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Educational Internationalisation

Academic Voices and Public Policy

Jennifer Olson, Heidi Biseth
and Guillermo Ruiz (Eds.)



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Educational Internationalisation

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5. THE BOLOGNA POLICY FORUM

The Temptation to Act on Non-European Higher Education Systems

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the genesis of the *Bologna Policy Forum*, as a new global actor in coordinating the higher education policies worldwide. It attempts to understand the current role played by the Bologna Policy Forum in the field of global higher education policies, through the Foucauldian concept of *apparatus*¹ (Foucault, 1994). We argue that the “European higher education apparatus” (Croché, 2010), was created with the Bologna Process and controlled by the European Commission (EC), which seeks to impose it all over the world, has since 2009 reached its maximum effectiveness and has absorbed all that it could. Once it achieved the primary objectives, the apparatus progressively adopts new ones.

This chapter is divided into two sections and a conclusion. The first section presents the theoretical developments of the Foucauldian concept of apparatus. The second section presents and examines the creation of the Bologna Policy Forum, its invasive nature as a coordinating actor of the higher education policies. Three historical periods will be highlighted in order to show the characteristics of the new form of regional partnership in the field of higher education, promoted by the European Commission with the member States of the Bologna Process. The conclusion highlights, on the basis of empirical evidence presented, the European higher education apparatus’ capacity to place competitive actors into a “black box” (Callon & Latour, 1981).

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE FOUCAULDIAN CONCEPT OF APPARATUS

The literature focused on the transformation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), under the Bologna Process, is embodied in several types of research that adopt different approaches. On the one hand, as underlined by Legendre (2012) a significant part of the research takes a rather descriptive approach, by presenting the evolution of European national educational frameworks during the last two decades. On the other hand, as showed by Ravinet (2009) and Charlier (2009), another part of the research (Mussejin, 2003; Fave-Bonnet, 2007; Paradeise, 2009; etc.) tries to understand the translation process of the European norms, in the field of higher

education, into the national frameworks but without making in-depth analyses on the genesis of the Bologna process, the development of an ideological vision underlying this process, or the actors' dynamics.

Nevertheless, at different levels of analysis, a large series of studies have focused on the Bologna Process' genesis, as well as on its actors' dynamics. Firstly, by trying to understand the changes in European national higher education frameworks, following the Bologna process, some researchers (Powell, Bernhard, & Graf, 2012; Musselin, 2008; Ravinet, 2007, 2009; Normand, 2007; Muller & Ravinet, 2008, etc.) went beyond the descriptive level and mobilised the neo-institutionalist approach. Secondly, other researchers mobilised the "Europeanisation" approach (Corbett, 2005; Lijens, 2005; Antunes, 2006; Dale & Robertson, 2009; Goastellec, 2012; Moutisios, 2013). The influence of the Europeanisation process on European higher educational systems is also analysed by researchers (Derouet & Normand, 2007) who adopt more critical approaches inspired by Boltanski's critical sociology (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991; Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999). Thirdly, discursive approaches (linguistic and textual) were also mobilized to deeply understand the Bologna Process (Saarinen, 2009; Goastellec, 2012). Fourthly, focused on actors' motivation, some analyses (Ravinet, 2011) used the approach by instruments of Lascaumes and Le Galès (2004), in order to understand "the structuring and instrumentation of the Bologna Process" (Ravinet, 2011, p. 43). Other researchers (Croché, 2010; Charlier & Croché, 2012; Charlier & Croché, 2013) tried to understand the evolutions of the European higher education system, through the concept of "apparatus" (Foucault, 1994). The specific focus of these studies is on how the Bologna Process was well implemented in Europe and how it spread in Africa and Latin America. However, none of these studies have analyzed the fact that the Bologna Process became increasingly hegemonic, to such an extent that it got in competition with UNESCO.

Activation, Strategic Function, Autonomy

Understanding the evolutions of the European higher education system, through the concept of apparatus, is a theoretical opportunity to go beyond Foucault's well-known quote, as well as its criticisms. In the perspective of Foucault (1994, p. 299) the apparatus is

a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. [...] I understand by the term 'apparatus' a sort of [...] a formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that

of responding to an urgent need. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function.²

This quote clearly underlines three key points that define the apparatus. Firstly, it is a heterogeneous ensemble of elements. Secondly, the apparatus is the established network between these elements. Thirdly, these elements have a dominant strategic function.

Subsequent theoretical and empirical research on the Foucauldian concept of apparatus (Charlier & Croché, 2013, 2012) show that in order to exist, the heterogeneous network of elements has to be activated by an actor, at a specific time and in a specific place. The apparatus is activated to meet a strategic purpose. Yet, this does not imply that its effects are spontaneous. Furthermore, once activated the apparatus could contribute to orient representations and behavior of a well-targeted population. For instance, the connection of previous heterogeneous elements contributed to activate the "European higher education apparatus" in 1998, during the reunion at Sorbonne (Croché, 2010). Under the leadership of the French minister of national education, Claude Allègre, a joint project of the ministers of Germany, Italy, France and United-Kingdom was announced. The project's purpose was to "harmonize the architecture of the European higher education system" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998).

The various elements associated are in fact the outcomes of previous efforts undertaken by different national or regional stakeholders in order to increase the competitiveness of national higher educational systems. Firstly, the previous advances achieved by the Council of Europe and UNESCO in the field of foreign diplomas' recognition paved the way for the emergence of the "European higher education apparatus". The "European higher education apparatus" will be here defined as the network established after 1998, between the European higher education systems, and the programs, instruments and initiatives that structured the landscape of higher education previously, to which one assigns specific and political objectives (Croché, 2009, 2010).

Among the initiatives that composes the apparatus, there may be included the Magna Charta Universitatum, signed in 1988 in Bologna at the initiative of the European Union Rectors, where the rectors exposed to public authorities their vision on how they could compete internationally. The structure of rectors' associations evolved over time, by being closely associated to the Bologna Process, and the European University Association (EUA). Other elements are the positions adopted by industry, anxious that the future evolution of higher education responds also in its favor (Croché, 2010). One of the initiatives taken in order to meet industry's needs is the European Round Table of Industrials, which in its report "Education for Europeans. Towards the learning society" from 1994, expressed what the patronage expected of education. The influence of American debates on higher education's orientation, with the choice to focus this orientation on elite formation, cannot

be overlook in terms of consequences on the reflection in Europe. Besides these institutional stakeholders, families had also an important role through their positive response to the support for students' mobility (Croché, 2010).

Consequently, the activation of this apparatus implies not only the connection of different pre-existing elements, but also the association of different institutional stakeholders. The use of the concept of "black box" as conceptualized by Callon and Latour (1981) could help us understand this association. This concept refers to an actor who

grows with the number of relations he or she can put, as we say, in black boxes.

A black box contains that which no longer needs to be considered, those things whose contents have become a matter of indifference. (Callon & Latour, 1981, p. 285)

More specifically, an accord is reached between the actor, who will become the macro-actor, and the micro-actors, who agreed to have their interests carried by the macro-actor.³ The description of the power issues in terms of "setting in black boxes" can be operated each time the concept of apparatus is used. Even if the concepts of "setting in black boxes" and "apparatus" are related to different theoretical systems, their use can be complementary. However, this conceptualisation in terms of "setting in black boxes" does not imply the same use for each case of study. It must be done according to the type of apparatus analysed. In an apparatus such as the Bologna Process, "setting in black boxes" firstly concerns agreements between concrete actors. Each candidate for the role of macro-actor tries to persuade the other candidates that the objectives he proposes and the mode of governance he advocates are more likely to serve the interests of all and every one of those who cooperates in the proper functioning of this apparatus. Moreover, the apparatus produces effects once strong symbols are connected to pragmatic realities and functional bodies. This also implies that the apparatus necessarily exceeds the actor who activated it. The logical links it established through speech or alliances are unanimously shared. Thanks to this unanimity, these logical links are no longer a controversial issue. Nevertheless, in all instances, initial created alliances between stakeholders can break off. This determines the reopening of the "black box" and the beginning of new bargaining processes.

The outcome of these bargaining processes and struggles between the actors involved can change the strategic function associated to the apparatus when it was activated. When referring to the outcome, it is the actor who will take control of the apparatus that will affect both the order within the network and its strategic function. Moreover, the apparatus' power lies on this same ability to "escape" his initiator. More concretely, the strategic function assigned by Claude Allègre to the European higher education apparatus through the Bologna Process, was to prevent a greater involvement of the European Commission in the national higher education systems. Not only, he failed in this sense to maintain the orientation of the apparatus, but he was also completely unable to lead the European system of higher education

in this direction. The European Commission enforced as a pilot⁴ of the Bologna Process at the end of a process where States' partners and close agency actors were put into a "black box". The EC's intervention in the national educational systems took place through quality control prescriptions that were voluntary assimilated by State partners. This assimilation legitimised the apparatus and once legitimised its prescriptions become restraints.

The apparatus does not belong nor obey anyone. It includes constraints for the heterogeneous elements, which compose it. These constraints, as well as the orientations of the apparatus are constantly refined through adjustments within the network. The apparatus orients the manner in which these adjustments are realized, as much as this manner orients the apparatus. Only the situations for which the apparatus provides solutions are identified as problems requiring its practical solutions. If the scale of practical modalities used to implement solutions can be broad, the scale of their orientations remains particularly narrow. By orienting actors' behavior and representations, the apparatus prevents that actors undermine the orientations it proposes.

Apparatus' Boundaries

Several criticisms surrounding the use of the Foucauldian concept of apparatus were expressed during the last decades. A first criticism concerns the contemporary uses of the concept of apparatus. At first sight, it is used without caution in the scientific vocabulary, as well as in the administrative vocabulary. The meanings that are attributed to this concept are far from being standardised⁵ (tool, technical means, etc.). We can consider that the ambiguity that surrounds its use is an expression of a particular conception over public policies and public action. More concretely, we find ourselves confronted with a reality in which nothing is taken for granted: every means used by the public action must be justified and its efficiency lies in its connection with other means. Applying here the concept of apparatus and its network representation underlines the presence of "a more subtle apparatus of control of the society, a network which links are strengthened by the power on our daily life" (Couzens Hoy, 1989, p. 157). While some network links are strengthened, other links are loosened. The strengthened links bring closer, in a coherent and functionalist manner, some of the network's elements. While bringing closer some elements, at the expense of others, the apparatus gets a new orientation, without changing its structure. Following Foucault, who rejects the anthropological and essentialized manner of conceiving the individual,⁶ we argue that this apparatus is the *apparatus for the production of the man*, which at certain times will focus on very specific issues, such as higher education, the social and solidarity economy, gender, children's rights, etc. Thus, the apparatus will produce thorough effects, by orienting actors' behavior in the field or in the society where it intervenes.

Each network's element is related to all the other elements and cannot be separated, which means that it is impossible to isolate it from the effects of other

elements. Each element has to be legitimised, because no element has a transcendent legitimacy. Justifications take the form of texts or principles governing actors' practices. Linked to a particular space and time, these justifications are established in each of the networks' nodes. Nevertheless, this does not prevent their movement between the network's nodes.

A second criticism relates to the operationalization of the concept of apparatus. First of all, this concept is a heuristic one, which belongs to philosophy. Consequently, it is not accompanied by indicators such as the sociological or the political science's concepts. Instead of defining the object, the concept of apparatus suggests it, which enables the researcher to open a field research. The researcher is confronted by explanatory hypotheses and recommendations resulting from Foucault's studies on different historical periods. In this way, the researcher is encouraged to develop operational tools given that he stands before a theoretical system that is not fully stabilised.⁶

CREATION OF THE BOLOGNA POLICY FORUM

The initiators of the Bologna Process were not immediately interested in the external dimension of the process. In the following lines, through a sociological analysis we present the orientation of the European higher education apparatus towards an external dimension. Charlier and Croché (2012) identified mainly three periods during which the relationship between the European area and the rest of the world was defined.

First Period: 1998–2001: Self-Congratulation

Between 1998 and 2001, the initiators of the Bologna Process were primarily interested in harmonising the European higher education systems. By this time, the main idea that guided the initiators was to reform the national systems and to strengthen the student mobility across Europe (Charlier & Croché, 2012). The Sorbonne Declaration from 1998 points out clearly this by referring to the historical origins and evolution of higher education systems as being linked to Europe: "Universities were born in Europe, some three-quarters of a millennium ago. Our four countries boast some of the oldest" (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998: 1). The perspective is resolutely eurocentric given that the actors gathered at Sorbonne emphasized the need

to engage in the endeavor to create a European area of higher education, [...] for the benefit of Europe, of its students, and more generally of its citizens. We call on other Member States of the Union and other European countries to join us in this objective and on all European Universities to consolidate Europe's standing in the world through continuously improved and updated education for its citizens. (Ibid.: 3)

This call, which closed the declaration, is unambiguous. It points out indeed the will to bring European countries together for the benefit of European students and citizens.

At the Bologna summit in 1999, the vision is just as Eurocentric as it was in 1998. At this summit, the interest of the partners to enhance European higher education systems' competitiveness compared to other regions was particularly expressed (Charlier & Croché, 2012). In spite of this, the idea to export the Bologna model has not been clearly advanced

We must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilization can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions. (Bologna Declaration, 1999: 2)

The 2001 summit was the one where the reorientation of the Bologna Process started. A piloting group was set up:

The follow-up group should be composed of representatives of all signatories, new participants and the European Commission, and should be chaired by the EU Presidency at the time. (Prague Communiqué, 2001: 4)

The European Commission is part of it, which then allowed it to gradually impose its imprint, particularly since it comes in with organisations it supports financially and very close to it.

The summit's Declaration shows the discrete interest of ministers of higher education of the European countries for the rest of the world: "Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world" (Prague Communiqué, 2001: 3). This phrase suggests the opening of the Bologna Process to the rest of the world without daring to display it with too much pride. The target that is explicitly put forward remains composed by European students: the Bologna Process has barely begun, at this moment, to stabilize. The fragile balance should not be compromised. A very explicit reference is made to the other parts of the world, but it is not associated in any way to a political project.

The Prague Declaration from 2001 finally announced that the Bologna Process could not be open to all countries. Nevertheless, it does that in a very allusive manner:

Ministers welcomed new members to join the Bologna Process after applications from Ministers representing countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open. (Ibid., p. 4)

This sentence suggests that the Bologna Process would only be available to countries that benefit from the Socrates, the Leonardo da Vinci and the Tempus-Cards

programmes. The interview with key witnesses confirms that this was the position of the drivers of the process and their advisors. In spite of this, they have not been able to maintain their position at the request of the Council of Europe to open much more widely the access to the process.

Second Period: 2001–2009: Attempt to Attract Students from Around the World

Although early warning signs can be easily detected in the Prague Communiqué, the change appeared explicitly only from the Berlin Summit in 2003. The final Communiqué of the summit shows a real interest for the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process.

Since the Berlin summit in 2003, a change marked the evolution of the Bologna Process by focusing on its “external dimension”. On the one hand, the objective of putting the Bologna Process in Europe’s service was recalled. In this respect, in Berlin the conclusions of previous European Councils have been reaffirmed:

Ministers take into due consideration the conclusions of the European Councils in Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002) aimed at making Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” and calling for further action and closer co-operation in the context of the Bologna Process. (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 2)

On the other hand, the interest for others regions was pointed out.

Ministers welcome the interest shown by other regions of the world in the development of the European Higher Education Area, and welcome in particular the presence of representatives from European countries not yet part to the Bologna Process as well as from the Follow-up Committee of the European Union, Latin America and Caribbean (EULAC) Common Space for Higher Education as guests at this conference. (Ibid., p. 2)

Signs of change were much more noticeable in Bergen in 2005. At this summit, the focus was not one of boasting the European model, but one of inviting other regions of the world to a dialogue.

The European Higher Education Area must be open and should be attractive to other parts of the world. [...] We see the European Higher Education Area as a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions. We underline the importance of intercultural understanding and respect. (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p. 4–5)

Finally, the conference in London in 2007 marks the end of the triumphalism’s cycle. On the one hand, the final statement resumed the idea of the “rich and diverse

European cultural heritage”, but the purpose is much more modest than in 1999 (London Communiqué, 2007). It is explicitly acknowledged that environmental pressures will force European higher education systems to further evolve.

Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA [...] that will [...] strengthen Europe’s attractiveness and competitiveness. As we look ahead, we recognize that, in a changing world, there will be a continuing need to adapt our higher education systems, to ensure that the EHEA remains competitive and can respond effectively to the challenges of globalisation. (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 1)

On the other hand, the rest of the world is now treated with the highest respect.

We are pleased that in many parts of the world, the Bologna reforms have created considerable interest and stimulated discussion between European and international partners on a range of issues. (Ibid., p. 5)

A policy relative to the rest of the world is finally implemented.

We adopt the strategy “The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting” and will take forward work in the core policy areas: improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA; strengthening cooperation based on partnership; intensifying policy dialogue; and improving recognition. This work ought to be seen in relation to the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. (Ibid., p. 5)

From an Apparatus Focused on Europe to an Apparatus Opened to the World

The changes observed in a few years are very significant. We used here only extracts outlining the greatness of Europe and its vision of its own relationship with the rest of the world. Changes just as sensitive can also be identified on many other topics. The analysis of this evolution can be done by using the concept of apparatus.

During the first period of time going from 1998 to 2001, severe struggles took place in order to take control of the “European higher education apparatus”. The minister Allegre wanted to take control of the apparatus by allying with the ministers of education in the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy. He was convinced that he could impose his vision on higher education throughout Europe because the four signatory countries at Sorbonne accounted for more than 50% of European students and had some of the oldest and most prestigious universities of education on the old continent. By selecting its partners, Allegre thought he could maintain control of what became the Bologna Process (Croché, 2009). However, he was immediately outflanked by the countries he had not asked to co-sign the Sorbonne Declaration. Some of them have very badly accepted his attempt to take control of

the orientations of European higher education. Without fully realising it, and even if he hoped to be the architect of a major reform of European higher education, he activated an apparatus that escaped him immediately. The symbols he mobilised in the Sorbonne Declaration, including the European roots of the university, alerted multiple actors he had rejected through his arguments and have strengthened their legitimacy to intervene in the debate. Those that were held away from the process, in particular the European Commission and all the countries he did not invite to sign the Declaration at Sorbonne, acted on the apparatus. This contributed to the evolution of the process.

The rescue of the process, after the meeting in Sorbonne and the strong tensions it provoked among the four signatory countries and other European countries, was ensured by the EC. The EC increased the mediations between countries and relied on international associations of university rectors, heads of higher schools and students, in order to consolidate its influence and establish its legitimacy. However, the Commission's task was not easy. It had to persuade countries to admit interventions, while education was not in its official mandate. It had to set aside other rivals in piloting the Bologna Process, including the Council of Europe.

The early years of the Bologna Process have been marked by hesitations. The "European higher education apparatus" has been activated since the meeting in Sorbonne. This means that the idea of better coordinating the European national systems of higher education in order to increase their attractiveness has not been challenged since. The way in which this project was going to be realised has been the subject of debates and struggles. These debates and struggles have strengthened the apparatus. Since debates focus only on how to implement the project and not on the project itself, they reinforce it by giving it a status of undisputed evidence.

The early history of an apparatus is the one of passage from a loose networking to a tight networking. When the apparatus is activated, links are established between multiple heterogeneous elements. These links gradually become functional, as issues arise and need to find practical solutions. For example, the criteria that countries must follow in order to join the Bologna Process were not defined until Australia wished to join it and its application was discussed at the Berlin Summit in 2003. Previously, the European Commission had hoped to reserve the Bologna Process only to member countries of the European Union. The accession of Switzerland in 1999 had prevented it to impose this restriction.

Hence the question whether the process should be opened to the entire world. The option could have been taken into account, even if it was contrary to the spirit of the Sorbonne. This was not the case, and the access to the piloting authorities of the Bologna Process has been reserved for countries within a given geographical area and participating in the same socio-political project.

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the

same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration. (Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 8)

This definition of the eligible countries adopted in Berlin in 2003 concerned only the Bologna Process. Moreover, it had also a direct impact on the European system of higher education: from Berlin, no one has ever challenged this definition. The passage of a loose networking to a tight one reflects the action of all the constituent elements of the apparatus.

On the one hand, the apparatus requires coordinating the action of many actors. This implies the development of conventions, or binding rules. The first rule concerned the conditions of access to the coordinated action. In this case, countries that were the original members of the Bologna Process' piloting group could not accept that any other country invites itself into their inner circle. They could have run the risk of having the orientation of their previously established agenda changed. Another more symbolical reason also played an important role: belonging to a group gives a distinction to the person who benefits from it only if it is attributed at the end of selective tests. Installing a piloting group meant therefore encouraging those who had been designated as full members (those who agreed to respond to the invitation to meet in Bologna in 1999), to establish criteria which should follow those who wish to join them. The passage of a loose network to a tight network is largely the effect of the actors' action, but also instruments' action. For example, the Erasmus program, launched in 1986, showed the benefits of exchanges during studies even if it touched only a small proportion of European young people who graduate since then.

During the early years of the apparatus, from 1998 to 2001, instruments are put in place, decisions are taken to make it more constraining. The European Commission joined the piloting group of the Bologna Process in 2001 and imposed its leadership. The Declaration's tone of the 1999 and 2001 summits do not significantly differ from the one of the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998. It was not yet clear that the Bologna Process would succeed. It had to attract as many countries as possible to join it. In this perspective, breaking with the Eurocentric discourse implied taking an unnecessary risk. From 2003 onwards binding measures started to be taken and the Bologna Process' drivers started to become interested to the rest of the world. The two elements fit perfectly together. The first strategic objective of the European higher education apparatus, for which it has been activated, is the creation of the European Higher Education Area. From 2003 or 2005, it becomes clear that this objective will be achieved. The initial schedule was not met, many resistances appeared. Some countries did not really play the game as well as the drivers of the process would have liked. Nevertheless, the EHEA became a reality.

Third Period: 2009–2013: The Bologna Policy Forum – A New Form of Partnership

The key moment in the evolution of the “external dimension” of the Bologna Process was the Forum in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009. A debate on the development of future partnerships within the Bologna Process occurred in Louvain with 46 member countries of the EHEA (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). They decided to set up a space for dialogue with the countries of other continents with which they wanted to collaborate. They created the Bologna Policy Forum, which federated the 46 Bologna countries and the countries from all the world areas (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Tunisia, and USA). This list shows that African countries with which Europe has long-standing ties, often built on colonization, were only minimally present. It highlights that only the countries with high potential for economic development, which is now in process of achieving, were selected as partners. The International Association of Universities (IAU) and other non-governmental and international organisations took part in the debate on sustainable worldwide cooperation in higher education. The statement following the forum highlighted the importance that this event, because it “has laid the ground for sustainable cooperation in the future” in the field of higher education (ibid., p. 1). Moreover, the discourse held emphasized “the key role that higher education plays in the development of our societies based on lifelong learning for all and equitable access at all levels of society to learning opportunities” (ibid.).

This discourse addresses the same concerns advanced in the same year in Paris by the participants of the World Conference on Higher Education organized by UNESCO. The conference focused on “The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development”. The main working axes considered were higher education as social responsibility: 1) access, equity and quality; 2) internationalization, regionalization and globalization; 3) learning, research and innovation; 4) higher education in Africa; 5) call to action. Member States; 6) call to action: UNESCO⁷ (Paris Statement, 2009). The main message addressed during this Conference and retained in the Paris Statement is that “Education as a public good and a strategic imperative for education at all levels and as a basis for research, innovation and creativity, is the responsibility of all governments and should benefit from economic support” (ibid., p. 2).

In addition, the same concern to improve the access to higher education is present in its dimension of equity. The difference between the Forum’s Statement and the UNESCO’s Statement is the specific orientation given in Paris to higher education in Africa, but also to the role played by UNESCO. The many challenges faced by higher education in Africa are emphasized, as well as the role that UNESCO will play in

the implementation of a quality assurance mechanism at the regional level. [...] In this respect, we recommend the accelerated implementation of the initiative

of the Association of Universities with the support of UNESCO, which will facilitate the creation of quality assurance systems at national, sub-regional and regional levels. (ibid., p. 7)

A second Bologna Policy Forum took place in Vienna in March 2010, where the EHEA was officially launched (Budapest/Vienna Declaration, 2010). The working axis of the conference that took place in Vienna was “Building the Global Knowledge Society: Systemic and Institutional Change in Higher Education”. This second Forum gathered the 61 countries of the first Forum with other countries (South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Ghana, Malaysia, Mali, Philippines, Senegal and Thailand). In Vienna, the Forum was institutionalised: each country is encouraged to name a personal point of contact and to make known her name with the secretariat of the Bologna Process. The choice of the Bologna secretariat for coordination shows the will to install a piloting of the Forum by a structure directed by only Bologna countries and European organisations. The Vienna declaration refers to initiatives of the European actors (OECD, European Union) but not to UNESCO’s 2009 world conference.

The third meeting of the Forum, in 2012 in Bucharest welcomed 16 new non-European countries. The actors decided to hold 11 seminars on the cooperation between Europe and the other continents, which were organised by an European actor in collaboration with non-European corporatist organisations (American Organisation for Higher Education, Association of African Universities, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, ASEAN University Network, Association of Universities “Group Montevideo”). The list of partners shows that the European actors intended to work with the regional university associations of each continent.

They put UNESCO into a “black box”. Controlled by Europe, the Forum appears as a macro-actor that managed to attract actors that it intends to translate the projects so that they can serve European interests. The objective of the Forum is the same as that of UNESCO nearly 50 years after it began connecting higher education systems all over the world. But, even if the actors of the Forum make reference to democracy and the protection of the human rights, the objectives dear to the UNESCO, these objectives are secondary to placing teaching at the service of the economy as projected in the European strategies. The Forum aims to increase the comprehension of the European Higher Education Area and to encourage exchanges between the EHEA and other parts of the world.

The text adopted during the Forum shows that the European actors will continue the project initially worked out within the Bologna Process to coordinate the initiatives of worldwide actors who have worked in the field of higher education and to inter-connect them. Furthermore, the Statement of the third Bologna Policy Forum emphasised the same relationship, between higher education and sustainable development, advanced in 2009 by UNESCO’s Statement in Paris. Nonetheless the participants manifest a strong interest in the relationship of higher education as a solution for the economic crisis (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012).

CONCLUSION

One of the interpretations concerning the creation and the evolution of the Bologna Policy Forum, as a new global actor in coordinating the higher education policies, can be done by going beyond Foucault's well-known quote of the "apparatus", as well as its criticisms. By evaluating the changes of the "European higher education apparatus", from its European dimension to its "external dimension", questions related to power issues and actors' roles emerge. We used in a complementary manner two concepts belonging to two different theoretical systems: "setting in black boxes" and "apparatus".

The Bologna Policy Forum, as a form of new partnership in the field of global higher education policies, is an occasion used by the Bologna countries and European organisations to export the "European higher education apparatus" outside Europe. Without disregarding UNESCO's major role in the field of coordinating education at the global level, this analysis showed that the Bologna Policy Forum began to take over some of the missions traditionally covered by UNESCO. This process was possible through a renewed conception by the Bologna countries of their relationship with the rest of the world in the field of higher education. They shifted from an Eurocentric speech to an invitation of non-European and selected countries to join them in order to establish cooperation agreements through intergovernmental cooperation controlled at the beginning by Europe.

The declarations of the three Bologna Policy Forums reveal that the initiatives of UNESCO are not central to the discussions. UNESCO is focused on development assistance, fair cooperation, education for all, etc., whereas through their Forum European actors aim to put European higher education under optimal conditions, which will enable them to develop a leading role over countries in other continents. The two categories of objectives (European and UNESCO) can only cohabit with difficulty. Today, UNESCO seems to have been placed into a "black box" by an intergovernmental coordination oriented towards objectives related to European economic competitiveness. With their collaboration within the Forum, powerful countries from all over the world showed that they wanted to make agreements through intergovernmental cooperation, rather than having them organised under the aegis of UNESCO. This raises some difficulties due to the particular role given to higher education in contemporary societies. It is the instrument for the safeguarding and the enrichment of national cultures and competition within the globalised framework.

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NOTES

THE BOLOGNA POLICY FORUM

- We retain here the term of *apparatus* being aware of the debate surrounding its use. Jeffrey Bussolini (2010) shows the debate around the use of the Foucauldian concept of *dispositif* by opposing Graham Burchell, one main translator of Foucault's lecture courses, and Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben. Graham Burchell points out that the issue is situated at a translation level, as well as at a philosophical interpretation level. He states that it "does not seem to be a satisfactory English equivalent for the particular way in which Foucault uses this term to designate a configuration or arrangement of elements and forces, practices and discourses, power and knowledge, that is both strategic and technical" (Burchell, 2008: xxiii *apud* Bussolini, 2010: 86). See also Ploger (2008), Rabinow and Rose (2003), Dreifuss and Rabinow (1983).
- The translation belongs to Peltonen (2004, p. 213–214).
- When referred to "macro-actors" or "micro-actors", the indicator taken into account is not the actors' size as such, but the fact that actors' interests are in accordance with the position (vision) advanced by the macro-actor. See Callon and Latour (1981).
- The influence of the European Commission on the Bologna Process is not assessed in the same manner by the different researchers. In a mapping exercise of the research undertaken on the Bologna Process, Charlier (2009) highlights the various positions presented in the literature. By considering the resistance's ability of national institutions and the strength of the influence of the European Commission, Charlier (2009) identifies a number of studies that underline the weak ability of the EC to orient national behaviours (e.g., Musselini, 2003, 2005, 2009; Paradeise, 2009; Saarinen, 2009). In the same research, Charlier (2009) shows that whereas some analyses refute the EC's influence in orienting national policies, others (e.g., Dale, 2005; Bruno, 2006, 2008; Garcia, 2008; Croché, 2006, 2010) consider its significant influence. In this mapping exercise, Charlier (2009) underlines also that some analyses (e.g., Gorga, 2009) indicate that the national responses during the Bologna Process would have been orientated by a strategic behaviour. Seeking internal reforms, national institutions would have used the globalisation argument and therefore joined the Bologna Process (see Charlier, 2009: 115).
- Following Foucault, the individual is shaped through a process of "subject creation in the historical fabric" (Revel, 2002: 62), through techniques of "governmentality", born in the XVIII century (Foucault, 1994) and individual and collective innovation (Le Blanc, 2011).
- See also Ploger (2008). For Dreifuss and Rabinow (1983: 121), Foucault's concept must be primarily conceived as a "grid of intelligibility" which includes a method, as well as "the structure of the cultural practices" examined by Foucault. See also Brenner (1994).
- The Statement resumes recommendations for higher education directed both to the member States and to UNESCO. These recommendations for member States took the form of a call to action, where the vocabulary used by UNESCO includes action verbs like: "ensure", "establish", "develop", "promote", "guarantee", "continue", "struggle", and "develop". In the case of the call to action directed to UNESCO itself, a dynamic vocabulary is also used: "help", "propose", "strengthen" or "support".

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