
The Changing Attractiveness of European Higher Education in the Next Decade: current developments, future challenges and major policy issues

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ABSTRACT This article focuses on the different senses of the attractiveness of European systems and institutions for students, academics, the labour market and the economy, drawing attention to emergent tensions between different university stakeholders. Universities not only need to be attractive to increasingly differentiated student populations, but they also need to be attractive workplaces and provide attractive career opportunities for academics. Both public and private institutions are under multifaceted pressures to change today. At a time of imminent reformulation of current welfare state systems in most parts of Europe, attractive systems will be able to balance the negative financial impact of the gradual restructuring of the most generous types of welfare state regimes in Europe on public funding for higher education. Ironically, the more successful public entrepreneurial universities are today, the greater the chances are of them following this entrepreneurial direction in the future. The promotion across Europe of a more substantial inflow of both private research funds and student fees can be expected. The possible redefinition of higher education from a public good to a private good is a tendency which may further undermine the idea of heavy public subsidization of higher education, as the economic rationale for higher education is changing. The expected developments may fundamentally alter relationships between university stakeholders, with the decreasing role of the state (especially in funding) and the increasing role of students and the labour market. The expected differentiation-related developments may alter the academic profession in general, and have a strong impact on the traditional relationships between teaching and research in European universities.

Setting the Stage: the growing complexity of the academic enterprise

An exploration of the possible role of European higher education in the promotion and development of active citizenship has to take into account the current complex European policy context. Rather than addressing directly the question of citizenship and higher education (see the other contributions to this issue), this article wishes to focus in detail on the current policy agenda to increase the attractiveness of European higher education. In discussing the complexities that are involved in framing the issue of attractiveness, special attention is given to the challenges posed to the university's public role, to the related role of the academic profession and, as a consequence, to the context in which the question of higher education and citizenship emerges.

It is difficult to define the attractiveness of European higher education as it is a relative and elusive term: its attractiveness has different senses in different contexts (local, national, European), at different (micro-, meso- and macro-) levels of analysis, and for different constituencies. On top of that, we are discussing here multiple future social and economic developments and their possible,

relatively uncoordinated, if not chaotic, impacts on higher education systems. The article focuses on the different – and often conflicting – senses of the attractiveness of European systems and institutions to students, academics, the labour market and the economy in general. Universities not only need to be attractive to increasingly differentiated student populations (and to cater for their increasingly different needs), but they also need to be attractive workplaces and provide attractive career opportunities for academics. Amidst ongoing restructuring of the public sector in general in many parts of Europe, and especially in the new entrants to the European Union (EU) (see, for example, Gilbert, 2004; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Iversen, 2005; Kwiek, 2007a, b), and amidst the reform of higher education systems in particular, universities need to keep their respect for traditional academic values. Their attractive curricula need to meet the needs of graduates and match transformations in the labour market and in the economy in general. To be attractive, European higher education also needs to be distinctive from higher education in other parts of the globe, as Zgaga (2007, p. ix) notes.

Both public and private institutions are under multifaceted pressures to change today, with varying intensity in different parts of Europe. These institutions include governmental agencies, institutions of the corporate world, institutions of civil society and the core institutions of the public sector. We are experiencing the shattering of a stable world governed by modern institutional traditions and, in this context, universities are increasingly expected to adapt to the changing social and economic realities (see Scott, 1999; Commission of the European Communities, 2003b; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007a).[1]

In a European context, in light of a sustainable future of higher education systems, the following issues are highly relevant for its attractiveness: the introduction or increasing of tuition fees and student loans (cost-sharing as an access, equity, social stratification, mobility and status issue; see Johnstone, 2006); academic entrepreneurship and ‘academic capitalism’ as ways to diversify institutions’ funding basis (see Clark, 1998; Williams, 2003; Shattock, 2005; Shattock & Temple, 2006; Kwiek, 2008b); ongoing public sector reforms and, more widely, possible reformulations of European welfare states and the European social model(s) (for instance, via the privatization of some public services, especially in new EU member countries; see Deem, 2007; Kwiek 2007a, 2009a); and a revised EU social agenda and new supranational visions of higher education (see Commission of the European Communities [2005a] on the ‘social agenda’ and a report on ‘the future of social policy’, and numerous recent World Bank and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] publications on tertiary education). Each of these issues is of critical importance to the attractiveness of higher education in Europe to (some or all of) its stakeholders. Educational strategies for the next decade need to take into account the growing complexity of the academic enterprise and the powerful role of the traditions of the modern European university, which may be acting both as inhibitors to changes and as their activators. Educational strategies need also to take into account the irreconcilable differences in the senses of attractiveness of higher education in Europe shared by its major stakeholders, and the growing tensions between them that are expected in the next decade. Simply speaking, it is clear that expectations from higher education on the part of the state (still the major funder in most European countries), students, the labour market and academics cannot be easily reconciled. The academic profession in the next decade will be in the eye of the storm and this article intends to show why.

More Market Mechanisms and New Income-Generating Patterns

What developments that have a direct impact on the attractiveness of European higher education systems can be expected? Firstly, with the growing relevance of the market perspective [2] and increasing financial austerity for all public services (accompanied by growing competition in public expenditures), strengthened by globalization and internationalization processes as well as by changing demographics and their consequences for national social expenditures, European higher education institutions in 2010-20 are expected to be responding to changing financial settings basically with solutions in terms of revenue: seeking new sources of income that are largely non-state, non-core and non-traditional to most systems. They may include various forms of academic entrepreneurialism in research (consulting, contracts with industry, research-based short-term

courses, etc.) and various forms and levels of cost-sharing in teaching (tuition fees), depending on the academic traditions in which the systems are embedded (and the relative scale of underfunding – those most underfunded, for example, systems in Central and Eastern European [CEE] countries, may be most willing to accept new funding patterns). Attractive institutions and systems will be prepared to use these revenue solutions, as well as some painful cost solutions (well known especially in European transition countries).[3]

Attractive European higher education systems will be able to find a fair balance between the impacts of general trends of globalization and internationalization and the impacts of regional (European and national) responses to them to make sure that academia still retains at least the major characteristics of post-war higher education systems and its traditional attractiveness as a workplace and an opportunity for a professional academic career (as yet, as Enders & de Weert [2004, p. 22] confirm in their comparative study of the academic profession in Europe, European systems in general offer 'low financial rewards' and 'uncertain future prospects for university employment'). Globalization brings about direct competition between business and non-business models of organizations; in the case of public institutions, we can expect the competition between more traditional collegial types of university management and governance and new business types of management and governance – known up to now in Europe mostly from private higher education institutions (Kwiek, 2008a, c). At the time of the possible reformulation of current welfare state systems in most parts of Europe (as Pierson [2001, p. 456] stressed: 'while reform agendas vary quite substantially across regime types, all of them place a priority on cost containment. This shared emphasis reflects the onset of permanent austerity ... the control of public expenditure is a central, if not dominant consideration.'), attractive institutions and systems in 2020 will be able to balance the negative financial impact of the gradual restructuring of the public sector (of the most generous types of welfare state regimes in Europe) on public funding for higher education.

Higher education in general, and top research-intensive universities in particular, as opposed to the health care and pensions sectors, are perceived by European societies and politicians as being able to generate their own additional income through, for example, entrepreneurship or cost-sharing (where fees are legally possible). Ironically, the more successful public entrepreneurial universities are today, the greater the chances are that this will become an unavoidable expectation in the future: universities may be 'punished' for their ability to help themselves in hard times.[4] Along with the efforts to introduce market mechanisms in pension systems (multi-pillar schemes instead of pay-as-you-go ones) and in health care systems (parallel, privatized systems based on additional, private, individual insurance policies), especially but not exclusively in European transition economies, the most far-reaching consequences of this marketization/privatization trend can be expected for public funding for higher education and research. As William Zumeta (2005, p. 85) stressed recently: 'unlike most of the other state budget components, higher education has other substantial sources of funds that policy-makers feel can be tapped if institutions need to cope with deep budget cuts'.

Another expected development is the promotion across Europe – as a mostly new and reasonable policy solution to the current problem of underfunding of European universities (both underfunding and austerity being relative concepts) – of a more substantial inflow of both private research funds from the business sector and of more private teaching funds from student fees. The European Commission (EC) is becoming much more positive towards student fees (it stressed recently that 'it has been shown that free higher education does not by itself suffice to guarantee equal access and maximum enrolments' and invited member states to consider whether 'their current funding model ... effectively guarantees fair access for all qualified students to the maximum of their capacities' [Commission of the European Communities, 2005b, pp. 8, 10]). Trends in European demographics (especially the aging of most European societies) – the social consequences of which, from a larger comparative perspective, are shown periodically by such popular datasets as *Pensions at a Glance* (OECD, 2007b) or *Health at a Glance* (OECD, 2007c) – will be affecting directly the functioning of the welfare state (and public sector institutions) in general, but will only affect universities indirectly, through the growing pressures on all public expenditures in general. Strong higher education institutions will be able to steer the changes in funding patterns for higher education in their countries rather than merely drift with them.

Another development is that public sector reforms are expected to have an impact on the attractiveness of academia to new generations of academics (and this seems to be especially negative in Anglo-Saxon and transition countries – see Deem & Brehony, 2005; Deem, 2006, p. 292; see also a report on ‘Academic Staff in the United Kingdom’ by Fulton [2000] and Kwiek [2003] on the situation in Poland). The overall policy call of the EC that Europe needs to ‘respond to new social realities’ – caused by globalization and demographics – through ‘a new approach to the social agenda with implication for both national and European levels’ (Commission of the European Communities, 2007a, p. 4) may have indirect financially negative impacts, translated into different national contexts, on public funding for public higher education as well (Kwiek, 2009b).

The possible redefinition of higher education from a public (and collective) good to a private (and individual) good is a tendency which may further undermine the idea of heavy public subsidization of higher education (see Calhoun, 2006; Marginson, 2006). In a stakeholder society, the fundamental relationship between higher education institutions and their stakeholders is always ‘conditional’ – which introduces an element of ‘inherent instability’ (Neave, 2002, p. 22). The economic rationale for higher education is changing: as Philip Altbach (2007, p. xx) stresses, ‘the private good argument largely dominates the current debate’ and it results from a combination of economics, ideology and philosophy. The possible gradual redefinition of higher education as a private good is parallel to two other processes visible in Europe: the reconsideration of the role of tuition fees as a smaller-scale process (for example, in transition countries [5]) and, more generally, the reconsideration of funding of public services in general as a way to tackle the financial challenge of maintaining European welfare state regimes (on different scales in different forms of regimes), as a large-scale process.

There is a clear paradox: higher education is seen as more important than ever before in terms of the competitiveness between nations, but though the importance of ‘knowledge’ in our societies is greater than ever, at the same time, along with the pressures to reform current welfare state systems, the capacity of national governments to finance higher education and research and development (R & D) in numerous European countries is considerably weaker than in previous decades. Knowledge is increasingly produced by other sectors than higher education, and increasingly funded by the business sector – see the role of private R & D in OECD economies (OECD, 2006, pp. 67-73; 2007a, pp. 30-40; Eurostat, 2007). In the OECD area, R & D performed by the business sector has increased steadily over the past two decades and, in 2005, R & D performed by the business sector reached 68% of total R & D. The tension between the general attitude of governments and populations (education perceived as perhaps *the* primary asset of the individual), on the one hand, and the inability or unwillingness of the very same governments to increase current levels of public funding for higher education and research in public universities, on the other hand, is stronger than ever before. As the EC put it recently, elegantly but firmly:

to attract more funding, universities first need to convince stakeholders – governments, companies, households – that existing resources are efficiently used and fresh ones would produce added value for them. Higher funding cannot be justified without profound change: providing for such change is the main justification and prime purpose for fresh investment. (Commission of the European Communities, 2005b, p. 8)

Consequently, incentives for transformations in the functioning of public higher education may come through new funding arrangements (referred to by the EC as new ‘contracts’ between universities and societies).

In the last half century, despite an immense growth in enrolments, public higher education in Europe remained relatively stable from a qualitative point of view and its fundamental structure remained unchanged. But, as Malcolm Skilbeck put it, things have substantially changed:

the University is no longer a quiet place to teach and do scholarly work at a measured pace and contemplate the universe as in centuries past. It is a big, complex, demanding, competitive business requiring large-scale ongoing investment. (quoted in OECD, 2004, p. 3)

The forces of change worldwide are similar (see Johnstone, 1998) and they are pushing higher education systems into more market-oriented and more competitive arenas (and towards more state regulation combined with less state funding) – which is another expected development. As Fazal Rizvi (2006, p. 65) observed recently, privatization has become globally pervasive,

'increasingly assumed to be the only way to ensure that public services, including education, are delivered efficiently and effectively'; furthermore, 'public institutions in most parts of the world have been encouraged, if not compelled, to adopt the principles of market dynamics in the management of their key functions'. For centuries, 'the market' had no major influence on higher education: the majority of modern universities in Europe were created by the state and were subsidized by the state (see de Ridder-Symoens, 1996; Rüegg, 2004). During the past 200 years, most students in Europe have attended public institutions and most faculty members have worked in public institutions (within all major models of the university in Europe, which served as 'templates' for other parts of the world – be it the Napoleonic, the Humboldtian, or the British model). Today, market forces in higher education are on the rise worldwide: while the form and pace of this transformation are different across the world, this change is of a global nature and is expected to have a powerful impact on higher education systems in Europe. Market forces formulate the behaviour of the new providers and, more importantly, increasingly reformulate the missions of existing traditional public higher education institutions (towards more businesslike organizations, which emulate the behaviours of business organizations). It is still unclear how the competition between public and private institutions in various parts of Europe (especially in CEE countries) will influence the core mission of public higher education generally.[6]

New Stakeholders and the Changing Teaching/ Research Nexus: towards student-centred universities?

In European higher education in the next decade, the role of new (and previously significantly less important) stakeholders will grow. Universities under conditions of massification will be increasingly expected to meet not only the changing needs of the state, but also the changing needs of students, employers, the labour market and industry, as well as the regions (see OECD, 2000; OECD, 2005; Arbo & Benneworth, 2006) in which they are located. The expected developments in 2010-20 may fundamentally alter relationships between various stakeholders, with the decreasing role of the state (especially in funding), the increasing role of students and the labour market for the more teaching-oriented sector of higher education, and the increasing role of industry and the regions for the more research-oriented sector of higher education.

On a more general level, the massification of higher education is tied in with the growing significance of these new stakeholders (as Guy Neave [2002, p. 17] put it about the developments in continental Europe: 'the rediscovery of "stakeholders" as a dimension in higher education policy is intimately tied with the rise of the mass university'). At the same time, in the midst of transformations and adaptations, in order to flourish – which means to be both attractive and competitive – universities also need to continue to be meeting the (either traditional or redefined) needs of academics. Increasingly differentiated student needs – resulting from differentiated student populations in massified systems – already lead to largely differentiated systems of institutions (and, in a parallel manner, a largely differentiated academic profession). The expected differentiation-related (or stratification-related) developments in the next decade may fundamentally alter the academic profession in general, increase its heterogeneity, and have a strong impact on the traditional relationships between teaching and research in European universities.

The traditional Humboldtian model of the university was to combine research and teaching, and was basically faculty-centred (see Fallon, 1980; Röhrs, 1995; Readings, 1996; Kwiek, 2006a, pp. 81-138, 2006b). The Anglo-Saxon model deriving from, among others, John Henry Newman, was largely teaching-oriented and student-centred (see Pelikan, 1992; Rothblatt, 1997; Rüegg, 2004). The struggle between these two competing nineteenth-century ideas on what universities should be doing continues well into the twenty-first century. The questions of how to combine teaching and research as university missions, and in which types of institutions they should be combined, based on which funding streams (for example, public or private) should be used for which priority research areas, will become crucial in 2010-20. Are attractive universities in 2020 going to be closer to the American (Anglo-Saxon) university model, which has traditionally been much more student-oriented than continental university models in Europe? Most probably the answer is in the positive. For the time being, most non-elite institutions in Europe are teaching-oriented, while universities

are still able to combine teaching and research. As a recent European University Association report remarks on the impact of the Bologna process on the mission of the university:

there is an increasing awareness that the most significant legacy of the [Bologna] process will be *a change of educational paradigm across the continent*. Institutions are slowly moving away from a system of teacher-driven provision, and towards a student-centered concept of higher education. Thus the reforms are laying the foundations for a system adapted to respond to a growing variety of student needs. Institutions and their staff are still at the early stages of realizing the potential of reforms for these purposes. (Crosier et al, 2007, p. 8; my emphasis)

Formulations about the need for systemic changes regarding teaching at universities also figure prominently in the London Communiqué (2007, p. 2), which assumes ‘a move towards student-centred higher education and away from teacher-driven provision’. Transformations of European higher education until 2020 may look like a paradigm shift to traditional universities, both those embedded in the German Humboldtian tradition and those embedded in the French Napoleonic tradition, and perhaps especially to institutions in new EU member countries in Central Europe which are still mostly elitist, conservative and faculty-oriented. University missions are already being strongly redefined, and their redefinition – for instance, along the lines suggested above – may require a fundamental reconstruction of the roles of educational institutions (as well as a reconstruction of the tasks of academics). The main characteristics of current European university systems – the combination of teaching and research as the core institutional mission – may be strongly redefined. Consequently, the implications of the Bologna process at European, national, institutional and individual (academics’) levels seem still not to be fully realized. D. Bruce Johnstone & Pamela Marcucci discuss this issue and come to fairly pessimistic conclusions regarding the future of research in universities:

The public and governments alike tend to think of universities and colleges as places for *instruction*. The important *research* missions of those institutions that are properly labeled universities may thus drop to an even lower priority or become otherwise distorted by the rising student–faculty ratios and the need to spend more time teaching or searching for entrepreneurial revenue or both ... Research may fall to only a few universities, or fall mainly to the universities and research institutes in the advanced countries ... or may fall mainly to business and private investment. (Johnstone & Marcucci, 2007, p. 3)

The social, political, cultural and economic world is changing, and so are student populations and educational institutions (increasingly compelled to meet their changing demands). Higher education is subject to powerful influences from all sides and all (new and old alike) stakeholders – the state, students, faculty, employers and industry; and, on top of that, it is becoming a very costly business (as Burton Clark [1998, p. 26] put it: ‘more income is always needed: universities are expensive and good universities are very expensive’). The expected development for the next decade is that stakeholders may increasingly have different needs from those they traditionally had, and their voice is already being increasingly taken into account (as in the case of students, who are living in the highly competitive, post-national and postmodern world and who, in general, are expecting a more vocational orientation in their education, as opposed to, for example, the orientation towards traditional *Bildung*, or the cultivation of the life of the mind [see Readings, 1996; Neave, 2000; Delanty, 2001; Kwiek, 2006a, pp. 139-228]). Institutions are expected to transform themselves to maintain public trust (and use public subsidies). As Neave (2002, p. 12) describes it, the passage to the ‘stakeholder society’ involves a redefinition of the ‘community in terms of those interests to which the university should be answerable’. The role of the market in higher education (or of government-regulated ‘quasi-markets’ [see Teixeira et al, 2004]) is growing as the market is reshaping our lives as humans, citizens and, finally, as students/faculty (on the failure of Bologna in conceptualizing the role of the market in European – especially Central European – higher education, see Kwiek, 2004). Never before has the institution of the university for so long been under the changing pressures of different stakeholders; never before has it been perceived by so many, all over the world, as a failure to meet the needs of students and the labour market (the literature on the supply/demand mismatch is substantial [see Perryman et al, 2003; Brown, 2004]). Therefore, the question of which directions higher education systems will be taking while adapting to new social and economic realities, in which the role of the market is growing and

the education received by graduates is increasingly linked to their professional and economic future, seems to be open.

Following transformations of other public sector institutions, universities in Europe – traditionally publicly funded and traditionally specializing in both teaching and research – are under powerful pressures to review their missions in view of having to permanently cope with (relative) austerity in all public sector institutions (see Pierson, 2001) and to compete for financial resources with other public services heavily reliant on the public purse. Public priorities are changing throughout the world. D. Bruce Johnstone reminded us a decade ago, from an American perspective, that

While there is no reason that higher education should necessarily, over time, lose in the competition for governmental resources, it would appear that expenditures for elementary and secondary education, economic infrastructure, health and welfare, and perhaps even for environmental restoration are emerging as higher priority objects for governmental spending in most countries. (Johnstone, 1999, p. 1)

The consequences of the growing competition for public resources for the teaching/research agenda at universities are far-reaching. As Rosemary Deem alarmingly put it recently:

scarce public funding may be also a crucial factor in the unfolding saga about the future role and purposes of universities in respect of teaching and research. Teaching-only universities *per se* (as opposed to higher education institutions in general) do exist in both public- and privately-funded forms in many countries, but at the present time this is not the norm in most of Europe. However, this may not continue to be the case in the future. (Deem, 2006, p. 285)[7]

The trend of disconnecting teaching and research in higher education has already started. As Vincent-Lancrin (2006, p. 181) summarizes in his analyses of OECD datasets: ‘academic research might just become concentrated in a relatively small share of the system while the largest number of institutions will carry out little research, if any’ (which is challenging the traditional Humboldtian principle of ‘the unity of research and teaching’, *die Einheit von Forschung und Lehre* – see the German idea of the university in Kwiek, 2006a, pp. 81-138; 2006b).

European higher education systems will be attractive in the next decade if, amidst the changes, there is still enough space for traditional universities following the above-mentioned multiple missions: teaching, research and service to society. The supranational trend (revealing itself in EC, OECD and World Bank publications) to become institutionally engaged in the substantial reformulation of their missions is strong, both globally and in European transition countries (for example, the idea of research to be done almost exclusively by ‘flagship’ universities in Poland, suggested by the new government in 2008). The EC, at the moment, seems convinced that teaching and research are mutually dependent and reinforce each other. There are signs of hesitations, though, and one of the differences between the Bologna process goals and the Lisbon strategy goals could be that the former are interested in reforming all higher education institutions while the latter are interested in reforming universities which are research-intensive and which can contribute directly (rather than indirectly via the increased qualifications of the European labour force) to the European economy’s competitiveness via innovations, patents and technology transfer (see, for example, the Commission of the European Communities [2004] communication on *Science and Technology, the Key to Europe’s Future*).

The distinctiveness (and attractiveness) of European higher education has traditionally been its ability to combine the two core missions (teaching and research). The Humboldtian tradition, in this respect, has been surprisingly strong across Europe – but generally not in other regions, especially not in Latin America or India and China (on transformations of Western models of the university in India and China, see, for example, Altbach & Selvaratnam, 2002), nor in the developing countries, which have been expanding their higher education systems rapidly in the last few decades and which have been largely teaching-oriented, with research carried out in selected elite institutions (without mentioning that the OECD area still in 2007 accounted for about 80% of R & D in the world, with China accounting for 55% of the non-OECD share [OECD, 2007a, p. 28]). The tendency for research to be located outside of universities – especially in the business sector – which additionally influences the separation of research and teaching, has been particularly strong in Europe and in Anglo-Saxon countries in the last two decades. Both public and private funding for

research increasingly goes to the business R & D sector. New products and innovative technologies are most closely related to business R & D. Consequently, the possibility of the separation of teaching and research at universities (and not only at higher education institutions in general) – as a development threatening the traditional attractiveness of the academic profession to new generations of scholars – is also reinforced by new flows of public and private research funds. The Barcelona European Council target of increasing R&D spending in the EU to 3% of GDP by 2010 (set in March 2002) does not assume that increased research funds will go from public sources to public universities; instead, increasingly, private business research funds (as well as public funds) may go to private research institutions and corporate laboratories. New flows of research funding can heavily influence the core missions of public universities, and directly affect the nature and purpose of academic work.

European Higher Education in Competition with Other Regions

By 2020, the role of competition in higher education will grow substantially, and in several dimensions. The world, including the graduate labour market, is becoming extremely competitive, and academic institutions will most probably focus more on the competitive advantages of their graduates as a substantial part of their missions (and will be ranked accordingly, especially nationally, in addition to their research-based global rankings). Strong European higher education will be based on competition (see Huisman & van der Wende, 2004): excellence in research is driven primarily by competition – between individuals, institutions and countries. As the recent EC report *Frontier Research* put it:

the desire to be first to make a major new discovery or a significant advance in theoretical understanding drives researchers to devote themselves single-mindedly and for long hours. Researchers compete with one another all the time – for funds, for new equipment, for the best technicians, to get their publications accepted in the leading journals, and for prizes ... and other recognition-based measures of esteem. (European Commission, 2005, p. 35)

Competition and cooperation come together, and Europe is currently very strong in both respects.

As a whole, the EU lags behind both the USA and Japan in tertiary attainment and in competitiveness ranking. Relatively few young people in the EU enrol in higher education (which brings an EC analysis to a conclusion that 'higher education in Europe is still not an attractive option for a significant part of pupils having completed upper secondary education' [European Commission, 2005, p. 11]). Also, too many enrolled students leave universities in Europe without their degrees – the survival rate in Europe is comparable to that of the USA (66%), but lower than in OECD countries (70%), Korea (79%) or Japan (94%). The active population of the EU has a lower level of higher education attainment than its main competitors – it is 23% for the EU, while twice as much (43%) for Canada, 38% for the USA and 36% for Japan (European Commission, 2005, pp. 11-13). However, the Bologna-supported introduction of the Bachelor of Arts level of graduation will probably attract more students into higher education. The strength of EU systems of education is that they produce a considerably higher number of new PhD graduates – however, they have fewer researchers active in the labour market than the USA. Strong European higher education needs to be able to attract the best talents from other parts of the world, be they students, scholars or researchers. Currently, compared with other world regions, spending on higher education in Europe (EU-25) is relatively low. Total investment in higher education in the EU is about 1.1% of the gross domestic product, at similar levels as Japan, but below Australia (1.5%), and significantly below Canada (2.5%), the USA (2.7%) and Korea (2.7%). As the EC put it, in financial terms, 'to close the spending gap on the USA the EU would have to spend an additional 150 billion Euro per year' (Commission of the European Communities, 2005c, p. 21). The EU thus needs to improve access to higher education, to increase higher education attainment levels, and to increase total (public and private) investment in higher education. To reach the US levels of enrolment in higher education of young people (aged 18-24 years), European institutions would have to increase enrolment by 50% (i.e. from 25% to 38%). Thus, in the financial environment expected, European systems in 2010-20 can be expected to experiment widely with tuition fees and accompanying loan programmes (on fees and loans from an equitable access perspective, see

especially Johnstone, 2006; Salmi, 2006; Salmi & Hauptman, 2006; Johnstone & Marcucci, 2007; on CEE countries, see Kwiek, 2008a, c).

Meeting Conflicting Demands as a Major Challenge to the Academic Profession

Massified educational systems (and an increasingly massified academic profession) unavoidably lead towards various new forms of differentiation, diversification and stratification. The need for differentiation in quality is stressed by the EC when it states that

mobilising all Europe's brain power and applying it in the economy and society will require much more diversity than hitherto with respect to target groups, teaching modes, entry and exit points, the mix of disciplines and competencies in curricula, etc. (Commission of the European Communities, 2005b, p. 5)

Universities in most European countries still seem to be quite faculty-centred and their responsiveness to student and labour market needs is low (and, therefore, as the OECD [2006, p. 11] notes, most current reforms 'aim to improve the responsiveness of universities and government research institutions to social and economic needs'). But students are increasingly being reconceptualized as 'clients' or 'customers' of higher education institutions (which is consistent with new public management ideology, and which is especially evident in the private sector boom in CEE countries – see Slantcheva & Levy, 2007). Public institutions in Europe are still in most cases either 'Humboldtian' or 'pre-Humboldtian'; and only in a few cases could they be called 'post-Humboldtian' (for an interesting taxonomy, see Schimank & Winnes, 2000) such as, for example, in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway or the Netherlands, where universities are less faculty-centred and there is no universal link between teaching and research (see Deem, 2006, p. 291). The broadening of the debate between universities and employers, students, parents and other stakeholders about graduates' employability (in order to 'enhance trust and confidence in the quality and relevance of institutional engagement' [Crosier et al, 2007, p. 11]) can be expected in the next decade. The European University Association report suggests that employability has grown in importance as a driver of change in European universities – in 2007, 67% of institutions considered the concern for employability as 'very important' (as opposed to 56% in 2003) (Crosier et al, 2007, p. 35). And employability (despite its inherent vagueness as a concept) is expected to be a key notion in rethinking the attractiveness of European institutions in the future.

European universities will be attractive if they are able to meet the above (sometimes conflicting) differentiated needs. However, these needs sometimes seem to run counter to the traditional twentieth-century social expectations of the academic profession in continental Europe. Consequently, attractive European higher education systems will have to find a fair balance in the expected transformations so that the academic profession is not deprived of its traditional voice. Close relationships with industry, responsiveness to the labour market needs and meeting students' vocational needs have not been traditionally associated with the core values of the academic profession in continental Europe, perhaps despite verbal declarations of the academic community and despite universities' mission statements (see the large international comparative studies by Boyer et al, 1994; Altbach, 2002; Enders & de Weert, 2004). It is unclear to what extent these core values will need to be renegotiated, or are already under renegotiation, in massified higher education systems. The academic profession may find transformations of higher education systems – and of their own institutions – surprising at best and appalling at worst.

Therefore, universities in the next decade will be attractive to the academic profession only if the changes are fair and balanced. Overburdened, overworked, (relatively, compared with other professionals) underpaid and frustrated academics will not be able to make European universities strong and attractive. And they will not be useful in the realization of the 'more growth/more jobs' Lisbon strategy of making Europe a 'knowledge-based economy' (and society). Unfortunately, current trends, both globally and Europe-wide, show the diminishing attractiveness of the academic career, academic workplace and academic remuneration and, consequently, may indicate growing future problems in the retention of best talents in academia in 2010-20. Attractive higher education systems should be able to offer academics competitive career opportunities. One of the possible options in times of financial austerity (reported for OECD economies in relation to universities as early as the 1990s by Gareth Williams [1990]) might be further differentiation of the

sector by 2020, with subsequent targeted research funding and further concentration of research (with the eligibility of selected top institutions only) and possibly flexible salary brackets, depending on national classifications or rankings of higher education institutions, with increased opportunities for academic mobility between them. This is basically the overall philosophy of the Lisbon strategy with reference to universities: for this goal, it would be especially useful if there were various rankings and different European accreditation agencies (for different quality levels). The widening of the gap between the economic status of academics and other professionals needs to be stopped, at least in top national institutions, to avoid further 'greying' of the academic profession in 2010-20 and to make universities a career option for the best talents. It would consequently stop what Alberto Amaral (2007, p. 8) recently called 'the gradual proletarianisation of the academic professions – an erosion of their relative class and status advantages'.

Differentiated student populations in Europe require also increasingly differentiated institutions, and (possibly, consequently) different types of academics. This may mean the decline of the high social prestige of higher education graduates (counted today in millions) and of the high social prestige of most academics (counted today in hundreds of thousands in major European economies). The universalization of higher education is already having a profound impact on the social stratification of academics, especially in those countries where the expansion in enrolments has been particularly significant.[8]

Academic Values, Changing Responsibilities and the Fragility of the Status Quo

People, traditions and values matter in higher education. The Bologna Follow-up Group (2007, p. 2) strategy stresses that 'innovations and renewal can, however, only be successful if they build on an awareness of traditions and values', and the process as a whole should 'build on Europe's heritage, values and achievements'. The apparently powerful role of values in European higher education systems needs to be maintained as these distinct core values have so far proved a successful 'European dimension'. Challenges to both academic values and the organization of academic work in Europe have probably never been as powerful in the last half century as they are today. And in 2010-20, they are bound to intensify. A new general context for universities may be the one in which the social trust in public institutions can no longer be guaranteed, which is a substantial change from the social mood prevailing in post-war Europe, with relatively lavish public funding guaranteed and the high social prestige of public universities and of the academic profession taken for granted. The question to consider would be how to maintain in Europe common academic values – such as critical inquiry, disinterested science, intellectual freedom, a commitment to objective knowledge, etc. – which are universal values (Scott, 2003, p. 296). Traditional academic values, closely associated with the public service responsibilities of universities and science, Scott (2003, p. 299) argues, 'have to come to terms with a new moral context in which the superiority of the public over the private can no longer be taken for granted'. This new 'moral context' has been widely supported by emergent EU social policies, especially social policies advocated in CEE countries, experimenting widely with various forms of privatization of social services (Ferge, 2001; Kwiek, 2008c, 2009a). European institutions need to continue their reliance on traditional academic values (especially academic freedom and institutional autonomy) to be strong and attractive.

Higher education in the EU context has been put in a post-national (and distinctly European) perspective, in which interests of the EU as a whole and interests of particular EU member states (nation states) do not have to be the same. The reason for the renewed EU interest in higher education is clearly stated by the EC: while responsibilities for universities lie essentially at national (or regional) level, the most important challenges are 'European, and even international or global' (Commission of the European Communities, 2003b, p.9). The divergence between the organization of universities at the national level and the emergence of challenges which go beyond national frontiers has grown, and will continue to do so in 2010-20. Thus, a shift of balance is necessary, the arguments of the EC go, and the Lisbon agenda in general, combined with the emergence of the European Research Area in particular, provides new grounds for policy work at the European level (see Kwiek, 2004, 2006b; Keeling, 2006).

The construction of a distinctive European educational policy space – and the introduction of the requisite European educational and research policies – has become part and parcel of EU ‘revitalization’ within the wide cultural, political and economic Europeanization project (see Lawn, 2003).[9] The response to the major challenges facing Europe (losing its heritage and identity; losing out economically; giving up on the aspiration of developing its own vision of a desirable future for humanity; giving up the European Social Model, etc.) should be through education, knowledge and innovation, according to the recent influential report, *Frontier Research: the European challenge*, published by the EC:

The most appropriate response to these challenges is to increase the capacity of Europe to create, absorb, diffuse and exploit scientific and technical knowledge, and that, to this end, education, research and innovation should be placed much higher on the European policy agenda.
(European Commission, 2005, p. 17)

European higher education systems are expected to be in dialogue with their stakeholders with respect to ongoing and future curricular reform. Both the OECD and the EU have been supporting very strongly the idea of universities meeting the changing needs of students, employers, the labour market, industry and the region. The traditional type of continental university seems, the EC claims, currently largely unable, and unwilling, to meet these needs, without undergoing a radical transformation. Thus, in the EC’s view, universities today face an imperative need to ‘adapt and adjust’ to a series of profound changes Europe has been undergoing (Commission of the European Communities, 2003b, p. 6). They must rise to a number of challenges and they can only release their potential by undergoing ‘the radical changes needed to make the European system a genuine world reference’ (Commission of the European Communities, 2003b, p. 11; see also 2003a, 2007b). The EC views (some form of) restructuring of higher education as necessary, and a much wider idea of European integration applied to the higher education sector (integration via ‘spillover’, where integration in some economic areas leads to functional pressures to integrate in related areas, in this case education, as in neo-functionalism in integration theories – see Barkholt, 2005, p. 23), expressed in the ideals of a common European Higher Education Area and common European Research Area, seems useful. The university’s goal is the creation of an area for research where scientific resources are used ‘to create jobs and increase Europe’s competitiveness’ (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p. 1). This implies a new discourse on the purpose of higher education in Europe, distant from the traditional one, in which the role of external stakeholders other than the state (and other than academics) was limited. The change in discourses and concepts used for the discussion of the future of public universities is a reflection of much wider socio-economic processes which seem to be affecting the whole public sector in Western economies. In view of the above, the status quo – or the current social and economic *modi operandi* of universities in Western societies – is very fragile: the multifaceted impacts, trends and challenges are far-reaching, long-term and structural in nature.

Conclusions and Policy Issues

The major policy issues related to the attractiveness of European higher education systems in the next decade include the following: (i) how to align the attractiveness of European universities to different stakeholders, whose interests in, and expectations from, increasingly differentiated higher education are substantially changed in new social and economic realities; (ii) how to meet the needs of students, the labour market and the economy without fundamentally transforming the traditional values and modes of operation common to the best public European universities today; (iii) how to combine the (necessary) restructuring of higher education systems towards meeting the new needs epitomized in the ‘more growth/more jobs’ Lisbon strategy with the traditional values associated with academic teaching and research; (iv) how to attract the best talent to academia amidst the deteriorating job satisfaction and changing working conditions of the academic profession; (v) how to view the traditional unity of academic teaching and research in universities in the context of the prioritization of research areas and the concentration of research funding (and in the expectation of more targeted and more competitive research funding) and in which types of institution the traditional combination of teaching and research will still be funded; (vi) the wider impact of changing public and political views (increasingly regarding the university as a private

good) on the future of cost-sharing (student fees) and academic entrepreneurship in research funding; (vii) how government policies will cope with the growing differentiation of student populations, institutions and their educational offerings and, finally, of the academic profession itself; (viii) to what extent higher education policies in Europe are becoming part and parcel of much wider social (political, ideological and philosophical) welfare state policies and public sector policies, and how the uniqueness of the university sector vis-à-vis other public service sectors could still be maintained in the future; (ix) to what extent the impact of globalization and demographics on policy thinking about other public services (health care, pensions) will change policy thinking about higher education, especially in terms of funding and governance structures; and (x) how can the 'European dimension' be saved as part of the attractiveness of European higher education to other regions of the world in the context of market-related changes to universities worldwide which are global in nature, similar in kind, and not specific to Europe.

The most general structural policy issues with regard to public universities (as presented in the EC, OECD and World Bank documents of the last decade, especially regarding funding) do not seem substantially different from structural policy issues discussed with reference to other segments of the public sector. The major difference – namely, the widely acknowledged fact that universities have much wider options to diversify their income – may lead to viewing universities as even more financially self-reliant than before, and potentially being much more open to new funding patterns (mostly to new non-core, non-state income). The policy challenge at national levels is to what extent particular countries are willing and able to accept global thinking about the future of public sector institutions in general (and of public universities in particular), and to what extent responses to this new way of thinking can vary between countries. Surprisingly, the worldwide reform agenda for universities was, as observed by D. Bruce Johnstone (1998, p. 1) in his report for UNESCO, remarkably consistent as early as the 1990s: there were 'very similar patterns in countries with dissimilar political-economic systems and higher educational traditions, and at extremely dissimilar stages of industrial and technological development'. Historically, and based especially on the US experience, we know that budget cuts in higher education in harsh times have always been disproportionately higher than in other public services, and that, from a longer historical perspective,

a constant element of the history of the universities, and certainly in the Middle Ages and early modern times, is the lack of financial resources ... there is no doubt that many institutions were hardly able to function decently, and always lived, as it were, below the breadline. (de Ridder-Symoens, 1996, pp. 183-184)

New policy contexts, in which state-subsidized public universities will be operating in Europe in the next decade, are in the making; therefore, being conclusive in a world that is changing faster than ever before, and in which the role of contingent events grows, is difficult – constructing future scenarios for higher education is a very risky business.

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Notes

- [1] See, for instance, the opening sentence of a recent 700-page OECD (2008) report on *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*: 'the widespread recognition that tertiary education is a major driver of

- economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality tertiary education more important than ever before' (p. 11). The natural consequence of this is given on the following page: not surprisingly, 'higher education cannot escape major change. Sometimes change will be difficult' (p. 12).
- [2] As the late Frank Newman argued, there is a growing willingness on the part of political leaders 'to use market forces as a means of structuring higher education in order to increase the impact of the competition. Their hope is to improve access, affordability, and the quality of learning' (Newman et al, 2004, p. 2).
- [3] Poland is an example. The two recent decades of not increasing per-student expenditures – following the expansion of the system (from 400,000 to 2 million students between 1989 and 2009 [GUS, 2008]) – absorbing substantially more students and offering new academic programmes without additional public funding, 'has arguably taken most if not all of the "low hanging fruit" of obvious waste and budget cuts' (as Johnstone & Marcucci [2007, p. 14] summarize the issue globally, but as it can be referred to Poland). What remains to be done are more fundamental and systemic changes, including, most of all, further sector differentiation. While cost solutions are not able to stop the growing gap between higher education costs and available public revenues, revenue solutions offer possibilities to complement governmental funds with non-governmental funds through, *inter alia*, cost-sharing (the introduction of fees for all – and not only part-time – students) and academic entrepreneurialism. Both funding strategies are new to the Polish public sector, and both shatter its relative stability (which exists albeit amidst austerity).
- [4] Not surprisingly, 'higher education's seeming ability somehow to withstand the loss of public revenues makes it all the more likely for these losses to continue' (Johnstone, 2001, p. 5). These losses in public funding, though, change the very nature of the state/society-academe relationships. Privatization – in the form of bringing more private teaching (fees) and private research funds to the university – inevitably transforms its organizational culture and the purpose and nature of its core missions. For a study of processes of privatization in Poland, see Kwiek (2009a).
- [5] Tuition fees have played a critical role in the expansion of both the private and public sectors in Polish higher education over the last two decades. In 2006, funds collected through fees in both sectors reached the level of 4.221 million zlotys (1.206 million Euros), with only a slightly higher share from private institutions (2.132 million zlotys or 609 million Euros). Thus, in practice, almost half of all fees paid for higher education in Poland went to the public sector, which is nominally 'free' (tax-based). This is the most striking financial aspect of the privatization of the public sector, which does not seem to be dealt with carefully enough in current research. In spite of the existence of the booming private sector (with 33% of enrolments), almost half of the total revenue from fees comes from the public sector, owing to its privatization. In competition with the private sector, in terms of enrolments the public sector is strong but in financial terms it is very strong. At the same time, the share of income from fees in the public sector in the last 10 years went up from about 15% in 1997 to almost 25% in 2003, and since then it has been decreasing steadily year by year, to reach the level of 19.8% in 2006. For more details, see Kwiek (2008c, 2009a; GUS, 2008).
- [6] A good example is given by the transformation of Polish public universities – clearly towards more businesslike organizations – under the impact of two forms of privatization: internal privatization (offering fee-based weekend studies for part-time students in a nominally free environment) and external privatization (the appearance of 324 [GUS, 2008, p. 19] private higher education institutions between 1989 and 2007).
- [7] Although in Central and Eastern Europe the vast majority of private higher education institutions are fully teaching institutions (with no capacities or ambitions to do research), in more financial terms, even public universities in CEE countries are teaching institutions. To give a Polish example, research funding constituted only about 11.4% of the total income of public universities in 2007 (GUS, 2008, p. 246).
- [8] As the first sentence of a synopsis report in a book on the attractiveness of the academic workplace in Europe puts it: 'in many countries the career patterns and employment conditions of academic staff as well as the attractiveness of the academic workplace for the coming generation are of major concern. The concern about the attractiveness points both to the career perspectives of those working in higher education compared to other societal sectors where highly qualified work is demanded and to the recruitment of younger graduates for an academic career' (Enders & de Weert,

2004, p. 11). This echoes Philip Altbach's (2002, p. 3) general conclusion from a global project on the academic profession that 'the conditions of academic work have deteriorated everywhere'.

- [9] As Martin Lawn (2003, pp. 325-326) put it: 'Europe is not a place ... Europe is a project, a space of meaning, a state in process, and education is the core technology in which governance, ordering and meaning can be constructed. Without education, there can be no Europe ... The emergence of the revelation of a "European education area" is fundamental to the contemporary structuring of the EU; it announces the arrival of a major discursive space, centered on education in which the legitimization, steering and shaping of European governance is being played out.'

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