

## Education Policy: Internal Consolidator or Foreign Policy Vehicle? EU and Canadian Perspectives Compared

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### *Introduction and Conceptual Foundations*

Education has emerged as an increasingly rewarding, but highly ambiguous form of foreign policy. Shifting from a domestic dynamic, constructed via internal processes for reasons of national self-identity, the internationalization of education 'has emerged as one of the most salient trends in higher education across the globe (CBIE 2011, 3), and become a clear component in the foreign policies of states and institutions alike. While scholarly investigation into foreign policy and education have in and of themselves remained popular areas of interest within the political and social sciences, exploring ways in which education is operating as a vehicle of twenty-first century foreign policy, as well as looking at how foreign policy content and ambitions are beginning to impact on the substance and structure of higher education is a relatively new field.

There are many moving parts and actors to this investigation. Education emerges as a mode by which national communities forge links by which to self-identity domestically, while foreign policy operates as the principle structure by which states project their national discourse and their sense of actorness on the world stage. What fundamentally connects education and foreign policy therefore is the construction of, and projection of identity. Few studies have been done on the linchpin role that identity plays in generating broad socio-political dynamics like education, and simultaneously providing the content and form of modes of foreign policy that project that content.

We begin by suggesting that education is central to the civic and cultural modes of contemporary *statehood*. Within the triad of national identity, national interests and foreign policy, key national events, narratives, personages, institutions constitute the fabric of the national self, from which national identity takes shape (Hadfield 2008). This happens traditionally within states, but increasingly within and across states as well, as witnessed by the EU (Corbett 2005). Education thus operates as the internal method of self-representation by which national identity first comes into being, giving rise to the intrinsic 'who' of the national self, and from which the national interests that ask 'what' arise. Education is thus a key, deeply internal, even personal mode of constructing both the form and content of the national self to its extent self and its emerging generations. From here, we suggest that education facilitates the externalities of the state; it is the key to foreign policy structures that begets *statecraft*. By underwriting the state's national identities and national interests, the state can demonstrate, can *convey* internationally what it has constructed nationally. The range of norms, values, and precepts that permit

diplomatic ambition are entirely cultivated from generations of examples of the national self successfully or unsuccessfully at work, nationally, regionally and internationally. Its internal sense of self, known and learned by both culture and the structure of education, operates first to convey (inside-out) to the world the type of state at work, and second (outside-in), to invite other states, societies and scholars, to partake - by engaging with the vehicle of education - with the source of this state's given self.

To grasp the myriad processes and variables at work we will use our second draft<sup>1</sup> to set out a constructivist-based foundation operating via both historical institutionalism, which best explains the initial, linear construct of domestic educational institutions, and sociological institutionalism as a necessary complement to understanding the role of standardizing, harmonizing structures found in European policies like Erasmus (or emergent in fledgling ways in our Canadian strategy), as well as the technical, top-down requirements of national institutions and programs. These two approaches are grounded in classical constructivism's ability to perceive the world according to identities, value-sets, normative instruments, bequeathing modes of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, both at the societal level within a state, and at the foreign policy level, between states. Lastly, we will draw upon the normative dimensions of communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, in order to deepen the quality of the domestic and international dynamics found in both education and foreign policy. At this point however, we concentrate on setting out the four major steps of interrogating our research question, and getting to grips with the range of primary sources bedding down our analysis of education, the foreign policy cycle, and the various comparative aspects by which we contrast the international elements of EU education with those of Canada.

### ***1. Identity, education and foreign policy***

Education is not only about equipping young generations with the skills and knowledge they require in their future, it is also seen as the prime method of constructing a national community and cohering a state.<sup>i</sup> As an imperative tool for nation states in their task of managing their population, education has also been regarded as vital in spreading "the image and heritage of the 'nation'" and promoting attachment to this imagined community.<sup>ii</sup> As Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal and Hanna Schissler argue, subjects of the state 'were transformed into citizens through the teaching of history, geography, and the language of the nation. People were anchored in illustrious pasts, in particular territories, and in the grammar of (national) self-recognition'.<sup>iii</sup> As such, transforming individuals into informed, contributory citizens requires some aspect of control regarding the form and content of education, particularly when teaching topics like history history:

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<sup>1</sup> To be presented at the Annual UACES Conference in Bilbao, Spain, September 2015.

*Teaching history has thus been a priority for modern nation-states. It carried and continues to carry the burden of identity-building of citizens. Crafting an account of the nation's origin, its past, and its evolvment has been of utmost importance for the nation and the state-building process (ibid).*

In accordance with this, European national education systems have for roughly two centuries operated as the main national medium by which states built and inculcated a common culture and shared aspirations, understandings, values, and ideas among their peoples, and through these educational structures extended and maintained their control over the public and created social cohesion.<sup>iv</sup> It was therefore 'in schools and universities that the cultural and epistemological underpinnings of national identity and nationalism are produced and reproduced.'<sup>v</sup> It was also through the mass education of their populations that the national elite sought to influence the way in which inhabitants of a territory viewed themselves, promoting the idea that they were part of a community with a distinctive identity 'so as to create loyal members of society whose ability to function as such would not be hampered by attachments to sub-groups within or beyond state boundaries'.<sup>vi</sup>

By placing the image of the nation and national identity in the background of all aspects of political, social and cultural life, states aimed to continuously remind their citizens of their status as part of a national community and as the bearers of a specific national identity. States however are not the sole actors in this process. Key non-state actors and institutions, chief among them the European Union and the European Commission respectively, have since the inception of the political project, focused on the potential that education brings in cohering a trans-state identity, via the mechanism of interlocking institutions based in Brussels, and national capitals. The early stages of European integration testify to emerging, if not always choate goals of educating youth demographic in the basics of 'Europe', but also physically encouraging them to come together in the same environment to experience the realities of the Community through mobility and exchange programmes.

As explored elsewhere (Mitchell 2014; Kuhn 2012<sup>2</sup>), the overall aim behind this was to make young generations of 'Europeans' aware of their commonalities with other nations of the Community and to increase their knowledge of other 'Europeans' for greater mutual understanding to break the barriers between national units on the path to building a genuine community in 'Europe'. This conception of 'Europe' was 'envisaged as an 'imagined community' in the making'.<sup>vii</sup> Moreover, these plans also aimed to increase the peoples' awareness and knowledge of the EC and to socialise them in a Community environment to increase the level of support for the process of integration and to make the Community relevant to and visible in their everyday lives.

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<sup>2</sup> This theme has also been explored in key papers during the 2014 conference of this UACES CRN on the European Research Area, some of which will be published in a special issue of the European Journal of Higher Education, in late 2015.

However, the proactive attitude of the Commission in this respect was coolly received by many Member States. They remained skeptical about top-down initiatives in general; eager to maintain their own control over the substance of education leading to tension between the institutions of the Community (Corbett 2005), chiefly because the Commission was seen as seizing rather imperiously 'the role of progenitor of a common European culture' and treating education, as Coulby suggests, 'as warfare by other means'.<sup>viii</sup> While warfare may be something of stretch, but education as a key plank of foreign policy, was, and has become a practical alternative for both key states and the European Union itself.

In terms of endowing a state or institutional entity with the structures by which to define, defend or attract itself against an international background, foreign policy is the counterpart of education. Bearing in mind that identity is a relational concept in which key selves are delineated and defined in relation to a domestic 'other' or in opposition to an international 'other',<sup>ix</sup> education fulfills the domestic category of selfness and *statehood*, while its foreign policy operates as the counterpart that instantiates its *statcraft*. Just as education attempts to set out clear lines of the national self within a series of iterative narratives, foreign policy too attempts to operate via a series of refracted frames of reference. Both are intrinsically discursive. Both contain the power of self-representation. Both draw inherently cultural, even moral distinctions between the self and the other.<sup>x</sup> Both are catalysts for, and drivers of identity. Both provide terrains where problems, whether domestic and cultural, or international and structural are played out (Arkan, 2011). In other words, both education and foreign policy of state, or an transnational actor, or an institution are the two foremost areas of policy by which political actors define themselves in relation to both their domestic audience, and their external sphere, effectively constructing and 'performing' their identity through educative policy practices at home and foreign policy practices abroad.

The question of course, is what happens when these two streams of self-definition amalgamate, for reasons of enhanced self-definition? How does a national education process come to define national foreign policy goals? In what way are the internationalization goals of a given entity actively formulated within and promulgated by its foreign policy? Further, how does the overlapping of these two terrains, the indigenous with the international, serve to protect and/or project a state or an entity against the deleterious effects of the post-2008 economic crisis?

## ***2. Graduating Education: Three Stages***

We suggest that within Europe, the ability of education policy to reflect, repackage, and ultimately represent key national dimensions that underwrite the international actorness, or foreign policy of states and entities, has emerged within three phases.

### *(i) Old Communitarian School Ties*

First, traditionalist perspectives which are emphatically national in ilk, dedicated as they are to a comprehensive, and generally unbending view of the national self, a vehicle of the national narrative (e.g. as found in textbooks), and a general transmission belt from past to present. This is the most static form of transmitting ideas, ideologies and instruments to the youth (particularly within the humanities and social sciences), simply because the nation-first perspective is intrinsically particularist. It may incorporate the plurality of other histories, voices, challenges, but ultimately it will be packaged as a unified, homogenous, even totemic series of national concepts that are exclusive in form, and unreflective in content: 'our school textbooks telling our national stories'.

This depiction is typical of many states around the world, even now. Wading into the fray of re-telling a national narrative, or cultivating different perspectives pits one against historical, political, institutional and cultural forces, quite apart from educational policies. European Member States' hard-bitten, jealous reactions to early attempts by the European Commission to transform key areas were immediately seen as interference and roundly rebuffed until packages like Erasmus could demonstrate a European 'self' in neat cultural coincidence with the national 'us'. In many other countries absent the ambitions of the Commission, countries have simply 'been left alone to handle or ignore their educational problems as they see fit.' Kopp's observations fall neatly within communitarian theories (see Brown). In other words, they are concomitant with realist-driven, a sovereignty-gear, 'hands-off' approach to states, permitting us the luxury of assuming 'that the contexts and challenges were so different from nation to nation that education could not be tackled at the international level' (Kopp, 2012).

The picture is not a pretty one. First, education that suffers from qualitative superficiality is also at risk of quantitative sparseness in terms of the overall educational disparities offered within a given states. Development is not a key factor here; rather attitude. As such, in 'countries at every stage of development... there are vast gaps in the quality of education [which] children of different races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds receive' (ibid). Both the quality of the content, and the factors that quantify how well they are taught can be surprisingly uneven. Second, fundamentalist political, national and religious attitudes will deepen such tendencies still further.

Lastly, there is a key like-to-like dynamic at work. In foreign policy policy, the educative content in this category operates solely to present a reified vision of a given state, and the predominant, accepted narrative of its national societies. Ironically, chimes with the inductivist approach to foreign policy, namely that states, their societies and key policies like education *are* indeed fundamentally incommensurate, incomparable in any sense, and attempting not only top-down programmes fostering pluralism is ineffective at best and cultural imperialism at worst. Here again, the communitarian precepts provide us with visions of neat, divided, separable states with homogenous cultures capable of being packaged into, and translating a clear, but indivisible sense of the national self.

The foreign policy modes of building a singular self are quite similar. At nation-state level, or via the political entity of the European Union, the construction of a given identity operate via civic and cultural modes, in which common political institutions operate against a naturalized background of shared culture. The transmission belt for the civic-cultural nexus that both builds a given nation, and binds a group of states flows from simple symbols like anthems and flags to more complex monetary engines like a common currency, to emerge into sophisticated modes of long-term internal standardization in areas like education, and the harmonization of external actorness, chiefly foreign policy. Are there areas of a clear-cut, immutable European self at work within even the most liberal, neutral Commission programmes, which appear to non-EU others as educational occidentalism? Certainly. Interviews with ENP partner states in terms of the educational provisions in the Action Plans highlight not only the present cultural impasse inherent in dumping education and its outcomes wholesale within foreign policy, as well as uneasy north-south disparities that make even the most basic forms of their implementation virtually impossible.

*(ii) Mid-range dynamics*

The second category recognizes education as a mid-range dynamic. It is not necessarily restricted to states, but capable of generating pluralistic outlooks that contribute to reconciliation and rewriting of national narratives (as witnessed in the transformation of the educational sector in the Balkans). Education policies can facilitate inter-state exchanges, including students and staff, as well as unrolling standardizing structures in terms of common or interchangeable credits, modules and even degrees. While national norms remain emphatically particularistic in WHAT is taught, the modes by which one teaches such ideas are proving helpfully fungible. This renders education – with the help of key structures like mobility – as an integrative, transformative process. In Europe particularly, but also elsewhere, this has not only been a tough, even tortuous process flowing from integration, but which has remained fundamentally divided in its founding ethos between liberal/cultural goals of cultivating new, enlightened horizons in the youth, and using such exchanges to drive forward the ability of a whole demographic to acquire transferable skills, undertake vocational placements, and become practically plugged into Europe as a marketplace, rather than culturally into the Union as a political philosophy.

The construction and promotion of a regional European identity as an implicit mode of self-identification, and a catalyst for both political and economic integration was focused on the ultimate goal of creating a genuine union between the peoples of Europe. As Church argues:

*[i]t was thought that a new loyalty should, and could, be built to rectify some of the weaknesses of the mechanism of integration. This was seen*

*as having brought together states, anxious to preserve their independence, and an unaccountable administrative decision making system, all of which was to the detriment of popular identification with the Community, as it then was.<sup>xi</sup>*

The leaders of the Community and the early architects of the process of integration therefore assumed that the gradual building and strengthening of a European level of identity and belonging was “necessary for the viability and, ultimately, viability of the EU”.<sup>xii</sup> This focus on the changing levels of belonging within the EU required a new way of conceptualising the Union as a multidimensional project instead of merely an economic and technocratic enterprise. This also implied a reconsideration of the way in which Europe was conceptualised as not only a geographic reference to a region or continent but as an entity that provided an existential homeland to different peoples, united by their commitment to live together. In this vein, it was assumed that this conception of Europe required a corresponding consciousness and identity:

*What is needed is not simply greater ‘consciousness of Europe’, but the creation of a ‘European consciousness’ that will transcend national divisions and mobilise Europe’s... citizens towards a new image of themselves as ‘Europeans’ rather than nationals.<sup>xiii</sup>*

We will return to the modes by which foreign policy perspectives can decisively change the original modes of Erasmus by providing a critical reading of recent scholarship on this area (Mitchell, 2014). At this point, the suggestion is that education in Europe is regionally-designed to boost the cross-border potential of its various members, rather than a far-sighted international strategy concomitant with EU diplomacy. Again, there are emergent examples of the latter, which we will point to in the conclusion, but at this point, the main goal of mobility and exchange programmes is designed to self identify beyond the national to the EU. (As illustrated below, our Canadian counterpart example however, may more realistically occupy the following category of fully-fledged foreign policy-led education policy.)

This mid-range category typifies past and current mobility structures that remain the educational counterpart of European integration, in both its political and economic aspects. The ambition here is to construct a single market, and secondly to Europeanise as many areas of policy as possible, to create a unique, but arguably regional European actor. In terms of the sheer scope of Erasmus (within and beyond the EU) the dynamic at first blush may appear to be solely mobility-based widening, but it is in reality far more associated with the integrative process of deepening.

The prime instruments are the ECTS, Erasmus (mobility), and as of 1999, the Bologna process begetting a European higher education area (EHEA), all designed to enhance “compatibility and comparability’ which comes from a common commitment to recognized frameworks for crediting studies, assuring quality, and

recognizing qualifications' (Corbett 2005, 4). Two points should be made here. First, such ambitions simultaneously support the political ambitions of integration. In other words Erasmus programmes underwriting the political philosophy of EU integration granting students opportunities to study, travel, interact with, work, and learn languages from across different parts of the EU, *and* market-based demands for ongoing European competitiveness and growth, by ensuring they return 'skilled' in the market dynamics of a knowledge-based economy as well as 'schooled' in its cultural precepts. Second, unlike the market itself, which is visibly internationalized in nature, educational goals operates somewhere between national policies and international strategies, and is therefore in the business of Europeanising itself, rather than (as yet) embarking on a full-blooded international strategy that platforms educational policy alongside development, and climate change.

The Europeanisation of education is not only tough in practice, is it not always clear in theory. As Corbett argues, 'we know relatively little about the process 'europeanising' policy for high education, and how EU initiatives interact with institutions which are a byword for their claim to intellectual autonomy and national governments which regard education as an element of national sovereignty' (2005: 5). The struggle therefore has been to locate, and undertake the Europeanisation of education between communitarian-driven views of education as solely national in purview, and the globalizing imperatives of a market which have themselves driven the internationalizing trends of higher education around the world. Work undertaken by both the Commission and national governments however, have begun to bear fruit, though not perhaps in excepted areas.

While the EU still struggles for a sense of its own actorness, and clarity in its foreign policy, education has assisted the EU to gain a regional coherence. As Corbett argues, 'there is a strong case for saying that aspects of educational policy are now an established part of 'europeanisation' of national policy-making - at least in the sense of 'europeanisation' as the progressive emergence of common norms of action' (2005: 5). The acknowledging, and sharing of a common European narrative, as found within key aspects of education has focused the collective sense of self. Education, in other words has provided crucial normative content, and vital structural form to the emerging shared foreign policy dynamics by which the EU has begun to craft its sense of actorness. Indeed, Europeanising key policies in name, is in many ways, half the battle. (Implementing them collectively, and being regarded as a collective actor in this respect constitutes the other half.)

The outcome however, and perhaps ironically, is that the 'foreign' policy of the EU is still dramatically regional. With some exceptions, EU foreign policy, and key strategies like education, speaks more of a local series of interlocking commonalities targeted either at cooperative local neighbors (EEA), or like-minded far-flung partners (Canada, the US). The central principle here is that of soft-power, not empire-lite. *Pace* Corbett, the aims remain emphatically internal, they are geared at motivating the hub, not converting the peripheries, despite protestations of high-vaunting, and singularly unsuccessful neighbourhood policies:



*The goal is not only to make the European higher education area (EHEA) attractive enough to the rest of the world to draw in more of the best foreign students and scholars, but also to boost quality within Europe itself, as a way of making universities more effective within the knowledge-based economy which the world's richest nations regard as the sine qua non of economic growth (Corbett 2005: 4).*

Indeed, the dynamic here is to leverage education strategically enough within the soft power arsenal of the EU to promote and attract talent, but not so instrumentally that the EU turns into an education hub whose talent (indigenous and international), ultimately hemorrhages away, along with its economic clout. The European way (admittedly bruised of late in global eyes), whether it be a Europe of Knowledge that underwrites a knowledge-based economy, or norms and values that continue to preclude hard power tools is what is to be preserved, and gradually exported. Corbett again, presciently: 'in advocating this Europe of Knowledge, policy-makers want to see not just an economy which is better geared to strategies of wealth creation derived from world-beating research and innovation, but the wealth itself making it possible to maintain the famous European social model or welfare state in some form' (2005: 6).

While the EU has an older, more structured series of mobility programs, and has arguably gone further in beginning to underwrite Erasmus goals with foreign policy ambitions, it is interesting to note that the US has its own dual vision of the role of education. As Zinny illustrates with the 2011 '100,000 Strong in Americas' supporting US-Latin American and Caribbean student exchanges, higher education has of late become 'the object of some interesting bilateral initiatives directly linked to competitiveness and innovation' designed not only to stimulate economic regionalism, but 'to better prepare young people for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce, making them internationally-aware and cross-culturally adept and, by doing so, promoting future leaders and innovators' (2015).

### ***(iii) Cosmopolitan visions: the international school***

This final perspective represents the most recent contemporary vehicle for supporting the civic, economic, and cultural drivers of states like Canada, and polities like the EU. Operating both internally and externally, perspectives on education while least-developed in practice, are now clearly beginning to move beyond limited, time-bound self-identifying mobility structures that are restricted to a single state or region. Education (through mechanisms like mobility and scholarships) is no longer an end in itself, but a step towards greater integration, and internationalization of the educational sector, but an increasingly clear plank of the composition of foreign policy. Education shifts in this sense from being merely an individual right afforded to all, to an output that that visibly serves the public good domestically, and viably reinforces the body politic internationally. Finding

evidence for this final category means moving beyond the self-defining narratives of the first category, the self-other reference points that allow market and political structures to come together in the second category.

In general, this final category arguably appears as the most productive and far-reaching. It is the farthest from the communitarian, small-scale attitudes to both education and foreign policy, not only by sticking to a credible cosmopolitan philosophy of achieving harmonized standards, but also by a conscious recognition that education, can and indeed *should* have a role to play in the content and conveyance of foreign policy. Ironically, foreign policy from this perspective is perhaps at its least state-like; first, because it is increasingly drawn in holistic, rather than siloed-strategic ways, and second because it flows from non-traditional non-state actors like the EU, and the UN.

### ***3. Education and foreign policy structures : strategies, strategems and the international realm***

As argued above, education is thus recognized as a standard norm, indeed a right, and its promotion undertaken through generic benchmarking, but its defenders are increasingly international, rather than national in composition. The resultant perspective is as Kopp suggests, one where educational problems are deemed to be

so similar... that solutions can be shared. Social entrepreneurs are already having an impact by working collaboratively and adaptive effective interventions across borders. But world bodies and leaders have an important role to play, too. They can facilitate resource-sharing, convince countries that investing in education is worthwhile, and shine a spotlight on injustices when countries fail to acknowledge or address their gaping educational deficiencies (Kopp, 2012).

All well and good, but what are the foreign policy implications of arguing that 'education needs to be the cornerstone of every country'? Does it transform education into the new climate change? This year's must-have norm, with a raft of national strategies and key international partners; worn visibly, but not necessarily viably within the international realm? 'Education-lite' in other words, offering a superficial boost to one plank of foreign policy.

Or is the content, and the method by which a given country educates its youth seen not only as emblematic of its values, virtues and identity domestically, but a commodity to be valued, and pursued by others, offered and taken up via partnerships, scholarships that routinely bring non-domestic students and scholars into the state? Education that operates to substantively inform, and possibly transform key aspects of the foreign policy composition of a given state, leveraging its ability to connect with like-minded states and work collaboratively, and

permanently within the international realm, rather than merely drawing from it to yield short-term domestic gains.

In terms of our research question, of what is this an example? In other words, of what is education within foreign policy an example? Low-level engagement with national and regional disparities? Mid-range anxieties about the precise role in which education should divide itself between cultural aims at providing a liberal education vs. vocational attempts at endowing the youth demographic with transversal skills in markets still crippled by unemployment and austerity (Hadfield and Summerby-Murray 2015)? Or a long-term attempt to place education alongside goods, services, capital and people, as the fifth freedom? A sea change in which Erasmus, Fulbright and CBIE structures are not mere strategems, but appreciably crafted strategies?

Education is of course the ultimate, global end in itself, fostering enhanced awareness, knowledge, skills, and the insight to use them. But education it also an undeniably powerful means to the end of a multidimensional, and effective foreign policy. It is a catalyst in other words, a vehicle that represents national identities, fosters national interests, and leverages foreign ambitions and actorness, of states and non-state actors. How many states are this far ahead? Education underwrites markets, and the economic philosophy of Europe's four freedoms. It is enlightened human capital in action. And yet, as Gabriel Zinny has argued recently, 'even though education and human capital building, which are critical for remaining competitive in this world, face a unique opportunity to become a new priority of this multilateral agenda, examples of engagement in this area are still scarce and random' (Zinny, 2015).

Operating internally and externally, simultaneously representing and attracting, education demonstrates not only its ability to operate as a key sinew of national identity, interests and foreign policy, but as a prime source of soft power. Briefly, it provides states, and non-state actors (including normative entrepreneurs within supra or transnational institutions) with an acquisitive structure that yields both material and intangible diplomatic benefits. From political clout that enhances the presence of an actor (Bretherton and Vogler), to normative coherence that sharpens the ideational, even legal impact of values and norms, from cultural provisions in trade bilaterals, to collaborative incentives tied to private sector investment, the sheer ability of education to reflect internally and represent externally is unparalleled in diplomatic terms. While climate change caps prove routinely nightmarish, and international legal precepts reliably rejected, education provisions within basic bilats are a comparatively neutral, if not always simple, commitment. Education is the thin end of a foreign policy wedge that could imply enhanced trade preferences, open-doors policy regarding talent, R&D, even immigration. It operates as 'the single most helpful, most powerful policy area, that we have at our disposal', argued an EACEA staff member recently, 'because it touches on everything, ultimately: it creates spaces around the world' (EACEA interview 2015).

A variety of international dynamics have arisen to suggest that intra-state cooperation is beginning to outflank the policy of education, and impact not only diplomacy itself, but transform the look of institutions themselves. The impact of the Erasmus upon the EU is itself notable, and can be considered in depth. Equally however, the sea change witnessed within the UN, which not only has worked (sometimes very unobserved) to leverage education from within the conventions of human rights to global development benchmarks like MDGs, but institutionally has worked to make education its own global priority. Non-state actors, including inter-governmental organizations like the UN operate a polyvalent foreign policy that decreases the traditional scope for national particularism and replaces it with regional, pluralist, and/or normative content around which a few, key principles of international behavior can be distilled. Linking both individual rights with collective security, the UN's use of education within its own polyvalent foreign policy must address both the specific needs of tackling illiteracy and innumeracy in developing states alongside global categories of citizenship, tolerance and collaboration. Echoing the approaches of the EU, the UN's historic *Education First* initiative, championed by Ban Ki-moon contains both bottom-up challenges tackling 'the quality of learning' in an attempt to even out educational disparities, and top-down leverage of global agendas, establishing education at the international level as every bit as vital as climate change, or as Kopp describes it, 'a shared global value' (ibid).

#### **4. Case Studies : the EU and Canada Compared**

Zinny's observation following observation, while prescient, needs to be explored for the inherent contradiction that it contains regarding 'who is acting', how and why:

Higher education institutions themselves are gradually developing their own channels of dialogue, cooperation, and interaction. Much of the current diplomatic activity for the global engagement of higher education is institution-to-institution, driven either by commercial motivations, or marketing interests or some strictly academic, seeking cooperative agreements to deepen and broaden the quality of their programs or expanding opportunities to join international research networks.

In terms of identifying actorness however, both Erasmus and Canadian programmes (as well as US ones) are derived strongly from HEIs themselves, though for very different reasons. Erasmus is designed to provide seed-money for European universities, both small and large, to engage with a curriculum that supports the teaching of European integration, and encourages them to connect with, and beyond each other, to provide critical but functionally standardized viewpoints of the EU as a soft power. Erasmus represents the success not only of viewing education as a shared cultural commodity with the capacity to build a regional identity, but the institutional success of running key parts of education as a shared competence, and in many ways, at the EU rather than the national level. In Canada however, absent any sort of national structure or ministry by which to provide leadership, vision, institutional schedule or national funding, institutions kickstart international

exchanges that send Canadians aboard and bring non-nationals to Canada because they are almost entirely self-reliant for funding, and yet part of a country whose identity, and foreign policy remains highly regarded.

To clarify our comparative approach, it is helpful to pinpoint the dual dynamics by which we find education and foreign policy coming together. We suggest it is in one of two modes:

- (1) provisions regarding education which are deliberately placed within the foreign policy of a state or entity;
- (2) foreign policy ambitions, constructs, and tools that affect educational policies.

### **Case Study 1: EU's education-led FP strategy**

European examples of the former are newer, and operate as provisions to boost education, literacy, life-long learning and exchanges within key bilateral agreements (e.g. with Canada or the US), or as replicable provisions within a larger foreign policy structure, like the European Neighborhood Action Plans. Examples of the latter are far older, and more well known, although perhaps not explicitly identified as core tools of foreign policy: Erasmus and mobility structures that operate across Member States to build a sense of cross-European heritage, and beyond with myriad non-EU states to deploy that same heritage in pursuance of EU soft power.

Identifying the myriad European actors is fundamental to understanding who is advocating which side of this two-step process. Foreign policy actors like the European Commission, like the new EEAS are increasingly clear on adding in educational provisions to foreign policy structures. The second draft will look in details (with the added benefit of interviews, where possible) at two bilateral agreements (CETA with Canada, and the beleaguered TTIP with the US), as well as provisions in the ENP to fully understand both what and how education is designed to do in pursuance of EU soft power. There are however a few recent examples that indicate this process. The 2014 press release of the Commission for Education, Androulla Vassiliou asked simply, but starkly, 'how can the European Union and its Member States maximize the impact of culture in foreign policy?' (EC 7 April 2014). Kick-starting discussions to look closely at 'a new EU strategy on the role of culture in the EU's external relations', a ream of actors that crossed the foreign policy and educational divide were listed, including the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee, the Goethe Institute, other cultural organizations, Pierre Vimont, then Executive Sec-Gen of the EEAS. Our second draft will dissect this report relative to specific bilaterals, and in doing so, look clearly at how and why education is beginning to operate as a key mode of disseminating European norms and values, underwriting European cultural diplomacy in way that ensures 'a more active and dynamic role for European culture on the international stage', and how that in turn contributes to European 'soft power...[that] can benefit the EU and its Member States in their relations with the wider world' (ibid).

Meanwhile, educational actors, chiefly the EAEAS of the Commission continue to underwrite the second dynamics of ensuring that some internationalization, available for enhanced foreign policy definition is slowly being written into long-standing educational structures like Erasmus.

If we argue that education operates as the counterpart to foreign policy, we are not only prioritizing (as argued) the dyadic role of identity in operating as domestic and international modes of the national self respectively, we need a clear sense of which is their interrelationship. If education is an internal-external dynamic, then its content are key, and its impact designed to operate as a form of soft power. Education is a vehicle for EU actorness; showcasing the norms and values that have in subsequent treaties operated to define for the EU, and for the wider world, a given 'European way'. Foreign policy enables the EU to "assert[]its identity on the international scene,"<sup>xiv</sup> but the content of that identity is deeply inculcated in the basic European heritage that is taught both nationally and cross-nationally, and springs from a post-war commitment to civilian,<sup>xv</sup> normative,<sup>xvi</sup> Kantian-oriented impact.<sup>xvii</sup> Education has informed the EU of its identity; the next stage is to examine areas of foreign policy where education (alongside other more traditional policies) is drawn upon to augment the EU's soft power identity by impacting positively upon a host of non-EU others. The dynamic is still avowedly inside-out: it is role-creation in which an internal self designs and projects a given identity via a few chosen policy vehicles.

## **Case Study 2: Canada's FP-led educational strategy**

Canadian examples of educational provisions within its foreign policy are almost non-existent. There is no Canadian equivalent of Erasmus; there are however a few key examples of educational provisions set within key bilateral agreements, including NAFTA with the US and Mexico, CETA with the EU, CALDO, that operate beyond basic aid or development support. More study is needed to identify self-standing educational agreements, or conventions operating in conjunction with other states, or against the backdrop of other agreements.

However, examples of internationalization, and even specific foreign policy content within education policy can be identified; and for these we turn (as illustrated below) to recent reports by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in terms of developing scholarships and mobility mechanisms to boost the understanding of international content in basic educational structures. This is a first step. As the reports illustrate, bedding down internationalization has an immediate knock-on effect to strengthening the soft power quality of Canada, allowing it to gradually move areas of its educational policy into its foreign policy structure. The 2011 CBIE report identifies a variety of methods, and rationales, by which an enhanced international component within nascent national concepts of educational policy would be of huge benefit. Key among them are:

- providing domestic students with opportunities to go abroad, to experience the world; developing Canada's overall workforce to succeed in a globalized economy and interconnected world (outgoing)
- to bring a global experience to domestic classrooms; to allow Canadian students to become more globally aware, understand cultural differences (incoming, but temporary; outgoing)
- to broaden horizons and interactions for researchers leading to better or quicker results (incoming)
- to enhance institutional reputation via visibility overseas, prestige, recruitment success for faculty, top students, improved finances etc.

Canada, while far behind in terms of a structured, harmonized, even quasi-centralized mode of overseeing or supporting its HEIs, has a sharper idea of the cyclical, reciprocal quality of education. Here, we rely on CBIE reports to identify the basic educational provisions in foreign policy (NAFTA – HRSDC; CALDO; CETA), to ascertain Canada's national strategy.

Connections between Canadian foreign policy objectives and the internationalization of education are surprisingly explicit. While there is no doubt of the domestic labour force orientation to many of the initiatives established by both federal and provincial levels of government across the country, an analysis of policy briefs, annual reports and specific educational programmes reveals that the projection of Canada's traditional 'soft power' role is only barely below the surface of the policy discourse. Indeed, in 2014 Canada's federal government moved forward with its first ever International Education Strategy, aiming to double the number of international students studying in the country by 2022. While a laudable step, this strategy immediately came under fire from the Canadian Bureau of International Education (a lobby group comprised of partner universities and agencies) for failing to go far enough. Writing in CBIE's 2014 annual report, Karen McBride, President and CEO, noted:

while the federal strategy forms part of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada's Global Markets Action Plan, a trade strategy designed to increase Canada's economic prosperity and global position, it should be looked at in a broader context. It is important to consider not only how the strategy contributes to economic competitiveness, but how it can serve as a platform for addressing a wide range of Canada's foreign policy objectives, including fostering capacity building in developing countries and strengthening people-to-people linkages that will carry our relationships forward in all domains. (CBIE Annual Report, p2)

In this sense, foreign policy initiatives are connected directly to the nation building dimensions of international education and form a significant component of Canada's projection of its own identity.

A significant challenge in the Canadian context is the devolved responsibility for education, as well as many elements of immigration and labour force development. With the origins of this complex relationship in the 1867 British North America Act which established Canada as a federal state, education remains the responsibility of each provincial government. There is no national education strategy or government ministry to coordinate clear policy. Indeed, one of the operational challenges of the past decade has been to sustain federal initiatives or dovetail them with provincial government priorities. (Interestingly, there is a national strategy on health care, despite variations by province, as well as several other aspects of social programming, captured in a series of federal-provincial financial transfers that form the basis of the various forms of the Canada Health and Social Transfer that seeks to equalize opportunities and access for service across the country between provincial medicare systems.)

Add to this mix the variety of priorities for labour force growth, immigration policy, and natural resource economies, and it is clear that approaches to internationalization policy must serve multiple agendas. Of course, responsibility for foreign policy remains with the Canadian federal government – but the extent to which international education and student mobility figure within this is by no means consistent across the country. Attempting to cope with this patchwork is a variety of non-governmental agents, ranging from universities to lobby groups, from student organisations to immigrant resettlement agencies to industry.

### **Phasic or Cyclical? The Inside-outside Polyvalence of Higher Education**

The polyvalent potential of education has yet to be either fully, or formally recognized in the practice of diplomacy. As Gabriel Zinny explains in relations to US-Latin American relations:

the bilateral agenda has not moved far from historic issues such as citizen and border security, democracy building and human rights, and trade. Even though education underlies almost every issue on the list, the formulation of educational programs and goals has been more an exception than the rule in foreign policy agreements (2015).

Yet, as illustrated, when operating as a form of foreign policy, higher education has the capacity to broker ‘compromises on an issue where both have complementary interests and remarkable challenges in the longer term’, including kick-starting serious and sustained exchanges (Zinny 2015). Balancing instrumental, post-economic crises requirements to stimulate competitiveness and innovation with cross-cultural horizon-enlightening cultural goals, educational structures can clearly project the power of a given nation’s global viewpoint, and underwrite the knowledge and insight needed in future leaders and innovators.



The question is whether this is a phasic, internal-external process, or a more cyclical and reciprocal programme, in which non-nationals are not only influenced by coming into contact with individuals and goals of a given political entity like America or the US in a way that impacts their home country, but consciously drawn back to the host state to boost it at 'source'. Is education designed merely to stimulate the ability of a foreign policy to impact and influence abroad while remaining competitive at home? If so, it needs merely to attract, educate and return international students. If however, education is a more thorough-going aspect of education, in terms of genuinely representing key foreign policy interests, and doing so in a way that not only goes beyond numbers and norms, but is designed reach out, and retain talent, then it is not only cross-cultural but a clearer indication of the longer-term soft power interest of a given state.

For the former, the variable is a quantitative one: what value do international students bring in, contribute to the overall state, and how much are they effectively 'worth' abroad as enlightened students operating as microcosms of the foreign policy of their host-state in their home country? This may sound rather calculating, but the numbers do tend to speak for themselves, at least in North America. The 886,000 international students studying in America as of 2014 is currently 'at a record high', as are the 290,000 US students abroad.<sup>3</sup> Further, 'the economic contribution of international students in the US has also increased from \$24 billion (2012) to \$26.8 billion (2013)' (Zinny 2015).<sup>4</sup>

For the latter, education designed to reach, teach, and retain. In other words, how closely is the state aligned with its education policy? As examined in the case studies below, the EU is steadily tying in key policy areas including education with its foreign policy, but is doing so in an emphatically inside-out method: teaching and training its own via internal mobility, and ensuring that key education provisions are steadily added to more and more foreign policy tools. Europeans are being internationalized but the international component is not yet being drawn in with a view to permanently retaining it within Europe.

In terms of our own research question, are Erasmus students from non-EU states educated with the goal of returning and enlightening their home state? Or are international students encouraged to remain in the US, in Canada to contribute to the overall indigenous talent pool? This duality is put clearly in the 2011 CBIE report, although not necessarily with any sense of how to implement it practically, or balance it evenly for the sake of enhanced foreign policy clout. For Canada, as for

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<sup>3</sup> Institute of International Education, *Open Doors*, 2014, cited in Zinny 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Citing NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Subsequent investigations will look into the impact of the private sector in underwriting the role of higher education in foreign policy, but suffice to say that a number of private companies and corporate foundations, operating independently and in tandem with institutions (though less so governments) clearly operate 'to build capacity that increases study abroad' opportunities to national and non-nationals alike (Zinny 2015).

many other polities, enhanced internationalization of higher education provides two (in some sense oppositional) opportunities:

- to attract students who will then **stay in Canada** as new, skilled, intelligent, and hard-working immigrants, and who will adapt and acclimatize quickly because part of their education is here. Hence, to enhance the talent pool and help to fill the labour force gap caused by the declining domestic youth population.... (CBIE, 2011, 3).

The implicit foreign policy goal here is to reach abroad, by virtue of an internationalized education structure, bring talent back to Canada, and keep it there. However, a stronger example of education ultimately working within, and for Canadian foreign policy:

- To attract students who will return home (or go to a third country) often to be among the future leaders and entrepreneurs of the country in which they settle, who will understand Canadian culture and values, and have ongoing links or affinity to Canada. These graduates yield reputational political and trade benefits for Canada in the future, as well as creating a form of 'soft power' (CBIE, 2011, 3).

The ambition here is both explicit, but divided along a reciprocal structure that is as yet unclear, and devolved from a loose sense of agencies with no centralized, or clear ownership. The goal is laudable,: 'to gain new Canadian-educated Canadian citizens who know the history, language, culture, views, concerns and politics of other countries or regions, whether for trade or other aspects of national interests and security' (ibid). The methodology however is still unsure. Do these students remain in Canada to instantiate the state's economic prosperity? Or do they help underwrite Canadian soft power abroad by acting as host-schooled ambassadors (temporarily) sympathetic to the cultural views, and possibly (permanently) supportive of the political ambitions of Canada?

#### **4. Conclusions: Comparing the role of education as a foreign policy external multiplier**

Does this smack of policy faddishness? Tackling a relatively contentious policy like illiteracy, broadening it to lessen bureaucratic incompatibilities of undertaking inter-state scholarship, and lessening disparities of content? Suggest that education alone carries the burden as being 'the single best investment we can make to end strife between and within nations'? While discerning the precise method by which education operates as lite, mid-range or substantive in transforming the foreign policy of a given state or non-state actor is tough to ascertain, the actual capacity of education for genuine and permanent change in the collective mindset of, or between societies is undeniable. Education on its own is an ideational vehicle par excellence; within foreign policy it operates as a catalyst for the outlook and

expectations of a given state, fostering limited cooperation, or deep collaboration on precisely the same terms, and for the same reasons that it operates strategically and economically.

Education is the third, cultural counterpart of national interests, promoting a three-way division between demands for political and military stability, financial security and socio-cultural coherence. To critics who suggest that education is not only an easy-win, but rhetorical rather than substantive in terms of content and impact, we would point to the political tsunami that followed the shooting in the Swat Valley by Pakistan-based Taliban of young Malala Yousafzai, in 2012. Freedom of speech, but particularly the provision of education by successful and failing states to all its youth, rocketed to the top of the international agenda. Education became in some sense deeply politicized, with its undercurrents of human rights pitched against the repressive and fundamentalist perspectives of the Taliban, and associated proto-Al Qaeda offshoots, transformed into the contemporary frontier of human rights. More significantly however, the sheer power of education was seized upon, not because it *is* a right, but because it enables one to *understand* rights, and the very real sparseness of their supposed ubiquity. Awareness and understanding, rather than the norm itself, was the true target of the Taliban; the role of foreign policy is therefore to strike a balance between national proclivities and international responsibilities in its use of education, reflecting its own, but also shaping other societies for the better by placing a premium on enlightenment.

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<sup>ii</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 91-92; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the*

<sup>iii</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 91-92; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>iv</sup> Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal and Hanna Schissler, "Introduction: Teaching beyond the National Narrative," in *The Nation, Europe, and the World*, ed. Hanna Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 1.

<sup>v</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 11-13.

<sup>vi</sup> David Coulby, "Warfare by Other Means: Unity and Fracture in European Education," in *Why Europe? Problems of Culture and Identity, Volume 2: Media, Film, Gender, Youth and Education*, ed. Joe Andrew, Malcolm Crook, Diana Holmes and Eva Kolinsky (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 246.

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- <sup>vi</sup> Richard Mole, "Discursive Identities/Identity Discourses and Political Power," in *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics*, ed. Richard C.M. Mole (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 5.
- <sup>vii</sup> Sassatelli, "Imagined Europe: The Shaping of a Cultural Identity through EU Cultural Policy," 436.
- <sup>viii</sup> Coulby, "Warfare by Other Means," 246.
- <sup>ix</sup> Nizar Messari, "Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Islam in U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, ed. Vendulka Kubáľková (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 228.
- <sup>x</sup> Parallel to this, there is an ongoing debate in the field of European integration studies in which those who believe in an inclusive EU identity ('Europe as a civilian power', 'Europe as a normative power', etc.) and those that argue that the EU identity is an exclusive one ('fortress Europe', the EU as a fortified market) form the two sides. For more information on these competing visions of 'Europe', see Bretherton and Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, 41-55. Also, for more information on Europe's various others, see Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the other*.
- <sup>xi</sup> Clive Church, "The Treaty of Amsterdam and European Political Identity," in *Outsiders or Insiders? Constructing Identities in an Integrating Europe*, ed. Maarit Leskelä (Turku: University of Turku, 1999), 173.
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