
The Bologna Process: a tool for Europe's hegemonic project on Africa

JEAN-ÉMILE CHARLIER & SARAH CROCHÉ

*Faculty of Economics, Political, Social and Communication Sciences,
Université Catholique de Louvain – UCL Mons, Belgium*

ABSTRACT This article treats the Bologna Process as a tool that European countries used for their hegemonic project on Africa's higher education. It is based on a normative perspective in which it is proposed that the creation of the worldwide higher education area should be a place of knowledge circulation where all scientists can collaborate in a free and open way, and that the ultimate goal of science is to make the world a better, easier and more just place. This article attempts to explain how the Foucauldian concept of 'apparatus' can help us understand the attitude of the European countries with regard to the Bologna Process and why, since 2003, they have not associated African countries with the process despite establishing relationships with other world regions. The article will analyse the long-term disregard of Europe for Africa and will show how and why the attitude of the Bologna Process' actors (especially the European Commission and the European University Association [EUA]) towards Africa has been evolving since 2007. Finally, this article will explain why the 3-5-8 or Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) Bologna model's transfer in Africa does not give fair results today.

Regulation into the Worldwide Higher Education Area

It is difficult to analyse the evolution of higher education policies without normative references, and without a prerequisite definition of what should be the best system of regulation into the worldwide higher education area. The argument in this article follows that of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

One could consider the expression 'the worldwide higher education area' deliberately provocative, because this area is still under construction and it is uncertain whether it will ever fully exist. However, since the 1970s, UNESCO has been trying to build such an area. It did this initially by the adoption of six regional conventions on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees between countries from the same world region; and secondly by the organisation of two world higher education conferences in 1998 and 2009. Some passages of the communiqué adopted at the second conference can be highlighted because they express the position of UNESCO and highlight the social responsibility of higher education that this article supports:

higher education has the social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted issues, which involve social, economic, scientific and cultural dimensions and our ability to respond to them. It should lead society in generating global knowledge to address global challenges, inter alia food security, climate change, water management, intercultural dialogue, renewable energy and public health. (UNESCO, 2009, p. 2)

All the problems mentioned in the communiqué are global and concern all humanity. We can deduce from this that UNESCO's view is that higher education should be accountable to all humanity rather than to local communities or national authorities. The communiqué specifies that

'International cooperation in higher education should be based on solidarity and mutual respect and the promotion of humanistic values and intercultural dialogue' (UNESCO 2009, p. 4), and that:

institutions of higher education worldwide have a social responsibility to help bridge the development gap by increasing the transfer of knowledge across borders, especially towards developing countries, and working to find common solutions to foster brain circulation and alleviate the negative impact of brain drain. (UNESCO, 2009, p. 5)

This definition of the role of higher education seems to us to be the best, although it is obviously far removed from reality. Ideally, universities should not work for international competition; they should be challenged to resolve the biggest problems with which people and the planet are confronted. The worldwide higher education area should be a place of knowledge circulation where all scientists can collaborate in a free and open way. From this point of view, all the reforms that help to approach the UNESCO model can be evaluated positively, and all that detract from this model should be evaluated negatively.

The work of Michel Serres (1999), a French philosopher, is an important reference point in the reflection on the role of scientists (academics, researchers) and higher education. He proposed that scientists take the following oath:

I swear that, in whatever falls within my responsibility, I will never use my knowledge, my inventions and the applications that I might find for them, to promote destruction or death, to increase poverty and ignorance, to enslave people or to promote inequality, but instead to dedicate them to achieving equality between people, to help them live, to enhance their lives and make them more free. (Serres, 1999, p. 1)

Serres's position gets away from a very pessimistic analysis of universities and higher education policies. He notes that during the twentieth century, universities and science institutions played a role in many human and environmental disasters. Like other philosophers who have noted the failure of the collective institutions, Serres chooses to trust only individual ethics. In part, we subscribe to his conviction according to which scientists must imperatively evaluate the direct and indirect consequences of their work and must refuse to pursue it if they feel that it will lead to negative applications for people and nature. In part, we refuse to share Serres's pessimism about collective institutions, because these institutions must provide the direction of work at universities, and scientists must ensure that this direction is followed.

Today, as we will see in the second part of the article, the proposition below could appear Utopian. However, Utopias enable the world to evolve because they have the capacity to modify our world vision and our ideas about how we can impact the functioning of the world.

An Apparatus in Higher Education

Since the end of the 1990s, European higher education has known acceleration in the production of texts, reforms and initiatives. The changes concern ideas, institutional structures and pedagogic practices, and teaching content – for instance, UNESCO and the Council of Europe's international agreements to facilitate mobility inside and between world regions; texts from international organisations which present new definitions of the role and missions of higher education; the development and generalisation of new tools, such as the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) or the UCTS (Umap Credit Transfer System – in Asia) to facilitate comparisons between curricula, or the diploma supplement; the emergence of international performance measurement, such as the AHELO (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes) feasibility study project (2010-2011), a kind of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) for higher education also developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011); and, maybe more importantly, the universities rankings. The effects of these changes are: (1) the reforms follow one another at a sustained pace and affect all university practices; (2) a displacement of certain elements of the piloting of higher education from national level to supranational level is visible; (3) we see the increasing place occupied by managers in the conduct of the universities and the steady promotion of quality assurance.

To highlight the coherence of this set of texts, initiatives and reforms, the Foucauldian concept of 'apparatus' is helpful. An apparatus is a much more general case of the episteme and Foucault (1977) sees apparatus as:

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. ... The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. ... The nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. ... In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely. ... I understand ... a sort of – shall we say – 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. (p. 194; emphasis added)

This article returns to the work of Foucault, even if some scholars (see Agamben, 2009; Bussolini, 2010; Thierman, 2010) in public policy analysis and Foucauldian studies make an interesting reappropriation of Foucault's apparatus concept. Agamben (2009) is an important analyst of the apparatus concept, which for him is not a specific technique, strategy or exercise of power, but a complex network which links different strategies and techniques together. As Foucault (1977) says, the apparatus is the system of relations that can be established between all the heterogeneous elements that compose it. Thus, the relations between these elements give the sense of the apparatus and of all the elements that compose it. Every element is carried by strategic actors aiming at a precise objective. But these actors are forced to place their element, whatever its nature, in the existing apparatus. By being absorbed by the apparatus, every element modifies it and is modified by it at once. These modifications concern just as much the use made of each of these elements as the meaning which is given to it. Two examples in higher education help us to illustrate this: one deals with the use of these elements, the other with the meanings which are given to them.

The first example concerns the use of the elements. When the architecture of 3-5-8 study lengths was proposed by ministers within the framework of the Bologna Process [1], their objective was to standardise the duration of studies in European countries. This decision has led to an increase in the variety of the length of study cycles and we find in terms of years: 3 + 1, 3 + 1½, 3 + 2, 4 + 1, 4 + 1½, 4 + 2. This paradoxical result should not hide the fact that the great majority of study lengths have been standardised. These paradoxical effects have been produced by what we will later define as the European higher education apparatus. At the same time, this apparatus recognises the necessity of a curricular harmonisation at European level and supports the idea that states must stay sovereign in the matter of education.

The second example focuses on significations. The harmonisation of curricula has been presented to European populations as a necessary condition for student mobility within Europe, and it indubitably supported an increase in mobility. If we locate this in the apparatus, the harmonisation of the curricula must be viewed in relation to the Attali (1998) report, produced in 1998 on higher education in France, and to the German report *Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert* or *Higher Education for the twenty-first Century* (Bundesministerium für Bildung 1997), which insisted on the necessity of attracting more foreign students in their respective countries. Located in the apparatus, the harmonisation of the programmes appears as a means to strengthen the attractiveness of European higher education, especially in comparison with its great competitors.

We propose the idea that a European higher education apparatus appeared in 1998, with the launch of the Bologna Process (Croché, 2010). If we try to characterise this apparatus, we need to revisit policies from the 1950s. Between 1950 and 1998, different actors (states, the European Commission [2], European Council, OECD, UNESCO and EUA [European University Association]) took initiatives which led to ideas about higher education beyond state boundaries. It means that there were attempts to form an apparatus for several decades. By inviting three partner states of France – Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany – to the Sorbonne meeting, with the aim to 'harmonize the architecture of the European higher education system' (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998) via an intergovernmental cooperation, the French Minister Claude Allègre linked many heterogeneous elements to a new coherent whole, notably: (1) the discourses of

France and Germany on the loss of the appeal of higher education in their countries, and the proposals for checking it; (2) the texts of the Council of Europe and UNESCO to facilitate the recognition of diplomas; (3) the reports of the regional conferences organised by UNESCO from 1997 on higher education; (4) the programmes of the European Commission to support student mobility; (5) the Magna Charta Universitatum adopted by European universities in 1988; and (6) the debates in the United States on the main functions of higher education. Every element was elaborated by one or several actors to address specific problems and the actions were not concerted. Before 1998, there was no European higher education apparatus. The badly structured set of elements needed the central element able to give coherence to the whole. The Sorbonne meeting can be thus seen as the logical result of a long succession of strategic initiatives. It can be seen as a product of the apparatus which the Bologna process was trying to form. In the Sorbonne meeting, Allègre activated the 'European higher education apparatus', which he created by imposing a coherence on all the scattered elements which it comprised. This apparatus was not established independently of the rest of the world. It carries traces of the US debates, in particular the 'A Nation at Risk' (National Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983) report, which disputed affirmative action and considered higher education as an instrument of international competition.

From 1998 to 1999, there were attempts to aggregate elements pulled from the European tradition and from observing the functioning of US, Australian and New Zealand universities. From the European tradition, the essentially public financing, the free access or moderate cost of studies for students, the protection against political authorities and enterprises and public control exercised on the use of means but not on the obtaining of results was to be retained, and from the observation of US universities the autonomy of management, the logic of results production, the international appeal and the capacity to raise funds on the market was to be retained. The question was, and still is, how to reconcile these two. The European states entered into the Bologna Process in 1998, because they had the conviction that they controlled it and that they could withdraw from it at any time. Every country of Europe intended to use the process to resolve national issues. The technique has been known for a long time; it was analysed and theorised, in particular by Putnam (1998) with his two-level game theory, and it was often used during the European construction: it is easier to impose a measure at national level if it has been formulated at an international level.

However, things did not happen as expected; the European higher education apparatus produced unforeseen effects by the Sorbonne Declaration's signatories in 1998. This double reference to the European, and to what we can call the New Zealand model, created two competing principles. For Gorga (2010), these two logics were easy to spot in the Sorbonne Declaration. Under the direction of the European Commission, which has tried to control the Bologna Process since 1999 and to orient it in line with its higher education vision since 2001, the European higher education apparatus imposed a new higher education and research world vision (Croché, 2010). The general interest stopped being the nation's interest and became Europe's interest. In the same way, the legitimate competition is now the competition between Europe and its great competitors (the United States and Asia). To win the race, European states are encouraged to join forces. One essential moment of the apparatus's evolution was the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 (European Council, 2000), in which the European Union announced its aim for Europe to 'become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy in the world'. This strategy will be followed in 2010 by the Europe 2020 strategy with reduced objectives.

The Effects of the Bologna Process on Africa

The Current Situation of African Higher Education

In the Cybermetrics Lab (2008) ranking of July 2008, the University of Cape Town ranks first in Africa and 385th in the world. Eleven out of the 14 best-ranked universities in Africa are South African. The first 12 are either South African or Egyptian, English-speaking universities. The first French-speaking African university is the Cheikh Anta Diop University from Dakar (Senegal), the second is the Cadi Ayyad University from Marrakech (Morocco). They respectively rank two thousand, nine hundred and sixty-second and three thousand, nine hundred and sixty-first in the world. Africa has only one university in the top five hundred and five in the top thousand. This

poor performance [3] forces the best African students to leave for European and North American universities.

Furthermore, African students are increasingly numerous. In sub-Saharan Africa:

the enrolment grew at a rate of 8.6%, on average, for each year between 1970 and 2007 – compared to a global average of 4.6% over the same time period. The expansion in the region peaked with an annual growth rate reaching 10% between 2000 and 2005. ... Despite the rapid growth, only 6% of the tertiary education age cohort was enrolled in tertiary institutions in 2007, compared to the global average of 26%. (UIS Fact Sheet, 2009, p. 1)

The mobility request that African students address to European universities seems infinite. To present its 'Global Education Digest 2006: comparing education statistics across the world', UNESCO published a communiqué in which it asserted that 'African students are the most mobile in the world' (UNESCO, 2006, p. 1). Some years after, this claim cannot be contested. The statistics are spectacular: one sub-Saharan African student in 16, or 5.6% (5.8% in 2007 statistics) studies abroad, while only one North American student in 250 (0.4%) studies abroad.

The majority of these mobile African students leave their continent, mainly to go to Europe. This data shows the poor confidence the African students have in their universities. In this case, the African choice for the 3-5-8 study cycle has nothing in common with the choice Europe expressed for this higher education organisation. On the one hand, Europe aimed to reinforce the visibility and attractiveness of its higher education on the international scene. On the other hand, Europe wanted to endow graduates with a European consciousness by encouraging them to operate part of their programme studies in another country. These two founding objectives are not on the agenda of the African countries in their 3-5-8 adoption process. The essential means to organise intra-African student and staff mobility are not available and nothing indicates that they soon will be. However, while mobility funding in Europe is colossal, and the potential for European student mobility is enormous, the target of 20% of qualified students spending some time studying abroad by 2010 was not met. These assessments lead to the conclusion that the Bologna model's transfer to Africa misses an essential part of its original meaning in Europe. It is only possible to easily transfer norms and conventions to Africa which make sense in Europe, to facilitate student exchange and support the idea of a higher education integrated system.

Europe's Interest for the Other World Regions

One of the main objectives of the Bologna Process was to strengthen the attractiveness of European universities worldwide and to organise resistance against the growing influence of US universities. Each year, more and more researchers left European research centres to join US teams (Charlier & Croché, 2007). This objective of improving Europe's position in international competition and of attracting the best scientists was long overshadowed by honourable words on the mobility of European students within the European higher education area. In 2004, following the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, European authorities clarified their project:

One of the objectives of Community action in the field of education is to promote Europe as a whole as a world centre of excellence for studies and vocational training. Promoting the mobility of third-country nationals to the Community for the purpose of studies is a key factor in that strategy. (European Council, 2004, p. 12)

In October 2007, the European Commission President Barroso declared that:

labour migration into Europe boosts our competitiveness and therefore our economic growth. It also helps tackle demographic shortages resulting from our ageing population. This is particularly the case for highly skilled labour. (European Commission, 2007, p. 1)

Vice-President Franco Frattini (2007), the Commissioner responsible for Freedom, Security and Justice, stated that:

Europe's ability to attract highly skilled migrants is a measure of its international strength. We want Europe to become at least as attractive as favourite migration destinations such as Australia, Canada and the USA. We have to make highly skilled workers change their perception of Europe's labour market governed as they are by inconsistent admission procedures. Failing

this, Europe will continue to receive low-skilled and medium-skilled migrants only. (Frattoni, 2007, p. 1)

The objective was not to admit all foreign students into Europe. The initiators of the Bologna Process wanted to raise the flow of 'good' non-European students into European universities. Africa was not the prime target of this policy to exploit grey matter from the south. Their prime target was emerging countries, those whose economic growth was strong and offered a wealth of commercial, financial, and industrial opportunities – China, India, a part of Latin America are cases in point. At the same time, the European Commission launched other projects to attract the best brains in Europe. For instance, the Erasmus Mundus (former Erasmus World) programme, which launched in 2004 and was not open to African students initially (European Commission, 2002). The strategy is doubtlessly expansionist. The Bologna initiators did not mean to give up their influence in the world regions where they had a strong hold, as their recruitment strategies extended over all continents without any exception. They hoped that the relationships between European universities and those of ex-colonial countries guaranteed the transfer of the best African students to European universities in any case. The most strategic objective was to encourage a brain drain favourable to immigration countries.[4]

Several European countries wished to use the Bologna Process to reduce the proportion of Africans amongst foreign students. To understand this, we need to return once more to the European higher education apparatus. In this apparatus, there is now a fascination with the New Zealand model: foreign students with a good basic training pay to follow a quality education in universities they choose with critical consumer rationality. This New Zealand model came into conflict with the European: foreign students with basic training of variable quality are financed by the host country which chooses the orientations and the study cycles open to the foreign students. At this moment in time, the European countries have decided to look systematically at solvent students, which had never been a major preoccupation: the politics of democratisation of higher education were first conceived for less rich students. The debate on the kind of foreign student the states need to attract to their universities is only a part of a larger debate on the role that the universities must play in contemporary societies. At the same time universities are called to produce the elite and to give opportunities of social promotion to everyone. Several European countries, such as the United Kingdom, have continued to be interested in foreign or national students but only if they are wealthy or talented. Other countries, such as France or Belgium, remained preoccupied with having a university open to all, without financial considerations. Other countries, such as Germany, have difficult internal debates (see Croché, 2010).

	France	Germany	United Kingdom	Italy	USA	World
1998-1999	130,952	178,195	232,540	23,496	451,935	1,642,171
1999-2000	137,085	187,033	222,936	24,929	—	—
2000-2001	147,402	199,132	225,722	29,228	475,168	1,750,128
2001-2002	165,437	219,039	227,273	28,447	582,996	2,192,846
2002-2003	221,567	240,619	255,233	36,137	586,316	2,280,553
2003-2004	237,587	260,314	300,056	40,641	572,509	2,455,250
Difference 1998-2004	+81.4%	+46.1%	+29.0%	+73.0%	+26.7%	+49.5%
2006-2007	246,612	206,875	351,470	57,271	595,874	2,800,470
Difference 1998-2007	+88.3%	+16.1%	+51.1%	+143.7%	+31.8%	+70.5%
2007-2008	243,436	189,347	341,791	57,270	624,474	2,965,840
Difference 1998-2008	+85.9%	+6.3%	+47.0%	+143.7%	+38.1%	+90.6%

Table I. Evolution of the intake and proportion of foreign students (higher education) in some countries from 1998-1999 to 2003-2004 and from 1998-1999 to 2007-2008. Source: UNESCO statistics (2006, 2010, 2011).

Table I shows that the four initial countries that signed the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 – the starting point for the Bologna Process – have seen a much sharper increase in the number of foreign students than that of the USA. In this table, let us examine especially the differences between 1998 and 2004. The growth in the intake of foreign students varies widely among the four countries that signed the Sorbonne joint declaration. The lower performance of the United Kingdom (+29% compared to a 26.7% rise for the USA) is caused by high tuition fees. Therefore the poorer students turned away from British universities caused a clear but temporary decrease in the number of foreign students there. While the countries that initiated the Bologna Process (France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy) performed better than the USA, they did not manage to keep up with the pace of international growth; the total number of their foreign students amounted to 565,183 in 1998-1999 and reached 838,598 in 2003-2004. Between these two dates, the rise stood at 'only' 48.4% for the four signatory countries and at 49.5% for the rest of the world. Asia and Oceania have grown so fast that the rest of the world cannot keep up with these two regions.

If we examine the data for the academic year 2007-2008, we see that student mobility in the world has still increased (+90.6% compared to 1998-1999). The four countries that initiated Bologna, however, saw their incoming student mobility decreasing a little with regard to 2006-2007, even if it is still a progression compared to 1998-1999. In the same year, the incoming mobility in the USA progressed in comparison with 2006-2007. This report can be explained by the influence of wider global events. For example, the restrictions on entry to the USA in the wake of the attacks of September 11 have limited the flow of foreign students and researchers to their universities. Now, these limitations are less heavy and have an impact on student mobility.

Europe's Disregard for Africa

The choice of the European countries for the Bologna institutional study cycle (3-5-8) was not discussed with the African countries. It was nevertheless obvious that the African universities would be forced to adopt the new European study cycle. During the previous decades, equivalences had been negotiated between African and European diplomas. These equivalences allowed some African students to finish their studies in a European university and to obtain their PhD in Europe. The integration of the Bologna study cycle put everything into question. The positive element is that this integration frees the southern institutions from the dependence upon their traditional northern partners. The negative element is that it frees northern universities from the historic agreements concluded with their southern counterparts. The adoption of the 3-5-8 indubitably widens the range of possible choices of partnerships, both for the northern and the southern universities. However, some factors, such as language and cultural proximity between the countries and universities, restrict this choice. Eventually, partnerships are established more according to the affinity between the partners than according to the rational evaluation of needs.

The Berlin Ministers' Summit in 2003 marked a turning point, because the European higher education ministers focused their attention for the first time on the 'external dimension' of the Bologna Process – its impact outside Europe. In Berlin, Latin America representatives had even been welcomed as observers by European ministers. Previous summits had to deal with inner conflicts concerning the way the Bologna Process ought to be piloted between member states and some organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Even definitions of territorial borders had to be discussed, notably because Australia tried unsuccessfully to integrate the Bologna Process in 2001. Since then, the borders of the Bologna Process have been limited to the 48 countries which signed the European cultural convention of the Council of Europe. While the issues were focused on the struggle for influence, the European Commission was going to act: since 2000, the Commission presented the 'Bologna model' as a reference point in some important international meetings. In the meantime, UNESCO and OECD promoted this model as well. From 2000 to 2006, the European Commission promoted the Bologna study cycle in its call for the Tempus project, which intended to supply universities of the European Union states or those from associated countries with the means to establish collaborations with their Eastern European counterparts, the Balkans, the Maghreb, the Middle East and Central Asia. The 'adaptation to the

Bologna Process development' was then brought up to the rank of explicit objective of the cooperation established with third countries (TEMPUS, 2005).

We see that the Commission turned towards African universities, its most natural partners, after resolving its inner conflicts and after having looked for new collaborations with universities from all the other regions of the world (Charlier et al, 2009). This strategy of disregard in relation to Africa produced unexpected effects. The table below features the geographical distribution of mobile African students. Their prime destination remains Europe where they go in ever greater numbers. In 2004, almost two thirds (64.9%) of African students studying abroad attended a course at a European university compared to 59.6% in 1999, that is a five-point rise.

	1999	%	2004	%
Africa	45,726	21.7	49,903	17.0
Europe	125,431	59.6	190,109	64.9
North America	32,554	15.5	39,894	13.6
South America	9	0.0	176	0.1
Asia	4,089	1.9	7,022	2.4
Oceania	2,503	1.2	5,774	2.0
Total	210,312		292,876	

Table II. Comparison of the distribution of HE African students abroad in 1999 and 2004.
Source: UNESCO statistics (2006).[5]

A strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna Process has been engaged since the London ministerial summit in 2007, entitled *The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting* (Zgaga, 2007). The London summit welcomed representatives of all the world regions, except Africa. Paradoxically, the discussions about the form of the higher education partnership between Europe and Africa began in 2007, but not in the framework of the Bologna Process. This partnership was an important point of the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy launched in 2007 in Lisbon. African and European university representatives, European Commission representatives, the Commission of the African Union and secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) joined the conference *Developing Links: EU-Africa Cooperation in Higher Education through Mobility*, which gathered in December 2008. This underlined the need to reform African higher education and to initiate compatible student mobility structures between African and European countries (EU-Africa Cooperation in HE, 2008).

Finally, African observers were invited for the first time to the follow-up ministerial conferences of the Bologna Process in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve in April 2009 and March 2010. Representatives from South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Senegal, Tanzania and Tunisia attended the conferences. During these summits, participants articulated their standpoints about current reforms in their higher education system (Commission européenne, 2009). This facilitated the implementation of a Bologna Policy Forum in 2009, intending to improve dialogue between member states of the European higher education area and other countries worldwide.

Europe now seemed to have decided to export its tools to Africa. A white paper entitled 'Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: meeting regional and global challenges' (EUA, 2010a) was published by the EUA in 2010. This article follows the project 'Access to Success: fostering trust and exchanges between Europe and Africa (2008-2010)' (European Commission, 2010a), financed by the European Commission, and which included a consortium composed of the EUA and the Association of African Universities (AAU). It identifies the cooperation between the African and European universities and delivers recommendations on the actions to be developed to increase collaboration. In the same year the European Commission launched a feasibility study on the potential for the introduction of the Tuning [6] method in African higher education. The Tuning method appeared firstly in 2001 in Europe and then in Latin America in 2003. These developments were followed by a reflection on the importance of the Tuning method in the United States, Russia and other countries (see Croché, 2010). For the moment, we have five different Tuning models (Latin America, United States, Europe, Russia and Kyrgyzstan). The study of the European Commission on a Tuning method in Africa follows declarations of African higher education ministers gathered in Johannesburg in 2007, who

announced the harmonisation of their programmes. To that end, they decided to install a framework for qualification comparison, based on a credit system such as the ECTS in Europe and the definition of learning outcomes and competency. The creation of an 'African higher education area' was identified as a fundamental objective by the participants of the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Africa, organised in 2008 to prepare the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference of 2009. A new cooperation programme, *Mwaliwu Julius Nyerere*, launched in 2010 between the European Commission and the African Union Commission, aimed to promote student exchanges between universities in ACP countries, and twinning partnerships bringing together, inter alia, European and African universities (European Commission, 2010b). The quality assurance is not ignored. In May 2011 the EUA and the AAU launched a two-year pilot project entitled 'Europe-Africa Quality Connect: building institutional capacity through partnership' (EUA, 2010b), aimed at capacity building and mutual learning in quality assurance reform. Co-funded by the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus programme, this pilot project will share the EUA Institutional Evaluation programme's (IEP) approach with five African universities selected in different regions of sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of the project is not to impose new quality assurance procedures on African universities, but to encourage them to install their own practices, in tandem with their goals and missions, and to share good European practice in this field (EUA, 2011).

The European indifference towards Africa, initially in the Bologna Process and the European Commission projects such as Tuning, are poorly viewed by African analysts. The titles of different papers on the attitude of Europe towards Africa or in other part of the world are explicit: 'Globalization or Recolonization' (Mok & Lee, 2000), 'The Bologna Process in Africa: globalization or return to "colonial situation"?' (Khelfaoui, 2009), 'Africa: Bologna Responses follow ex-colonial lines' (MacGregor, 2008).

Conclusion

To conclude, we can reread the different empirical elements by connecting them to the apparatus concept and to the normative position presented at the start of this article. Firstly, when the four ministers launched the Sorbonne call in 1998, they constructed an apparatus around the competition and the balance of power to impose their ideas. The way they organised the Sorbonne meeting shows that they believed in these values. They tried to build a favourable balance of power to uphold their convictions, without caring about the reactions their actions would provoke. They were willing to exercise power rather than to convince the potential partners of the pertinence of their arguments.

Some examples of the effects of this strategy can be spotted:

- All the official documents (communiqués) maintain that the Sorbonne meeting was organised for the 800th birthday of the University of Paris. This is totally false and Allègre admits it. But because the first university of Europe, Bologna, had celebrated 900 years, it was necessary to perform at least as well.
- The Sorbonne communiqué affirms that universities first appeared in Europe. This is also a distortion of history. They were probably born in China and prospered in the Arabic world before appearing in Europe. By asserting that universities were born in Europe, the communiqué tacitly claims the right to dictate the definition of university to the rest of the world.
- Only four ministers signed the Sorbonne Declaration. Others were there, who also wanted to sign, but the four refused them the right to sign. The objective of the four, who represent more than 50% of European students, was to limit the number of the process's leaders and to impose their direction on all the others.
- The European Commission, which financed several important student exchange programmes, such as Erasmus, and several information exchange programmes between universities, was initially excluded from the process. The four ministers tried to build a process against the European Commission (Croché, 2010).

Currently, the model is thus universal competition, Europe against the rest of the world, European countries against each other, the European nations against the European Commission. Africa is not a part of this.

Secondly, the strategy did not work. The excluded European countries did not follow the four initiators. The European Commission had to intervene to save the process. Through this intervention, the Commission steered the process towards competition. It therefore retained the apparatus it constructed around the balance of power and the spirit of competition. However, if it uses this apparatus, the Commission needs to more clearly define its competitors. These competitors are the other regions of the world and, to compete with them, the European countries will need to further the federal notion of a strong Europe with common interests.

The European Commission knows that it has to be seductive to convince the countries to follow it. It has thus spent a lot of money to inform and influence the countries which have still not adhered to Bologna. It has helped the powerful European countries increase their number of foreign students and has integrated the peripheral countries in the European higher education area.

At first, the European Commission was not concerned with sub-Saharan Africa because the African region was not a strategic objective (Charlier et al, 2009). When it saw that the sub-Saharan African universities signed agreements with other world region's partners, the Commission began to focus its attention on Africa and started to intervene in this region by trying to export its tools.

Thirdly, for the moment, the Bologna model's transfer is not a success. This is unsurprising because, to be effective, the model needs a particular apparatus, centred on the competition and the balance of power between world regions. That apparatus does not exist in the countries of French-speaking Africa. Higher education continues to be associated, firstly with rights, in particular the right to have a job in the public service. The universities are integrated into the state administration; all attempts to regionally separate the centres of excellence have failed up to now.

Fourthly, the measures inspired by Bologna provoke questions of power in education in a society and economy of knowledge, and the impacts of hegemonic projects of the great competitors. Even if higher education is considered (in the Bologna Process officials documents) as a public good, the Bologna measures are marked by the spirit of competition. Do we have to deduce that they are definitively bad? No, the Bologna Process can be seen as a stage on the road which leads to the creation of a worldwide higher education area where the global mind would be mobilised for resolving the essential problems which unsettle people today. But for the moment, the competition to attract students does not make sense and is not positive for humanity. We need to question the effects of the competition process applied to the scientific field (as research and higher education are closely related). When it regulates the production of goods which are subject to consumer choice, this process has proved its indisputable worth. It tends to replace the finality of action with the objective of beating or outmatching rivals. But this principle does not apply to science, as potential recipients generally do not have go-betweens to impose their preferences on the managers of large laboratories. The aim of science is to make the world better, easier, and more just. If it keeps pursuing these ends and helps achieve them faster and more resolutely, scientific competition makes sense. In all other cases, it diverts science from its initial premise. The overriding influence of the United States and Europe on science and the academic sphere gives them tremendous historical responsibilities. They must both remember the goals of science, to organise the regulation of the scientific world, and ban unacceptable behaviour (Charlier & Croché, 2007). New academic hubs being set up in other world regions will necessarily promote different types of behaviours. Some of these hubs will grow and compete with existing ones. Thus, it is crucial that the entire scientific world imposes regulations on scientific research if it is to achieve the liberation of humanity rather than the domination of some by others.

Notes

- [1] The name 'Bologna Process' comes from the city where the process was adopted, in Bologna in 1999. For other meetings, it was the same, as for example the 'Sorbonne meeting' comes from the conference that was held in the Sorbonne in 1998.

- [2] The European Commission is one of the three important institutions of the European Union, with the European Parliament and the European Union Council. Its function is to propose and to carry out community policies. The Commission has the quasi-monopoly of the right of initiative.
- [3] The method used in this ranking can certainly be criticised. Quality criteria that are less prone to criticism are suggested in this article.
- [4] The debate 'brain drain versus brain gain' is not addressed here. See for example Vinokur (2006) or Wickramasekara (2002).
- [5] The statistics published by UNESCO (2011) on the mobility of African students in 2008 are incomplete. The data on African students in Europe omit far too many European countries, which distorts the analysis. We shall thus limit ourselves to complete data which date from 2006.
- [6] The Tuning method was initiated firstly in Europe with the launch of the Bologna Process. It consists of a methodology established to understand curricula and make them comparable between different countries. Different lines of approach have been distinguished: 1) definition of generic (general academic) competences for each cycle; 2) definition of subject-specific competences for each programme; 3) definition of approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment. The role of ECTS as an accumulation system and the role of quality enhancement in the educational process are important in the Tuning method.

References

- Agamben, G. (2009) *What is an Apparatus? and other essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Attali, J. (1998) *Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur*. Paris: Stock.
- Bundesministerium für Bildung (1997) *Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt: Bundesministerium für Bildung.
- Bussolini, J. (2010) What is a Dispositive?, *Foucault Studies*, 10, 85-107.
- Charlier, J.-É. & Croché, S. (2007) The Bologna Process: the outcome of competition between Europe and the USA and now a stimulus to this competition, *European Education*, 39(4), 10-26.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/EUE1056-4934390401>
- Charlier, J.-É., Croché, S. & Ndoye, A.K. (2009) *Les universités africaines francophones face au LMD*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia-Bruylant.
- Croché, S. (2010) *Le pilotage du processus de Bologne*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia-Bruylant.
- Commission européenne (2009) *Le processus de Bologne – réformer les universités au cours de la prochaine décennie*. IP/09/615. Bruxelles, 22 avril.
- Cybermetrics Lab (2008) Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, July.
http://www.webometrics.info/top100_continent.asp?cont=africa
- EU-Africa Cooperation in HE (2008) Developing Links: EU-Africa cooperation in higher education through mobility. IP/O8/1894. Brussels, 4-5 December.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1894&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr%22>
- European Commission (2002) *Establishing a Programme for the Enhancement of Quality in Higher Education and the Promotion of Intercultural Understanding through Co-operation with Third Countries (Erasmus World) (2004-2008)*. Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision. COM 401 final. Brussels.
- European Commission (2007) Making Europe More Attractive to Highly Skilled Migrants and Increasing the Protection of Lawfully Residing and Working Migrants.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1575&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>
- European Commission (2010a) Access to Success: fostering trust and exchange between Europe and Africa.
<http://www.accesstosuccess-africa.eu/web/>
- European Commission (2010b) INTRA-ACP Academic Mobility Scheme. Africa (Mwalimu Nyerere) and the Caribbean & Pacific. Call for proposals. EACEA/35/10. Brussels.
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra_acp_mobility/funding/2011/documents/call_35_10_final_en.pdf
- European Council (2000) *Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000*. Brussels: European Council.
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

- European Council (2004) *Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the Conditions of Admission of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Studies, Pupil Exchange, Unremunerated Training or Voluntary Service*. Official Journal of the European Union, L375, 12-18.
- European University Association (EUA) (2010a) *Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: meeting regional and global challenges*. White Paper. Brussels: EUA.
http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications/Africa-Europe_Higher_Education_Cooperation_White_Paper.sflb.ashx
- European University Association (EUA) (2010b) *Europe-Africa Quality Connect: building institutional capacity through partnership*. Project report available at:
<http://www.eua.be/eua-projects/current-projects/europe-africa-quality-connect.aspx>
- European University Association (EUA) (2011) *EUA and AAU Launch Quality Evaluation Pilot in Africa*. Brussels: EUA.
http://www.eua.be/News/11-05-12/EUA_and_AAU_launch_quality_evaluation_pilot_in_Africa.aspx
- Foucault, M. (1977) *The Confession of the Flesh*. Interview with Michel Foucault, in M. Foucault & C. Gordon (Eds) (1980) *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972-1977*, pp. 194-228. New York: Pantheon.
- Frattini, F. (2007) Franco Frattini's Speech at Conference on Legal Immigration, 13 September.
<http://soderkoping.org.ua/page15679.html>
- Gorga, A. (2010) *Les jeux de la qualité. Impacts sur les politiques éducatives et la vie académique en Suisse et en Roumanie*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia-Bruylant.
- Khelfaoui, H. (2009) The Bologna Process in Africa: globalization or return to 'colonial situation'?, *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 7(1-2), 21-38.
- MacGregor, K. (2008) Africa: Bologna Responses follow ex-colonial lines, *University World News*, issue 0019, 9 March.
- Mok, K.H. & Lee, H.H. (2000) Globalization or Recolonization: higher education reforms in Hong Kong, *Higher Education Policy*, 13, 361-377. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0952-8733\(00\)00018-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0952-8733(00)00018-0)
- National Commission for Excellence in Education (1983) *A Nation at Risk: the imperative for educational reform*. A report to the nation and the secretary of education by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, United States Department of Education, April.
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011) *Testing Student and University Performance Globally: OECD's AHELO*.
http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3746,en_2649_35961291_40624662_1_1_1_1,00.html
- Putnam, R. (1998) Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the logic of two-level games, *International Organization*, 42(3), 428-460.
- Serres, M. (1999) A Hippocratic Oath for Scientists?, *The UNESCO Courier*, May, p. 36.
- Sorbonne Declaration (1998) *Joint Declaration on Harmonization of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System, by the Four Ministers in Charge for France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom*. Paris, 25 May.
- TEMPUS (2005) *Tempus Programme, Budgetary Situation (as of 20 January 2005)*.
<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/doc/budget05.pdf>
- Thierman, S. (2010) Apparatuses of Animality: Foucault goes to a slaughterhouse, *Foucault Studies*, 9, 89-110.
- UIS Fact Sheet (2009) *Trends in Tertiary Education: sub-Saharan Africa*, n°1, July.
- UNESCO (2006) *African Students the Most Mobile in the World*. Communiqué. UNESCO. Paris, 31 May.
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=33154&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
- UNESCO (2009) *World Conference on Higher Education: the new dynamics of higher education and research for societal change and development*. Communiqué. UNESCO Paris, 5-8 July.
- UNESCO (2011) *Recueil de données mondiales sur l'éducation 2011 : Statistiques comparées sur l'éducation dans le monde*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- Vinokur, A. (2006) Brain Migration Revisited, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 4(1), 7-24.
- Wickramasekara, P. (2002) Asian Labour Migration: issues and challenges in the era of globalization, *International Migration Papers*, 57, Geneva: International Labor Office.
- Zgaga, P. (2007) *Looking Out: the Bologna process in a global setting. On the 'external dimension' of the Bologna process*. London: BFUG.

JEAN-ÉMILE CHARLIER is professor of sociology at the Facultés universitaires catholiques de Mons (FUCaM) and president of the Department of Political, Social and Communication Sciences. He pursues his research on the study of higher education reforms, on the impact of the Bologna Process in Europe and its effects on higher education systems all over the world (especially in Africa). *Correspondence:* Jean-Émile Charlier, Faculty of Economics, Political, Social and Communication Sciences, Université Catholique de Louvain-UCL Mons, 151 chaussée de Binche, B-7000 Mons, Belgium (charlier@fucam.ac.be).

SARAH CROCHÉ is a postdoctoral researcher of the National Fund for Scientific Research (F.R.S.-FNRS) in Belgium and researcher at the FUCaM. She holds a PhD in political and social sciences and a PhD in educational sciences. Her research concerns the decisional mechanism of the Bologna Process and its effects on national higher education policies, and the study of the relationship established between the sciences and religions at school. *Correspondence:* Sarah Croché, Faculty of Economics, Political, Social and Communication Sciences, Université Catholique de Louvain-UCL Mons, 151 chaussée de Binche, B-7000 Mons, Belgium (croche@fucam.ac.be).