Justin J.W. Powell

FOUNDING THE INTER/NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG IN THE BOLOGNA ERA

Situated in the heart of Western Europe, the University of Luxembourg is among the youngest research universities[1]. This new venture is one of the few public universities to be founded since the pan-European "Bologna process" got underway during celebrations for the Sorbonne's 800th Anniversary in 1998.

At ten and growing rapidly, the University of Luxembourg (UL) is on the path to becoming a full-fledged, internationally recognised research university within a thriving globalised world of academic institutions. Recruiting scholars, staff, and students from over a hundred countries across the globe, the university relies to a considerable extent on transnational, particularly European, mobility to achieve growth. Embedded in a culturally hyper-diverse and multilingual, small, but prosperous nation-state – that is well-positioned in significant regional and worldwide networks – Luxembourg's "national" flagship university is thoroughly international. While exceptional in Europe due to its relative youth on a continent with centuries of academic history, it well exemplifies recent global trends in the development of the research university. First established in Germany and spreading globally since, the research university seeks to combine higher-level academic teaching and research.

INTER/NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES BETWEEN THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

Higher education and science, transmitting and producing knowledge in the *lingua franca* of the day, are thoroughly worldwide activities. Research universities provide spaces for multicultural learning and for scientific discovery. Increasingly, ideals of "progress" rely on successfully institutionalising universities that promise to generate the "knowledge society" and economic development (Ramirez & Meyer, 2013) as well as to further expand human rights and capabilities (Meyer, 2009). Today, all countries invest in higher education, the smaller ones often doing so through a single national university, despite the considerable state investments this requires. Creating new institutions involves high costs and myriad challenges – especially for small states due to limited highly-qualified human capital and lack of economies of scale (see Martin & Bray, 2011). Indeed, the costs of tertiary education have risen by 15 per cent across the developed world since 2000 (OECD, 2011). However, higher education investments and scientific productivity vary considerably across countries. Successful research universities provide considerable returns to national investments in education and science as they reach beyond their local contexts to attract the best and brightest internationally (Salmi, 2009). Others struggle to develop their reputations. All must balance the main pillars of research and teaching, the unity of which remains the foundational principle of the modern, research university (Ash, 1999). Today, universities are challenged by the lack of resources as many states retrench their commitments to public higher education.

From the beginning, universities have been standard-bearers of the nation-states in which they are located, often serving to train elites – from civil servants and business leaders to clergy and intellectuals – for the nation. Yet they have also reached beyond such boundaries, be they political, linguistic, or disciplinary, oriented as they are to universal goals such as truth-seeking and cross-cultural understanding. Higher education, more than ever due to massive educational expansion in societies worldwide (Schofer & Meyer, 2005), is often viewed as the most assured pathway to elevated social status for individuals and to economic growth for societies. Individuals with tertiary education qualifications enjoy higher salaries and lower unemployment rates than other groups. Having a tertiary degree instead of an upper secondary degree provides significant net long-term economic advantages (OECD, 2011: Indicator A9). Thus, while higher education systems exhibit durable national differences, especially research universities have become even more international in orientation, following an "emerging global model" (Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008) as they seek to capitalise on the myriad benefits this organisational form provides.

The on-going internationalisation of higher education and science challenges traditional nation-based analyses. In response, neo-institutional analyses have explored the powerful diffusion of worldwide ideas and norms (see Drori, et al., 2003; Baker & LeTendre, 2005). Such work has uncovered the ideologies, values, and assumptions that guide policymakers, researchers and educators as they continuously attempt to optimise institutions and organisations based on comparisons with others nationally and abroad. Trends in transnationalisation, such as increased student and faculty mobility, are incontrovertible. Continued growth in the numbers of youth and adults attending all types of higher education institutions is a key element behind both growing scientific capacity and the role of the university in knowledge production (Baker, forthcoming). Whereas about half a million (mostly male)

students, or just one per cent of the youth age-cohort, were enrolled in higher education worldwide in 1900, a century later approximately 100 million youth were enrolled, representing 20 per cent of the college-aged women and men (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). This phenomenal growth in capacity forms a critical base for training the world's future scientists and scholars (Altbach, 2005).

The rationale and vision shared by many governments of how to build capacity for science is not difficult to understand: infrastructure for research lies at the heart of the so-called knowledge triangle – *the beneficial combination of research activity, specialised education/training and innovation that advances our knowledge* (European Commission, 2010: 3). Internationally oriented universities aim to prepare students for employment as well as for global citizenship, especially in states like Luxembourg that rely to a large extent on foreign workers and the worldwide export of goods and services. In terms of research, governments hope universities will strengthen institutional and individual capabilities and broaden knowledge networks to contribute to research and development, to enhance prestige and visibility, and to generate revenue and economic growth.

Alongside excellence in research (evaluated by publications and projects), academic freedom, and adequate facilities and funding, crucial factors in establishing the global research university include the internationalisation of students, staff, and faculty and the resulting diversity (Levin, Jeong & Ou, 2006). Inexorably, universities compete in multiple university rankings, even if their worth and methodologies have been criticised (e.g., Hazelkorn, 2013). These types of continuous comparison and benchmarking are, however, only the latest in age-old competition for talent, resources, and reputation extending beyond national borders. Trans/national mobility of academics, then as now, proves vital for the diffusion of ideas and to drive the diverse intellectual environments conducive to innovation. Increasingly, the potentials of higher education and science at the systemic, organisational, and individual levels rely on cross-border cooperation and supranational coordination, such as the Bologna process in Europe.

THE EMERGENT EUROPEAN MODEL OF SKILL FORMATION

Europeanization is not limited to higher education but part of larger changes in skill formation; the key to myriad societal goals. Since the beginning of the century, intergovernmental reform initiatives in Europe seek to promote a comprehensive European model of skill formation situated at the nexus of vocational training and higher education (see Powell, Bernhard, & Graf, 2012): This emergent model, a *bricolage* that integrates diverse characteristics of influential national models, such as the German, French, British, and American, responds to heightened global competition among "knowledge societies". Simultaneously, it challenges national systems to accept common standards and develop similar practices, though convergence has occurred far more on discursive than on structural levels (Powell, et al., 2012). Dozens of countries worldwide now implement these principles through membership in the Bologna process. The diffusion of ideas – their translation and transfer – has been crucial in guiding these on-going education reforms. More than ever, countries and regions explicitly compete with each other through human capital investment, and contemporary reforms aim to improve higher education. Indeed, the Lisbon strategy in Europe set about to create *the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world* (European Council, 2004). While countries share such key ideals and aspirations, they also develop and maintain contrasting foci, deeply embedded in institutional arrangements. Hosting the European Union with one of three capital cities, Luxembourg reflects not only national priorities, but also European and global goals. At all levels, decision-makers discursively support investments in higher education and science.

Building on the basis of decades of prior European initiatives, the Bologna process has established a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to facilitate individual cross-border mobility, coordinate national quality assurance, ensure the transparency and recognition of qualifications obtained elsewhere and mutually recognize credits and degrees. If dozens of countries now recognize the Bologna template as a model to emulate and as standards to implement, most countries join the process not *tabula rasa*, but rather after decades or centuries of university institu-

tionalisation. Following a host of post-WWII European programs to facilitate educational expansion and build bridges between countries, the Bologna process considerably intensified the on-going Europeanization of national skill formation systems. In this phase of European standardisation, the University of Luxembourg was founded.

FOUNDING THE UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG

Ironically, just as European borders were becoming more porous and spatial mobility is everywhere supported and glorified, Luxembourg invested heavily in establishing a new home-grown university. In so doing, it provides an alternative to the tradition of study abroad for the youth of Luxembourg. On the one hand, rising international competition and supranational coordination increased the exogenous pressure on Luxembourg to found a research university to foster scientific innovation upon which to build the future "knowledge society".

Further, the university is viewed as a means to diversify the national economy and develop new growth potential. It also serves to integrate multilingual citizens from diverse cultural background into a polity dominated by local elites. On the other hand, the university was founded against considerable resistance, both pecuniary and ideological, the latter especially due to the long-standing custom of educating the elite in neighbouring countries within cosmopolitan networks (Rohstock & Schreiber, 2013). From the very beginning, Luxembourg has relied heavily on student mobility and tertiary education provided abroad to supply qualified personnel, especially teachers, lawyers, and physicians; this has generated cultural hybridity (Rohstock, 2010: 44; Rohstock & Schreiber, 2013). Luxembourg certainly boasts more spatial mobility than other European countries. Arriving in a new century, Luxembourg did eventually depart from its unusual path of educating most of its elite abroad. Yet, as elsewhere, the tremendous rhetorical concentration on student exchanges and cross-border learning is not matched by empirical reality, with mobility still highly socially selective – the preserve of elites (Powell & Finger, 2013).

Thus, the University of Luxembourg, now enjoying broad-based support and rising reputation, provides the opportunity to gauge the impact of global norms generally and the principles codified in the Bologna process specifically. The significance of this case is mostly an exemplar of the recent changes in the European research university. The UL's founders selected multilingualism, interdisciplinarity, and internationalisation as its three founding principles. These foci both reflect global trends and capitalise on Luxembourg's history as a trading crossroads and its contemporary situation of cultural and linguistic hyper-diversity. Scientifically, strategic investments in promising research areas are meant to compensate being a new, small university. Although the university's antecedents can be traced back to the early 1800s, not until 1974 was the Centre Universitaire du Luxembourg, hosting several humanities and social science departments, opened alongside the teacher training institute (ISERP) and an Institut Supérieur de Technologie (Meyer, 2008). Building upon this legacy, the UL was founded in 2003 as a private, government-dependent institution *(établissement public)* directed by a seven-member council, the Board of governors. Aiming to develop strengths based on both international trends and local and regional needs, the university has three multidisciplinary faculties and two major interdisciplinary research centers. By identifying in advance the most promising research areas that also reflect Luxembourg's economic, geographic, and social contexts, the university concentrates its resources.

The mission statement emphasises that as *a small-sized institution with an international reach, [it] aims at excellence in research and education. … to be among the world's top universities. UL intends to be innovative, centred on research, … and attentive to the needs of the society around it* (www.uni.lu 2012). Most funding – the total budget for 2012 from all sources was around €150 million – is provided by the state, although external sources, including research grants from publicly-financed National Research Fund (FNR), have risen rapidly over the past several years (UL, 2013). Although the financial autonomy provided by the national government is considerable, organisational autonomy is more limited in European comparison (see UL's rating at www.university-autonomy.eu). With nearly 100 nationalities represented among the 6,288 students (2012/13), and around half non-native,

the university is highly diverse (UL, 2013). Regardless of nationality, each student pays tuition of €200 per semester. State investment ensures that Luxembourg's national university can attract students not only locally but from around the world – and that the Luxembourg labour market has the qualified workers it needs to grow. Yet a key challenge remains to recruit the most talented student body, since elites continue to send their children abroad in large numbers, with neighbouring Germany, Belgium, and France preferred. The university has three official languages – German, French, and English. In a hyper-diverse society marked by migration and mobility, internationalisation has been present from the start. Reflecting both national heritage and the Bologna consensus about the value of mobility, all Bachelor-level students are expected to spend a semester abroad as a required part of their course of study.

Unlike many other small states, Luxembourg is highly international, ethnically diverse, and prosperous. Almost completely dependent on international trading relationships and global markets for capital and labour, Luxembourg's extraordinary recent growth was made possible mainly through immigration. Similarly, the university aims to achieve excellence in research by recruiting top faculty members worldwide. Over the past decade, further intensified investments in education and science have attracted scientists and students from around the globe.

AMBITION AND COORDINATION, INVESTMENT AND GROWTH: LUXEMBOURG'S LATE-MOVER ADVANTAGE?

The aspiration to have an internationally recognised university reflects UL's culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse host country, thus its ambitions are not limited to the national context. Indeed, the government seems to have found promising mechanisms to compete globally, such as significant investment in selected, high-potential, and often multidisciplinary research fields; the building of cutting-edge campus facilities; and the establishment of a range of undergraduate and graduate programs to train local elites and attract individuals from around the world. While these elements are highly advantageous, the recruitment of international scholars and students to a university still attaining its reputation takes considerable effort, as do international and regional partnerships of differing depth and significance. The Universität der Großregion or Université de la Grande Région (www.uni-gr.eu) that links universities in Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg provides cross-border coordination enabling such benefits as students' eligibility to take courses at other campuses in the network at no additional cost. To convert material resources into human capital and scientific advancement takes time – generations, in fact. Yet because many traditionally strong higher education systems currently face serious challenges such as lack of vision and resources, not least due to the consequences of the financial crisis, newer entrants able and willing to sufficiently endow universities have a golden opportunity. Combining investments with deliberate planning and scientific autonomy, these institutions may well profit from late-mover advantage.

Arguably, competition in tertiary education and scientific activity will continue to increase worldwide, especially due to the massive expansion of education and science systems in East Asia and elsewhere. But Luxembourg has shown dedication to fund its ambitious experiment in capacity building via university institutionalisation. Leaders have accepted the principle that the future belongs to education and science. The relocation of several faculties to the new campus being built in Belval symbolises the hopes for the research university as an incubator for economic and social development not only of Esch-sur-Alzette and the industrial South. All of Luxembourg will profit from the growing import and export of knowledge.

In sum, Luxembourg has invested both considerable capital and strategic planning in the establishment of its inter/national university, aiming to compete on a global scale by concentrating its resources, both intellectual and financial, and by building on the country's strengths and priorities. Alliances with other universities emphasise its international outlook and facilitate the mobility and networking so crucial for scientific progress. The establishment of the University of Luxembourg reflects national determination as well as tensions, such as in questions of language, organisational structures, and autonomy. Influenced by the rise of European supranational coordination, particularly the Bologna process, it signifies a response to mount-

ing global educational and scientific competition as well as collaboration. The UL shows that within the contemporary period of higher education development – characterised by worldwide rivalry, national ambitions, and regional coordination – no country wishing to become a “knowledge society” can do so without an international research university. Whatever the future holds, the University is now Luxembourg’s standard-bearer in the global arena.

NOTES

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Robert Harmsen
The Challenges of the Contemporary University

1 The present chapter derives from Professor Harmsen's inaugural lecture, 'Globalisation, Europeanisation and the Governance of Higher Education', delivered on 23 January 2013.

2 See further Mitchell G. Ash (ed.), *Mythos Humboldt: Vergangenheit und Zukunft der deutschen Universitäten* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999).

3 See further Sheldon Rothblatt, *The Modern University and its Discontents: The Fate of Newman's Legacies in Britain and America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

4 Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963). Citations here refer to the fifth and final edition of the work, published in 2001.

5 Ibid, p. 5.

6 Ibid, p. 15.

7 Ibid.

8 Talcott Parsons and Gerald M. Platt, *The American University* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

9 George Fallis, *Multiversities, Ideas and Democracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

10 Ibid, pp. 17 and 48.

11 For a recent survey, see Roger King, Simon Marginson and Rajani Naidoo (eds.), *Handbook on Globalization and Higher Education* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).

12 See, for example, Ulrich Teichler, 'The Changing Debate on Internationalisation of Higher Education', *Higher Education* vol. 48, no. 1 (2004), pp. 5-26.

13 Ben Wildavsky, *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Reshaping the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

14 Simon Marginson, '"Ideas of a University" in a Global Era', paper delivered at the conference 'Positioning [the] University in the Globalized World: Changing Governance and Coping Strategies in Asia', University of Hong Kong, 10-11 December 2008. Available for download from: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/marginson.html

15 Ibid, p. 12.

16 Ibid, p. 10.

17 One of the more influential (and severe) critiques in this regard is that of the former long-serving Harvard University president Derek Bok. See Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

18 Clayton M. Christensen and Henry J. Eyring, *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

19 Holden Thorp and Buck Goldstein, *Engines of Innovation: The Entrepreneurial University in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

20 Burton R. Clark, *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation* (Bingley: Emerald, 2007).

21 Henry Etzkowitz, *The Triple Helix: University-Industry-Government Innovation in Action* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).

22 Ibid, p. 9.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid, p. 30.

25 See further Stefan Collini, *What are Universities for?* (London: Penguin, 2012).

26 *The Observer,* 5 January 2013.

27 Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2012/revised tenth anniversary edition), pp. 309-312.

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Justin J.W. Powell
Founding the Inter/National University of Luxembourg in the Bologna Era

1 This chapter derives from a contribution, "Small State, Large World, Global University? Comparing Ascendant National Universities in Luxembourg and Qatar," that appeared in *Current Issues in Comparative Education* (2012) 15(1): 100-113. I thank Jennifer Dusdal, Bernhard Ebbinghaus, Lukas Graf and Michel Margue for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

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