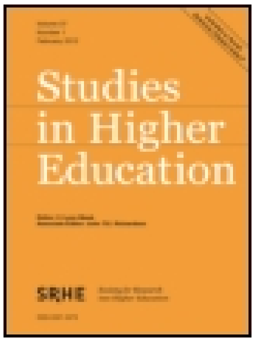

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Are researchers in Europe European researchers? A study of doctoral researchers at the University of Luxembourg*

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ABSTRACT

How doctoral researchers (and their supervisors) experience and conceptualise the process of becoming a researcher and the identifications that are enacted during the process has hitherto been researched only in terms of disciplinary and professional identities. Yet, within Europe, the creation of a common Higher Education Area has a potential impact on the doctoral experience and there is a declared intention to encourage doctoral students to see themselves as European researchers. The University of Luxembourg has policies and characteristics which might be expected to support this direction of development, and this study analyses the nuances of doctoral researcher experiences, at this University, of European and wider international identifications comparing these with policies at European and local levels. The opportunities offered to researchers in Luxembourg to ensure the policies are implemented are considered by participants to be significant. Whether the level of expenditure needed is possible in other countries and universities is an open question but remains a crucial condition for policies to be successful.

KEYWORDS

European identity; researcher identity; doctoral students; PhD studies; internationalisation; higher education

Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education is succinctly defined by Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009, iv) as 'the variety of policies and programmes that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization', and, as such, it is now a worldwide phenomenon. In Europe, it is reinforced by the creation of the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process (www.ehea.info), and the focus of this study, the University of Luxembourg (UL), is very much engaged in this whole phenomenon. As its mission statement says, 'the University aims to create a new model of a European university for the twenty-first century with a distinctly international, multilingual and interdisciplinary character' (University of Luxembourg Mission Statement 2016). Given this ambition, the question of academic identity for members of the university, including doctoral researchers, is a significant issue, and an analysis of their reflections might be expected to give some indication of how they – and others elsewhere – understand and experience internationalisation in practice. In the European context, where the influence of the Bologna process might be expected to create a

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particular kind of international identification, the research can begin with the question 'Are researchers in Europe European researchers?'. This might be expected to be a good empirical example of the effects of internationalisation, and in fact, as we shall see, it leads on to the notion of being 'an international researcher'.

Here we focus on doctoral researchers, but the question is just one aspect of a study of the total experience of doctoral research as seen by researchers, by their supervisors and by others involved in the doctoral process, such as examiners and directors of doctoral schools. It in turn is part of a wider study – Strand 2 of the EUROMEC project (http://www.euromec.eu) – involving universities in several countries. Here, we focus on data collected at the UL, a particularly rich environment since the ambition formulated in the mission statement appears now to be in the process of realisation. An indication of this is its strong position in international rankings, where it achieves 'particularly high average scores in terms of international outlook and citations' (wwwen.uni.lu/university/presentation/rankings.accreditations – accessed 6 September 2016).

One dimension of this international environment of particular note is that the University is expressly multilingual in policy and character, thus contradicting trends towards English in teaching and research identified by Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009) as a characteristic of internationalisation. Three languages, English, French and German are official languages within the university and are used for all its functions (Hu 2016), while for Luxembourg in general Luxembourgish is declared as the national language of the Luxembourgers, French as the language of legislation, and German, French and Luxembourgish are administrative languages (Memorial, Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Recueil de législation. 27 février 1984); for multilingualism in Luxembourg, see also Berg and Weis (2005), Fehlen (2009) and Hu (2014). School education is explicitly multilingual. Focusing on Luxembourgish in the preschool, children in the primary school are taught to write and read in German while French becomes the most important language of instruction in the secondary school. In general, English is taught from the 8th grade onwards as a foreign language (Hu 2014).

It might then be expected that a multilingual university with aspirations to be a model for European Higher Education would provide an ideal situation to foster a plurilingual European researcher identity, since language is often a marker of a group's identity (cf. Edwards 2009). The notion of a European researcher identity linked to – perhaps stimulated by – a multilingual environment is a concept which has hitherto been paid little or no attention. Previous studies of doctoral identities have taken other perspectives, often with a focus on 'professional identity' (e.g. Hockey and Allen-Collinson 2005; Hall and Burns 2009; Sweitzer 2009; Foot et al. 2014; Smith and Hatmaker 2014; Cotterall 2015; Keefer 2015).

This article is based on interviews with student-researchers in social and human sciences. They were asked, *inter alia*, to talk about questions of identity and about the role of languages in academic identity, with a view to answering our research question: 'Are researchers in Europe European researchers?'. We shall begin with an overview of the policy context and related research before explaining in more detail our methodology and findings.

The policy environment

European policy

In European universities, the above-mentioned 'Bologna Process' is well known as the basis for creating some degree of harmony among different university systems (www.ehea.info/). Starting with undergraduate studies, this work has gradually been extended to postgraduate and doctoral studies (Enders, de Boer, and Westerheijden 2011). As a consequence, the fundamental documents for doctoral education at European level are: the framework of qualification for the European Higher Education Area (www.ehea.info); the Salzburg Principles of the European University Association (EUA; http://www.eua.be/activities-services/cde/euas-work-on-doctoral-education.aspx); and the European

Charter for Researchers of the European Union (www.Europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter). While the first two documents help to implement Bologna actions in doctoral studies, including mobility, comparability and transparency of quality assurance mechanisms, the third provides the basis for lawful governance of different parties involved in a doctoral system.

It is however striking that these documents have little to say about questions of identity or languages, or the impact of doctoral study systems on researcher identity. The main focus is 'quality' in different components of a doctoral system, their purposes, processes and products, although, implicitly, the criteria used in quality assurance may help to create the identity of a researcher.

Of the three documents, the Salzburg principles are interesting here because they provide the basis for student-researchers' conditions and standards which are linked to matters of identity. For example, principle 4 states that a doctoral candidate should be recognised as a professional and also as an early stage researcher. However, in other parts of the document beyond principle 4, various terms are used to identify a doctoral researcher as 'doctoral candidate', 'doctoral student', 'young researcher', 'PhD', 'early stage researcher', and 'doctoral fellow'; we have coined the term 'student-researcher', as is explained below. Of particular interest for our focus on European identity, there is a special provision and procedural treatment for European Doctorates. A European Doctorate must fulfil four criteria proposed by the Confederation of the EU Rectors' Conference:

(a) at least two professors from two higher education institutions of two European countries, other than the one where the thesis is defended, give their review of the manuscript,
(b) at least one member of the jury is from a higher education institute in another European country than the one where the defence is taking place,
(c) a part of the oral examination is in a language other than that or those of the country where the defence takes place, and
(d) at least one trimester of a doctoral period is spent in another European country.

Conditions (c) and (d) may create a sense of being a European researcher and are probably intended to do so (Nyborg 2015, 18).

It is noteworthy that the UL has recently become involved in European doctorates and provides opportunities to engage with this process to student-researchers. Those who take this up are required to develop a 'Doctoral Degree Supplement' which documents their research experience including their work in other countries and in other languages (cf. http://www.europass.ie/europass/documents/DiplomaSupplementNationalGuidelines-August2009.pdf). This ensures that the European doctorate is clearly visible and a marker of a different doctoral identity.

The Luxembourg context

On 4 February 2012, the Governance Council of the UL approved its 'Doctoral Education Framework' in line with the Salzburg Principles, the Bologna Process, the European Charter for Researchers and the recommendations of the EUA (Blessing 2012). Following the Framework, doctoral schools have the following core five responsibilities:

- **doctoral research, training and supervision** at the UL is of high quality and relevance, encouraging doctoral candidates to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and technology through independent creative research;
- doctoral candidates develop **qualities** of rigorous critical evaluation and the ability to search for original approaches and solutions;
- doctoral training meets the needs and expectations of the **individual** doctoral candidates and equips them with the means for effective and efficient doctoral research;

- doctoral candidates are offered the **best research and training environment** for personal and academic development, providing frequent intellectual interaction with fellow doctoral candidates, supervisors and other senior researchers, and supporting the development of transferable skills;
- doctoral candidates are encouraged to look **beyond the boundaries** of their chosen discipline and share and broaden their knowledge across and mindset about other disciplines and countries. (Blessing 2012, 10–11; emphasis in original)

As can be seen from this list, the purposes of UL doctoral education are similar to those found elsewhere: (a) to advance knowledge through original research; this is unique and different from the bachelor and master level of education; (b) to combine doctoral autonomous research and doctoral research training in order to obtain a doctoral degree through successful completion and defence of a doctoral dissertation; and (c) to provide a transparent and substantial doctoral process producing a critical mass of research, research infrastructures and resources. The first of these is influenced by the 3rd cycle perspective of the Bologna Process and the latter two are designed in the light of EUA's recommendations.

It is thus clear that UL has developed its doctoral studies very much in a European spirit. It is however noteworthy that there is, in addition, explicit reference to language and language policy. In the UL's 'Guiding Principles for the Valorization of Research Results and Intellectual Property Rights' (www.en.uni.lu/research/chercheurs_recherche/valorisation_of_research_results – accessed 10 September 2016) which was approved in April 2009, it is specified that the research language can be in any form and type used for research related to verbal and non-verbal communication. In the case of the European Doctorate, as we saw above, another language than that or those of the country must be used in the defence, but since the UL has three official languages, it would not be unusual for more than one language to be used in a defence anyway. In that respect the language conditions of the European Doctorate would not be seen as burdensome for Luxembourg students.

The question of identity is not directly addressed in these documents but we can infer that a student-researcher who has a comprehensive experience of the programme described above would have a professional identity as a trained researcher (point 3) with a high quality of intellectual development (point 2) and with an interdisciplinary and international outlook (point 5). The last of these characteristics is important for our study, in particular the reference to 'other […] countries', even though this remains general. There is no specific focus on a European perspective, in contrast to the mission statement with its emphasis on being a model European university and the explicit reference to European documents in the description of the doctoral programme.

Related research

The significance of 'identity' in doctoral study is widely acknowledged. For example, Cotterall (2015, 360) opens her article by saying 'Identity lies at the heart of doctoral study, symbolised by conferring the title of "doctor" on successful candidates'. Foot et al. (2014, 103) open with a similar statement, albeit with a focus on transitions: 'The doctoral journey is as much about identity transitions as it is about becoming an expert in research and teaching within a discipline', and Parry (2007, 12) makes the point that 'disciplinary cultures are maintained and perpetuated by means of identification with disciplinary norms and ideologies'. A search of the literature reveals however that although there has been considerable interest in identity issues, the emphasis has been on the experience of being or becoming a researcher, where theories of socialisation, social networks and agency are used. There appears to be no research on whether doctoral candidates see themselves as 'European' or 'international', although there are some signs of interest in a human capital analysis of the contribution of doctoral researchers to nation-building (Maheu et al. 2014). It would therefore be otiose to list all the studies on student-researcher PhD identity and report them here as we shall argue that they have little bearing on our focus. To illustrate the identity research we will analyse what seem to us the more interesting.

A first broad categorisation can be made between research which focuses on professional doctorates (e.g. EdD, DBA) and the changes in identity from being, for example, a mid-career teacher or headteacher to being a doctoral 'student' on the one hand, and on the other hand, research focused on 'traditional' doctorates, the 'PhD', where 'students' are likely to have had no previous professional identity and have simply moved from being an undergraduate to a postgraduate student. Examples of the former include Taylor (2007) who identifies three ways of learning and understanding among people doing Doctorates in Education: 'conformity' meaning a focus on learning how to do research; 'capability' referring to those who manage to balance their identities in senior positions in the education system with their status as learners in the university; and 'being and becoming' where a more critical, analytical stance is taken and a holistic experience is forged from the two identities as people become 'professional researchers'. Hall and Burns (2009) also focus on people doing Doctorates in Education, and write in essayistic form, rather than presenting empirical data, to argue for placing identity issues at the heart of the mentoring ('supervision') process because of the need to reconcile different identities. Rayner et al. (2015) is another analysis of professional doctorate student-researchers in Education but in this case done by the researchers themselves.

One of the issues raised by this work, which appeared also in our data, is whether the people in question should be called 'students'. The international nature of the project of which our study is a part, makes us aware that in other languages, the term used – doctorand (French) Doktorand (German), doktorant (Polish) doktorant (Bulgarian) – is different and avoids the problem. One of our pilot interview participants explained how she had founded a group to discuss the conditions of working for a PhD and reported that:

> one of the things we want to change is that people are not considered to be PhD students anymore but PhD candidates, to emphasise the fact that we are also part of the work force, also because this is set up in a very particular way in Luxembourg that you have an actual work contract.

The point made about working to a contract may be unusual from the perspective of some other countries and universities – and it is not correct that everyone at UL works to a contract – but the reference to being part of the workforce is supported in other sources (e.g. Mendoza 2007; Halse and Mowbray 2011). Nonetheless, in English, the term 'student' is widely used in the literature. Here we will refer to 'student-researchers' which, though cumbersome, is truer to the wishes of some of our participants.

Returning to the literature, we find that Smith and Hatmaker (2014) also focus on professional doctorates and turn to socialisation theory as they trace the development of a professional researcher identity among student-researchers in Public Affairs. They identify the 'tactics' student-researchers used as: 'organizational', the institutionalised, formal procedures which induct student-researchers; 'relational', which refers to the contribution of the mentoring/supervising process; and 'individual', meaning the agency of the individual in developing their own understanding of research and researcher identity. The authors also stress the significance of 'serendipity', the 'good luck' which brings student-researchers into good relationships with mentors/supervisors, in contrast to the more deliberate and conscious tactics of the other three factors. Sweitzer (2009) takes a wider perspective in analysing factors outside the immediate university environment and uses network theory to show how one group of PhD student-researchers looks for support within the university and its departments while another relies much more on those outside, 'family and friends', and because she is dealing with student-researchers in a Business School, 'prior business associates'.

The participants in our study and others doing traditional PhDs are less likely to experience this change in professional identity and links with professional networks outside the university, although some of our participants had had previous careers of shorter or longer duration. On the other hand some of the factors analysed – such as the 'tactics' of Smith and Hatmaker's (2014) participants or the external 'friends and family' of Sweitzer's (2009) group – are probably valid for all types of student-researchers.

Among researchers analysing the identification experiences of PhD student-researchers, the following are interesting. Gardner (2008) interviewed student-researchers in History and Chemistry in two universities in the USA where the doctoral school is the norm. Gardner thus identifies three phases, and we find the notion of a doctoral candidate appearing with the focus on thesis/dissertation:

> The first phase consists of the time of admission to the program through the beginning year of coursework. The second phase of the doctoral program includes the time spent mainly in coursework until the examination period, and the third phase marks the culmination of coursework through the dissertation research, or the period generally referred to as candidacy. (Gardner 2008, 334)

The doctoral school is not evident everywhere and in other countries student-researchers often work in isolation with the guidance of one or, more often today, two 'supervisors' (the terminology differing from country to country and language to language). In one educational tradition, in France, where the supervision is a matter of one supervisor working with one student-researchers, Gérard (2013) analyses the conceptions of the process of socialisation held by supervisors and identifies six elements: the uniqueness of the supervisor–student relationship, quite different from what exists in Bachelors or Masters courses; that the socialisation process is considered a crucial element, perhaps even more important than the research per se; that socialisation is of two kinds, into the job, 'métier', of being a doctoral student and into the profession of being a future researcher; that student-researchers are expected to 'play the game', learning the explicit and implicit rules of academic work; that socialisation is also a matter of peer-group learning and comes not only from the supervisor; and finally that there is a difference in how all this is seen in different disciplines. In the same volume, Ntebutse, Jutras, and Joly (2013) point out that the process of socialisation is no longer simply into the academy but increasingly governments are expecting student-researchers to be engaged in future work outside the academy and hence need a different experience than the traditional one analysed by Gérard (2013), Ntebutse, Jutras, and Joly (2013) analyse the evolution of this idea in several countries. Gérard has also interestingly analysed the issue of how student-researchers manage the stress of their work (Gérard and Nagels 2013) with worrying conclusions, and others are concerned with the question of if and how student-researchers complete their studies (e.g. Skakni 2011).

Most of this empirical work is based on qualitative data, often with small numbers of participants, and usually the data collection is in semi-structured interviews, including narrative interviews. For example, Taylor (2007) had 12 interviewees; Cotterall (2015) had six participants albeit interviewed in each case between five and seven times; Smith and Hatmaker (2014) had a larger number: 27 student-researchers from several disciplines connected with Public Affairs; Gardner (2008) also had a larger number with 40 participants. Analytical procedures vary from those referring to grounded theory (Smith and Hatmaker 2014) to deductive methods based on existing models (Cotterall 2015). One common theoretical perspective is the emphasis in many studies on 'socialisation' although there is a tendency to use this term as if the student-researcher were a passive recipient of socialisation processes, whereas the 'recipient' may often respond and shape their own socialisation.

In contrast to the large amount of research and writing on professional identity, only one piece of recent research has a similar focus to ours. Larrinaga and Amurrio (2015) analyse the changes taking place in attitudes to the choice of languages for teaching and research in the University of the Basque Country. They suggest that the changes taking place in general – an emphasis on instrumentalism, a shift to research as the dominant activity and identity in academe, the growing supremacy of the technological and experimental sciences – are the factors impacting language attitudes. The minority language, Basque, which is a recognised language of the University, is losing out to a new 'instrumental attitude' which privileges English and Spanish. They argue that the professional identities of academics are changing as a consequence of the general trends they identify and that this in turn leads to changes in language attitudes. Such a causal relationship is of possible significance for our study although there are important differences between Luxembourg University and the University of the Basque Country. In the latter case, the introduction of a policy of multilingualism brings English into the university and threatens the minority language, whereas in the UL, English is one of the existing languages, multilingualism has been the policy from the beginning, and the language corresponding to Basque, that is, Luxembourgish, has never had a formal role in the university, even though it is in practice used in some circumstances. The question of identification and languages is one of the themes we pursued in our research too.

Methodology

This is an interpretative project attempting to 'understand' (*Verstehen*) rather than 'explain' (*Erklären*) (von Wright 1971). Although all the researchers involved have personal experience of 'doing a PhD' – in the case of Rahman very recently – and also, in the case of Hu and Byram, of many years of supervising doctoral researchers in both PhD and professional doctorates, we could not for practical reasons draw directly on this as participants or develop a participant-observer design, for example, by attending supervisions or doctoral school sessions. Since the modes of working in the human and social sciences on the one hand and in the natural sciences on the other differ substantially, the latter being often laboratory-based with work in teams, it was decided to begin with one group and move to the second later; the question of which group to analyse first was a matter of opportunity.

On the other hand, since we all work in the social sciences, we were able to use our experience in creating a relationship with our participants and ensured that Byram interviewed supervisors and some student-researchers whilst Rahman interviewed student-researchers.

The question of the language of interview was addressed by asking participants to use English if at all possible so that the data would be accessible for others in our international project; this is not usually a problem since English is one of the official languages of the University. However it was made clear that Byram could interview in French or German too and ensured that any interviewees who expressed hesitation about their competence in English would be interviewed by him. In fact all interviews were mainly in English but with code-mixing in some cases.

A pilot study was carried out in 2014 in three universities (Durham, Luxembourg and Sofia) and then, as the project was integrated into the EUROMEC project, other universities joined the project (Aveiro [Portugal], Krakow [Poland], and Beijing Language and Culture University [China]).

In the pilot study three supervisors and three student-researchers were interviewed. In the event, all of the former and 2 of the latter were retained for the corpus of the study and were augmented to a total of 7 supervisors and 12 student-researchers. The supervisors were all permanent, 'tenure-track' professors working in the human and social sciences, including History, Education, Psychology, Sociolinguistics and Sociology, and with a range of experience of supervision from being in the first years to having supervised 10 or more theses to completion. The student-researchers in terms of disciplines were: three in Psychology, three in Law, two in Linguistics, one in History, one in Sociology, one in Sociolinguistics, and one in Education Sciences. There were nine female and three male respondents of whom the majority were 'European', with two 'local' (i.e. Luxembourgish) and one 'international', these being the categories they were asked to use in the preliminary information requested. All were in the final year of study or had completed their study up to one year before the interviews took place.

In the pilot study, the interview schedule was created by the teams in the three initial universities based on the over-arching questions: What structures – formal such as regulations, and informal such as expectations of supervisors – exist, shape and evaluate the doctoral study process?; How is doctoral study experienced and perceived by participants? The significance of European identity and the developments in higher education in Europe discussed earlier became more evident as the project was taken into the EUROMEC project where a major theme is the question of European identity. This meant a further question, the focus of this article, was added:

– Are (doctoral) researchers in Europe European researchers? and new questions were introduced into the interview when the main study began.

Since we shall here focus on the student-researchers rather than the supervisors, it is important to explain how we addressed the issue of European identity. We began by saying we were interested in 'international and/or European identity', and whether those doing a PhD feel in some way international or European. Other sub-themes introduced included asking about experience of research in other countries and if and how respondents knew that their work was of international standard. Those respondents who had come to the university from another country were also asked whether this in itself created a sense of being an international or European researcher.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the UL and all participants were given a description of the project and its research questions and asked to complete a declaration of informed consent.

Interviews lasted up to one hour, not least because we promised our participants that we would not ask for more time than this. In the pilot stage some conversations went on longer as we asked participants, who are after all themselves experienced researchers, for comments on the project and the interview schedule and process.

Transcriptions were carried out either by members of the team of by a commercial company, and checked for quality. No corrections of non-standard English were made to ensure authenticity of citations. Analysis was thematic (Braun and Clarke 2006) combining a deductive focus on the research questions with an inductive approach to include unanticipated themes. In the context of the larger project, coding terms were developed in one location and then checked and revised in another (e.g. the universities of Durham and Aveiro drew up a coding list for 'supervision'). In this article based only on Luxembourg data, these coding lists were used but augmented by themes specific to the Luxembourg context.

Analysis and interpretation

The thematic analysis showed that student-researchers had well-developed theories about their European and international positions as researchers. There was some indication that this was not a new matter for discussion, and that the particular characteristics of the University were a contributing factor. Thus, when asked whether they felt they were a European or international researcher one participant said:

> Actually, this is something that comes up on a daily … not daily basis but since you really have to be in contact with other people if you submit something or it is … In my case, it's always outside from Luxembourg. Just empirical stuff, it's in Luxembourg now. So actually, this sense of international … being an international researcher is always there in Luxembourg but for sure the experience in the (United) States enforced that again. [LS8, I16, 12]

The position of Luxembourg and the size of the university are factors in the statement that 'you really have to be in contact with other people' and the reference to experience in the USA is another feature of the Luxembourg doctoral experience which we will explore in more detail below.

To be a researcher is to be international

Perhaps the dominant perception in the data is that being a researcher is to be international and/or European. Although as we saw above, most of the participants, when asked to categorise themselves, said they were 'European', it quickly became clear that the distinction between 'European' and 'international' is difficult to make. It is the function of research, and we can call this their 'functional theory'. Student-researchers seemed to believe that their international identity is a function of being a researcher: researchers are international 'automatically':

> Because nowadays, all the universities and all researchers are international researchers somehow, unless you stay in your little office and you don't go to conferences. Maybe you can be a local researcher because you only contribute to your own country. But if you publish – which I think everybody does nowadays – for research, otherwise you won't survive, you are automatically an international researcher, if you go to conferences in other countries as well. So it's just a question of how to name it but in the end it's all the same thing. [LS1, I10, 10]

It is the final sentence which suggests that there can be no distinctions, that 'in the end' being a researcher is being international. Other participants are however more ready to see distinctions both in terms of the topic of their research and in terms of their own trajectory or, as in the following case, a combination of both:

> I would say both local and European. Because I started studying in Greek law or local or domestic legal system, I did some research as a lawyer there. Eventually I decided to pursue more European law than the national law. So I did a master in European law in Holland and in other different countries of Europe. And then I spend some time as a trainee lawyer in the European Parliament in Brussels. And then I found doctoral position in Luxembourg. So considering my background, I could say that local but European researcher. [LS10, I16, 6]

Yet this person also goes on to say that the distinctions are not easy, and introduces the issue of the effect of globalisation:

> And lately at the end of my PhD study, it became also international. Because I gave more international perspective of my research by travelling for research visit in US. But it is little confusing that due to the globalization, you cannot say this is local or European or international. I think I consider myself all of these. [LS10, I8, 7]

We see again that the question of experience in another country is part of this position. It is also found in a slightly different form when participants emphasise the importance of international conferences and networks, for example here where the importance of reading international literature is also introduced:

> Because I am travelling all the time to conferences worldwide and the research community is international and the other students in the doctoral school. The network with whom I am working are international. And I did my studies first in Germany and then I came to Luxemburg. So also the literature is from everywhere, the research that I am consulting. So I don't think there is such a kind of not international research. Even though my topic is on Luxemburgish childcare practice. [LS4, I16, 10–11]

So we see that being international is a widely shared perception among the participants and can be contrasted with being local, and for some with being European. The focus on being a local or European researcher is more a matter of the topic of the research and the contribution the research might make to society. We saw this above in the quotation from LS10 who had started their studies in Greece and with their emphasis on the focus of their studies being European. Others have Luxembourg-specific topics which might be expected to give them a sense of being 'local'; some topics are 'Luxembourgish' in terms of the location and the multilingual characteristics of Luxembourg:

> I was writing on a Luxembourg specific topic because I dealt with the Luxembourgish educational system with Luxembourgish students. So I was always really located in the Luxembourgish context and also the administrative experiences I did as I'm doing … as an employee of the University of Luxembourg also gave me always more feeling of 'Okay. That's Luxembourgish.' So I would say I feel like … On the one hand, it's really Luxembourgish also since … due to the different language that also came up in my dissertation project because I had to read French legacy, a lot of texts, and so that's really Luxembourgish all these characteristics. [LS8, I10, 11–12]

On the other hand, because Luxembourg is a very small country, with one, relatively new university, this participant went on to say that 'I think that having only one university in Luxembourg, you cannot really talk about Luxembourgish research. Not in my field' [LS8, I16, 8]. The field in question was specific to Luxembourg – a study of pathways in the educational system – which might appear 'local' but has to be related to the 'international'

> Because you can't exist if you don't go to international conferences or you work together with people at different universities. So it's absolutely international and Luxembourg specific but there's no European dimension for myself. [LS8, I1, 10]

It is evident then from this that this participant thought of themselves as international, rather than European which they associated with the idea that European research would be about European institutions.

When asked about how they thought their research, when finished, might be a contribution to understanding society, the following participant encapsulates the richest response in that they see their contribution being at three levels, in contrast to LS8 who thought only of the local and the international. Specifically, LS2 said first they do research 'with and for the Luxembourg population':

> And I think I would consider myself as being on every level like a local, European and international researcher. Local because I do research with and for the Luxembourg population. [LS2, I8, 6]

They then go on to explain how they did research in other European countries, and adds, thirdly, that being in Luxembourg is itself a European experience, and because of its size, it forces contacts with other countries:

> European because I have strong relationships with partners at other universities and also yeah as I said from my study that I did during my PhD I involved also participants from Germany, for example. I've also done online studies where several European countries were involved. And also in Luxembourg I think you're automatically European because the country is so small. You really have to have contacts to other countries. [LS2, I16, 8]

This participant goes on to reinforce previous definitions where the notion of 'international' is a matter of attending conferences and 'getting noticed':

> And then also international because I also I got two international conferences and I talk to international researchers. I have some connections there also in an international level and of course I try to put my research forward on an international level and get it noticed by international researchers. [LS2, I16, 9]

In short, what we have seen so far is a view that being a researcher automatically means being international, and that conceptual distinctions are difficult. There are three levels to which one might contribute through one's research although for some people only two of these are important, and thirdly that the notion of 'contribution' is significant. 'Function' and 'contribution' are thus related but distinguishable. A 'functional' theory is complemented by a relationship to society, to be working 'with and for' society at three levels.

Factors creating international and European identities

Student-researchers also have beliefs or theories about the factors which create or cause the process of 'identification'. Although the conceptual distinction between being a European and an international researcher is difficult, when causal factors are discussed, there is a stronger clarification of how some factors are European.

Language is often cited by student-researchers as a significant factor. There is immediate recognition of the scientific import of English but this is counter-balanced by the use of different languages in data collection in Europe by 'European researchers' who are contrasted with 'the rest of the world' and 'the United States':

> Well in terms of the languages I mean the most important language is English. For scientific communication just in my field, the data collections I do are always with people so I have to speak people's language. So for Europe, I have the advantage that I speak five languages and so I can speak with many people in Europe. Not for the rest of the world I guess but yeah this is especially important for European researchers. It's not important if you're in the United States I guess. (LS2, L3, 8)

Multilingual competence is thus used to distinguish between being a European researcher and an international researcher, in 'the rest of the world'.

Research mobility is another important factor, as we have seen above, when participants talk of their international identification, but they are also aware of the specificity of this factor in European policy, and its impact. One of the participants referred to the most well-known policy promulgated by the European Union to encourage a sense of being a European:

> I suppose that people who made their ERASMUS in Europe, maybe they have more of a European identity. (LS5 I4, 21)

Others point out that mobility plans or agreements between different universities of different European countries may also lead to creating an identity of a doctoral researcher in Europe. This is articulated in terms of recognition of qualifications by those directly involved in agreements between universities:

> I don't think that I'm directly faced with problems of recognition in terms of doctorates. Since I will be given a PhD both from the University of Leuven in Belgium and I will also receive the title of doctor of the University of Luxembourg upon successful completion, so this might make the situation more particular. (LS7 I10, 6)

That this is a particularity of the European situation is important and is reinforced by another participant:

> I actually have two separate degrees. One degree was awarded by Geneva … .the doctoral degree in educational science … .and the other degree issued by university of Luxembourg and it was in linguistics. And there was an agreement between these two universities mentioning that I can use both degrees. (LS6, I8, 11)

A third factor is the size of Luxembourg. We saw above how one student-researcher says that being in Luxembourg obliges them to have contacts in other countries, and another participant articulates this in the paradox of a 'European nationality':

> I'm European. I think so because, I mean, in Luxembourg, there's only one university. And also, on a nationality level, I consider myself very much European. [LS8, I8, 8]

But then the conceptual difficulty of distinguishing 'European' and 'international' reappears and this participant says that the university is international but so is Luxembourg as a whole: 'Because I grew up with all these. Also, there were so many foreigners. […] And I have so many friends who are from immigration background' [LS8, I8, 8]. It is also pointed out by another participant that the 'international' character of the doctoral school is important:

> The whole doctoral school and the whole university is very international and then the other students that I got to know through this doctoral school and we formed this group, this informal PhD meeting group was also very international, yes. And it was good to have the different disciplinary experience and the different national experiences and also the different language experience. [LS4, I4, 10]

Here again language is mentioned, and the multilingual population is implied, so that it is possible that 'international' is here being used for 'European'.

Looking for factors which are clearly connected with the concept of the international researcher, we have already seen several references to the importance of attending conferences, a marker and a causal factor of being international. The same point is made by another student-researcher who, when asked what advice they would give to new researchers, focused *inter alia* on the importance of conferences and the way in which the UL facilitates this, and again language competence is mentioned

> And also to really travel and go to conferences, meet other people, other researchers and see what they are doing, and how they are doing it, and really … also pose your questions, don't stay silent all the time. And … also use the possibilities that you have at the university with the doctoral school courses, with the language courses and so on. I think it's … Opit's a huge opportunity to study here in Luxemburg because they have many resources that they don't have at other universities. So at German universities, for example, as a PhD student, you have very limited resources. Most have to work at other jobs so they have limited time for their PhD because they have another job, and then they cannot go to conferences very much, because they only get like 200 Euros a year to go to a conference which is nothing. If you want to go for example to a US conference, you cannot pay, and here in Luxemburg it's very generous. [LS4, I16, 14]

We can conclude therefore that there are several factors which student-researchers are aware of as influencing their experience and their sense of being international and/or European. It is also possible for them to identify factors which create a European identity and those which are associated with being international, despite the slippage which often occurs in the use of the terms. Some of these factors are very much a characteristic of the Luxembourg context. Some of them are general – the size of Luxembourg as a country, the need to go beyond the boundaries – and some are specific to the University, not least its financial support for international experience. We can therefore now conclude with a return to the question of policy.

Conclusion

We pointed out above how University documents draw attention to their European 'Bologna' connections, and how there is an explicit ambition that student-researchers should go 'beyond the boundaries'. There is evidence from our participants that they did experience this and that it was actively supported *inter alia* in their doctoral school. There was no clear indication in the policy documents that a European and/or international researcher identity is an expected outcome, although it might be inferred. Similarly there is no research literature which addresses this question.

The student-researchers on the other hand are very aware of the topic and discuss it among themselves as well as in our interviews. The interviews have shown that there is no strong conceptual dichotomy between being a European and an international researcher but that some of the practices of the university as well as factors in the specific Luxemburg context in which they live and work, are understood as more European and others as more international. Language and multilingual competence are important European factors, and the multilingual character of Luxembourg, of the University and of its members whether students or teachers is an important feature of the findings. Travel and conferences also make a student-researcher 'international' although some travel is more European than international, and is part of European policy.

The particular context and nature of the UL, as we pointed out in our introduction, provides an opportunity to investigate the European researcher identity. This is a case study and its transferability (Lincoln and Guba 1985) has yet to be tested. To what extent this policy and practice can be extended and whether for example the European Union ERASMUS programme, which offers financial help to doctoral students for study abroad (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-individuals/students/studying-abroad_en), is an appropriate means of following Luxembourg practice and leads to similar identity-effects is an issue we cannot pursue here, but one which needs to be considered. Furthermore, there is a need to consider whether the distinction between being an 'international' or a 'European' researcher, strongly marked by multilingualism, is worth pursuing in policy-making at local, national and European levels, or whether policy-makers in countries beyond Europe should introduce some of the characteristics of the European researcher into their practice.

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