic goals here, a point Osterloh/Frey (2015, p. 69) comment on as prestigious academics have been known to be "bought in" prior to various audit or assessment phases. Some HEIs therefore seem more able to play the rankings game than others. German HEIs nonetheless perform fairly well, in spite of financial limitations. In terms of system strength, for example, they rank as third in the world after the US and the UK (QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings 2016; Hazelkorn 2017)¹⁰.

The British HE context: past events, present dilemmas, future directions

Since the Middle Ages British universities have enjoyed a long history of independence and autonomy, and many are today rated among the leading universities worldwide, both in terms of the quality of their research, but also their teaching (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, University College London, Imperial College London). In Great Britain, as elsewhere up until the 1980s, higher education remained for a small proportion of the school-leaving population, and only the best students were successful in the application process. In 1950, for example, only 17 300 students were granted first degrees, however, by 2010/2011 this figure had risen to 331 000¹¹. The increase ('massification') is similar to the situation in Germany, where student numbers have increased dramatically in line with political interest in expanding the tertiary sector and providing a more highly-skilled workforce.

In order to become degree-awarding institutions, British universities require a Royal Charter, which is granted following consultation by the Privy Council of the United Kingdom if there is sufficient confidence in the quality of the programmes being provided. This was the case for all pre-1992 HEIs. In 1992 the Further and Higher Education Act made all the existing polytechnics into universities, which became known as the post-1992 universities. Funding for all of these institutions was centrally regulated by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council). All HEIs are able to set their own standards and determine

how academic their courses are. This means that there are differences in standard between degrees awarded by different universities, although ultimately, of course, the degree awarded is either a Bachelor, Master or Doctorate. Unlike the German system which in principle allows anyone with an *Abitur* into higher education, entry to higher education in Great Britain is not a foregone conclusion and remains a competitive process¹². As places are offered by each programme and institution individually, HEIs advertise the minimum grade levels they expect applicants to fulfil, and school-leavers can then identify how academic or competitive the application process will be and make decisions accordingly. Undergraduate applicants may only apply to five HEIs via the national UCAS portal¹³, and if they are fortunate they will be offered places in all five. In Germany, by contrast, it has been known for applicants to apply to all universities offering a particular course (40 or more).

Academic standards in Great Britain have long been formalized and maintained by institutions themselves and from 1991–1996 there were two common forms of quality assessment in the non-private tertiary sector¹⁴: subject review and academic audit. During the audit procedure institutions prepare a self-evaluation document in which they comment on their academic processes and structures and the areas in which they are doing well, but more importantly on those in which they have identified problems or deficits, alongside goals and instruments for improving the situation. The document is assessed and then the institution visited by auditors who then prepare a report on their findings.¹⁵ From 1997 onwards and following on from recommendations by the Joint Planning Group for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 1996 the two strands were united under a single independent body: the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)¹⁶. The QAA is predominantly financed by HE providers in all four nations of Great Britain, who contract its services to conduct external peer reviews of academic standards and quality on their behalf. HEIs must comply with the QAA's Quality Code, which has been developed and is recognized by the entire British higher education sector. Since its inception, the QAA has also made recommendations to the Privy Council in advance of conferral of new Royal Charters.

⁹ See Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hochschulgesetz – HG), p. 25: „Kommt die Hochschule dieser Planungspflicht nicht fristgerecht nach, so kann das Ministerium die Planung ganz oder teilweise selbst durchführen.“ <https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/Universitaet/UEberblick/.../HG-Vergleich-alt-neu.pdf>

¹⁰ See <https://www.topuniversities.com/system-strength-rankings/2016-for-details>.

¹¹ See Education: Historical statistics, House of Commons Library, for details: researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/.../SN04252.pdf

¹² If grades are not reached, then students can enter 'clearing' and receive offers from other HEIs which have available places.

¹³ See UCAS website for details: <https://www.ucas.com/>

¹⁴ Private and independent tertiary institutions are accredited by the British Accreditation Council, which is a member of ENQA.

¹⁵ See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/handbook2006/default.asp> for audit methodology.

¹⁶ See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en> for further details.

Whereas HEIs were audited on a fixed-term basis, following a 2011 UK government White Paper 'Students at the Heart of the System' it was proposed that external quality assurance should be guided by the past record of each HEI: a 'risk-based approach'. A most recent example of revision can be witnessed in the new approach to quality assessment which is being introduced in England and Northern Ireland from 2017-2018. This will give reviewers a far more differentiated approach which takes the individuality of each HEI better into account: "proportionate, risk-based and grounded in the mission and context of an individual university or college and the composition of its student body" (QAA website).¹⁷ One of the main criticisms of past audit processes overall had been that institutions were not always being audited by external reviewers who were on the same level as those they were auditing – a moot point, which was corrected in later audit rounds.

Most higher education research funding in Great Britain is provided by four bodies: HEFCE (England), the Scottish Funding Council, HEFCW (Wales), and the Department of the Economy (Northern Ireland). The quality of research in Britain was first reviewed in a process – *Research Assessment Exercise* (RAE) – first undertaken from 1986 every five years on behalf of the four funding bodies. Individual subjects were assessed and ranked by subject specialists, with research statements submitted from 37 subject areas with five selected research outputs. This was later expanded to allow two outputs per researcher, and 152 subject areas. Depending on the respective position gained, research funding would then be allocated accordingly. According to the House of Commons Science and Technology Report (2002) the RAE, although not perfect, "stimulated universities into managing their research".

Between 2008-2013 the system was replaced by the impact evaluation known as the *Research Excellence Framework* (REF). Here, individual academics and departments submitted their five self-selected best papers, which were then graded into four star (world-leading in originality, significance and rigour) to unclassified (quality that falls below the standard nationally recognized) in terms of their impact, which was defined as "an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia" (HEFCE).¹⁸ One of the first main issues with the REF was that smaller, less academic HEIs were disadvantaged. If they were unable to produce publications of sufficient impact, then they would receive less funding, which in turn would lead to less research output etc. A negative spiral therefore. In the latest 2016/2017 HEFCE allocation of REF funding, Oxford University receives 165mil. GBP, and a dozen HEIs at the other end of the scale get a few tens of thousands. Another point was that impact cannot necessarily be determined alone in a metrics-based system. If all research is conducted with a view to creating social impact, then various forms of research would be completely redundant and not worthy of funding, for example. The system therefore came under intensive review from 2010 and the format of the second Research Excellence Framework is still under consultation, with results pending.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was developed in England only by the Department of Education and introduced to "build evidence about the performance of the UK's world-class higher education sector (HEFCE 2017)¹⁹. As such it is designed to provide evidence to prospective students about the quality of teaching in any given HEI which has undergone the TEF. It is a completely voluntary instrument and only addresses the quality of undergraduate teaching, but already in the first TEF 2017 results, which was trialled in 2016, a total of 295 HEIs took part, receiving gold, silver or bronze ratings, with a further number granted provisional TEF rating as there had been insufficient data received for full rating. The TEF draws on national data (National Student Survey) and evidence provided by each HEI including a detailed report about its teaching policy, practice and student support structures. It examines three areas: teaching quality, the learning environment and the educational and professional outcomes achieved by students. TEF ratings are awarded for up to three years and can help students to choose which HE provider they wish to apply for. Unlike the outcomes of the REF, which have a direct impact on the amount of funding provided by HEFCE, the TEF is a slightly different mechanism: those HEIs, which have undergone the process, may be able to increase tuition fees in line with inflation. However, depending on political developments in the UK, which are at present volatile and uncertain, tuition fees themselves may possibly be abolished in the future, which would have a fundamental impact once more on the way higher education is managed (Labour Party manifesto 2017)²⁰.

There has been some resistance to the idea of the TEF, as HEIs are aware that they may lack effective quality-control mechanisms with regards their teaching, because middle-management at departmental level may be weak, whatever may exist at the top of the managerial hierarchy by way of PVCs²¹ elaborating on teaching quality and producing various policy papers for presentation to visiting quality-audit teams (and for 'gaming' these audit and assessment processes). In spite of such misgivings, however, 295 HEIs have chosen to participate in the first trial round, so while appearing to increase pressure on the chalk-face academic, the TEF may, in fact, be welcomed by rank-and-file lecturers as requiring corporatist management to properly resource undergraduate teaching in order to deliver over 3-4 years the package of teaching and assessment promised in HEI marketing and enshrined in the contract-to-educate.

Although HEIs in Great Britain have seemed autonomous in terms of how they design, finance and manage

¹⁷ See <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/QualityAssessment/>

¹⁸ See <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/REFImpact/>

¹⁹ See <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2017/Name,114556,en.html> for further details.

²⁰ Interestingly, some 'top' REF HEIs have been awarded only bronze in the 2017 TEF.

²¹ Pro-Vice-Chancellors (PVCs) are responsible for all student, research and teaching matters and are therefore key to developing the institution overall.

their courses, the entire system of quality assessment using the QAA, REF, and now TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) exemplifies that British academics have become amongst the most monitored in the world, as these various instruments assess quality in academic structures and management, research and now teaching, which is done at national level. Since the entire British HE sector is fee-paying, the student role has evolved into that of consumer, who is buying into a product, namely the gaining of knowledge and acquisition of skills, in order to receive value for money which includes not only academic administrative services, but the quality of teaching in particular. This changed perception of student identity is apparent in other countries, too, where governments and taxpayers have also been re-treating from providing HE as a free public good in the context of its costly massification over recent decades (Heller/Callender (eds.) 2013). The cost burden is being progressively passed to the student (and his/her family) since the graduate is now seen as receiving a significant private benefit and hence as having personally to 'invest' in his/her higher education. Essentially, countries have to face as a public policy issue whether to take the route of continuing the under-funding of an over-crowded and (perhaps over-)expanded, mass HE system as a free public good (e.g. Germany), or share the cost burden of HE between the taxpayer and the student/family by injecting tuition fee income so as to better finance institutions in the age of mass HE (in England at GBP 9 000 annual tuition fees).

A most recent change to British higher education which awaits implementation is the Office of Students, a new regulatory body, which was established in law by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. It will become active in 2018 and will replace HEFCE and OFFA (Office for Fair Access), thereby putting the student at the heart of the higher education system.

N.B. David Palfreyman is a Board Member both of HEFCE and of the OfS. The views expressed in this article should not be taken as either HEFCE or OfS policy.

Lessons to be learnt from German-British perspectives?

The Bologna Process (Germany), marketization forces (GB), quality management and assurance and New Public Management (Germany and GB), specific initiatives, pacts and target agreements (Germany) and HE ranking systems (worldwide) have been of profound impact in German and British higher education. They have all contributed to making academics consider their activities in teaching and research in a new light. Even German professors, who occasionally still summon the ghost of Humboldt as justification for claiming freedom in teaching or research, are nonetheless bound by higher education laws, the fulfilment of Bologna requirements, or the decisions of funding bodies, which on average only release money to ca. 20% of all research applications (cf. DFG). The quality of their work is today being rightfully examined not only at local, HEI level, but also at national level, as both research and teaching is predominantly financed by the German taxpayer.

If we consider the extent to which higher education in Great Britain is managed today, it seems that practically every area of activity is under national scrutiny. However, if academia seems disinclined to engage in reflection on the quality of its activities, it should be reminded of Dill's words: "If the professoriate is to insist, and I believe we must, on the need for academic autonomy, then we must also offer convincing evidence to each other and to the larger public that our collegial processes for the maintenance of academic standards are vigorous and valid." (Dill, D., in Barnett, R. (ed.) 2005, p. 178). In this respect, academia and society in general needs robust evidence on the quality of research and teaching domains in particular. The revision of various audit processes in Britain and especially in England displays an ongoing, healthy and robust review system of these processes in a fast-moving environment. If review systems are finely-tuned and adaptive, and if they actually present data which stands up to academic scrutiny, then these systems should prove enduring. National systems for systematic review appear a useful mechanism if they are capable of differentiating between types of institution and missions present, thereby measuring only like with like. Admittedly, the capital and knowledge provided by HE degrees of various kinds still remain difficult to quantify or measure. While attempts have been made to quantify income gains post HE qualification, for example (Conlan/Patrignani 2011; Walker/Zhu 2013), a main part of what HE offers are aspects of personality development that do not lend themselves well to precise measurement. HE funding bodies and the greater public in general can only be given reliable data to a given extent, which helps them to make decisions on the support or maintenance of each respective system. It is therefore the ongoing duty of these systems to ensure that their forms of measurement remain as precise as possible, but also flexible.

Due to the efforts of independent national bodies such as the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in Great Britain, which champions teaching excellence in higher education, not just in GB, but across the globe, the quality of teaching staff has been supported at national level, and fellowships granted by this body have become labels which stand for good quality. Today, many incoming British academics (teaching) already have Associate Fellowship status. If we examine German teaching certificates from 16 federal states, it is all but impossible to judge whether the quality of each certificate is comparable or what it really says about any given individual. Arguably, the impact of these certificates on decisions regarding professorships, for example, remains rather low by comparison. A national system in Germany could possibly help to provide more confidence in the quality of incoming teaching staff, or give added value to those already within the system if they proceed through a certification process.

Even without national systems of review, the German HE sector has certainly shifted toward more managerialism, thereby improving teaching quality and complexity reduction in administrative processes, many of which have been reviewed in the run-up to an HEI undergoing system accreditation. HEIs have developed their individual

QM systems, which include checks on the quality of teaching and administration, a process which usually leads to the entire institution taking ownership for the instruments involved and the monitoring of quality overall. Taking ownership may make it more likely that internal checks will be better accepted and become part of the institutional fabric. However, the quality of research in Germany remains nebulous and at present there are no undertakings to introduce a system of quality review over and above those which already examine funding applications on the basis of a promise of quality research. HEIs are introducing quality management systems for research, sometimes in compliance with ministerial demands; however, it is not judicious to simply superimpose international variables such as impact factor, publications, citations or research output upon all HEIs, as this will not necessarily take subject-specific academic culture or the individual HEI into account. Reviews of the quality of research need to be conducted with a much finer filter than is presently being undertaken. Nonetheless, as was the case in the 2002 review of the RAE which confirmed that HEIs were at least now managing their research better, German efforts to create research quality management programmes seem destined to lead to a quality discourse, which may itself be fruitful and improve research quality and research management overall, a debate which has been conducted in Great Britain since the RAE and REF were first implemented. The next few years will witness individual QM systems coming under mid-term evaluation, followed by re-accreditation, and adaptations to ongoing systems may ensue.

Although it is still too early to state with any confidence what impact the Brexit process may have on either British or German HE, a political decision which has so far not been mentioned in this article, it is estimated that many EU academics who are presently based in Britain will return to their home countries. Equally, there are growing indications that British graduates are considering or actively seeking employment outside of Britain as a direct result of Brexit (Manchester University Graduate Survey 2017). Furthermore, research collaborations between Europe and British counterparts, may be put on hold, or cancelled. At very least, until the terms of Brexit are made clear, decisions will already be made long ahead of 2019, and these may prove to be of considerable impact upon HE in both countries, with possible gains to be made by the influx of returners to continental Europe and losses to be made as British academics seek to fill the gaps left by departing colleagues. Both scenarios are tentative; however, it does seem possible that British HE and the wider society is possibly set for a rather large brain drain.

In conclusion then, both German and British HE systems have autonomy at their heart. Governments on both sides of the Channel promote this credo, but have different approaches to supporting it. Britain has adopted national mechanisms of funding and quality assurance, whereas Germany has adopted a more individualistic approach. Research funding in Britain is released en bloc to HEIs, who may then determine themselves how to distribute the money. German academics are in a system

of individual submission, which can be a hindrance to innovation if research proposals, especially those that span different disciplines, are not fully understood by reviewing committees, which in Germany tend to be strongly discipline-orientated. German academic peer review might benefit from more flexibility here, where the overriding principle should be: expansion of knowledge, possibly coupled with societal benefit.

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Wilfried Müller (Hg.)

Ist der Bologna-Prozess gescheitert?

Siggenger Begegnungen 17. bis 22. August 2015

Der Bologna-Prozess beinhaltet die umfassendste Reform der deutschen Hochschulgeschichte. Er hat im Jahre 1999 mit der Unterzeichnung der Bologna-Erklärung von damals 29 Wissenschaftsminister/innen europäischer Länder begonnen. Das oberste Ziel war die Schaffung eines gemeinsamen Europäischen Hochschulraums mit hoher Mobilität der Studierenden und Wissenschaftler/innen.

Die Umsetzung hat an den deutschen Hochschulen sehr lange gedauert und vorübergehend grundlegende Mängel aufgewiesen. Heute sind einige dieser Probleme gelöst, aber beileibe nicht alle. In diesem Band wird in den folgenden Schwerpunkten eine Standortbestimmung vorgenommen:

- Studieren im Europäischen Hochschulraum
- Modularisierung
- Employability
- Internationale Mobilität der Studierenden
- Akkreditierung
- Akteurkonstellationen der Reform

Die Autorin und die Autoren dieses Buches haben sich in verschiedenen Funktionen der Hochschulforschung, -didaktik, -politik und des Hochschulmanagements über mehr als 15 Jahre mit der Bologna-Reform auseinandergesetzt. Ob die Bologna-Reform gescheitert ist, ist angesichts der Komplexität der Thematik und der unvollständigen Datenlage nicht einfach zu beantworten. Sie wagen eine Zwischenbilanz, angereichert durch wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse und *eigene Erfahrungen*.

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