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e-mail: journal.rehe@ubbcluj.ro

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Politics and Policies of Higher Education: Policy Transfer and the Bologna Process

Simona Torotcoi

*Doctoral School of Political Science, Public Policy and International Relations
Central European University, Vigyázó Ferenc u. 2. Room 220/1051 Budapest,
Hungary, e-mail: Torotcoi_Simona@phd.ceu.edu*

Abstract: In this paper, I show how a policy transfer framework can be applied to higher education in Europe, and can provide a different understanding on the relationship between multi-level governance, policy transfer and policy implementation. First, the paper offers an overview of the multi-level-ness of the European Higher Education Area (levels, actors, issues). This is paramount in a time in which discussions about governance and implementation issues are on the verge. Secondly, building on the given context, this paper applies to higher education a framework for analysing policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000, p. 9). Thirdly, and most importantly, by combining the policy transfer and policy implementation literature, this paper puts forward a framework for analysing what facilitates or obstructs transfer in multi-level, multi-actor setting. Differentiating between three levels of implementation, namely: adoption, transposition and institutional implementation would reflect into a more appropriate approach for researching the different implementation outcomes, since the Bologna Process relies on national and institutional elements. This is significant because higher education is not an area under EU competencies; however there are similarities with other areas, e.g. the EU social policy, in terms of the method employed (OMC) to achieve the set goals, the role of the EU institutions, etc.

Keywords: higher education, multilevel governance, policy transfer, policy implementation, Bologna Process

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The Bologna Process: What is it?

There has always been an interest in exploring compliance and implementation of international treaties and laws, either from the perspective of the involved actors, the process itself and its analysis, trends in development, or of the issues the key stakeholders are dealing with. However, not until recently the topic of examining the implementation of voluntary policy agreements has started to be a topic of discussion. Enhancing policies that act in ways that are consistent with the goals and objectives intended by the policy makers in international voluntary agreements represents a starting point for the members of that agreement to express their commitment and coordinate their policies.

The Bologna Process, more recently known as the European Higher Education Area, is a voluntarily agreed, collective and intergovernmental effort to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education by helping diverse higher education systems to converge towards more transparent systems and to create a harmonized European higher education area. The foundation of the Bologna Process started with Claude Allegre, the French Minister for Education, who in 1998 together with his counterparts from Germany, the UK, and Italy decided to launch a European initiative, a “Joint declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system” otherwise known as the Sorbonne Declaration. According to Racke (2006), “the harmonization of higher education structures was meant to increase the employability of graduates across Europe” (p. 2). Through the Declaration, the ministers “committed themselves to encouraging a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability” (Racke, 2006). According to Racke (2006), this cooperation was triggered by the fact that, through it, member states could address common European problems, which otherwise could not be dealt with at national level. This fact is actually reflected even in later reports, where it is stated that member states commit themselves to the process and use the Bologna Process for national purposes (Kauko, 2012). By example, Claude Allegre, based on prior reports, which were proposing the introduction of the two-cycle

system; compatibility with other European systems; and promotion of international attractiveness, wanted to reform the French higher education system. Fearing of strong resistance from universities, academics and students, Allegre invited his counterparts to join introducing such reforms through a European initiative, which would be easier rather than facing the potential opposition at domestic level. This idea is supported also by Moravcsik (1994, p. 1), who claims that “international cooperation redistributes domestic power resources in favour of national executives”.

In this respect, Allegre and his counterparts took the Sorbonne initiative outside the EU framework in order to avoid an involvement of the European Commission, and supported the idea that it should be based on intergovernmental cooperation and not be part of the Community policy. According to Racke (2006), the Bologna Process was initiated outside the EU as ministers wished to maintain full control over the process and sought to avoid a transfer of competences or even of standardization of European higher education systems (p. 1).

Using the distinction between *supranationalism* and *intergovernmentalism* will contribute to understanding the origins, the context and the development of the Bologna Process, but also how the agreed commitments/policies are reflected at the participating countries level. Applied to the Bologna Process, this distinction presents to what extent the EU institutions and conventions are interfering or overlapping with the overall Process and its intergovernmental nature, and whether they are influencing in one way or another its level of transposition and implementation. Both concepts, *supranationalism* and *intergovernmentalism*, refer to the relationship between three elements: the role of the participating countries, the power-relations between them, and the existence or not of a certain authority. On the one hand, *intergovernmentalism* focuses on the role and importance of member states (currently 49 countries acting as main actors) in the process of setting goals and policies (horizontal policy-making). *Supranationalism*, on the other hand, refers to the amount of power given to an authority which is higher than the state (EU institutions especially the Commission, the Council of Europe, European Council, including treaties, and other legally binding documents such as Lisbon Recognition Convention- a top-down policy-making approach).

Intergovernmentalism

In 1998, through the Sorbonne Declaration, member states (their ministers) “committed themselves to encouraging a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability”, and therefore agreed to design policies in order to enhance student mobility, to promote the attractiveness of the member states higher education systems by facilitating recognition through a system based on two main cycles, the implementation of the ECTS scheme and of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), a system which aims to facilitate the recognition of studies including the assessment of qualifications, the recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education, and the recognition of periods of study and of higher education qualifications.

A year later, through the Bologna Declaration (1999) strong emphasis was put on more European co-operation in quality assurance and the promotion of the European dimension in higher education. In 2001, through the Prague Communiqué, member states were encouraged to create lifelong learning policies, to facilitate the partnership of higher education institutions and students in promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and policies aiming at the social dimension of higher education, including the access of underrepresented groups. Later on, followed the introduction of stocktaking reports and the doctoral studies as a third cycle, and the idea of cooperating with other parts of the world (Bergen Communiqué 2005), international openness, policies focusing on student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education, and also multidimensional transparency tools and funding (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009).

Every two or three years Ministerial meeting are being organized in order to evaluate the progress made within the EHEA and to agree on further steps to be taken. Each meeting produced a communiqué based on ministers’ deliberations, which indicates the progress that has been achieved but also sets new priorities through declarations. This is what I call the Bologna “policy scripts”. Besides these scripts, it is worth mentioning the LRC, which is calling participating countries to recognize “higher education qualifications in the academic field within Europe”. The Convention sets a number of basic requirements and

acknowledges that individual countries could engage in “an even more constructive scheme”. This EU aspect coinciding with the Bologna Process, sometimes neglected by those interested in the overall Process, represents one of the cornerstones of the Process since it constitutes the only legally binding document, a fact that might also explain the different levels of compliance compared with the other agreed commitments.

Nevertheless, Bologna cannot be reduced only to the work done by the Ministers of Education or country representatives participating in the ministerial meetings. In total there are 58 parties: 49 participating countries (EU and non-EU), the European Commission and 7 consultative bodies. The parties are organized through different structures including a Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), a Board, a Secretariat, different working groups and consultative bodies.

As far as the BFUG is concerned, it is the main follow-up structure in the Bologna Process (BP). The BFUG oversees the BP between the ministerial meetings and meets twice a year; it is chaired by the country holding the Presidency of the European Union, and it is supported by the Bologna Secretariat. Among its roles, it can establish working groups which might deal with certain topics in details based on Bologna Seminars¹ input.

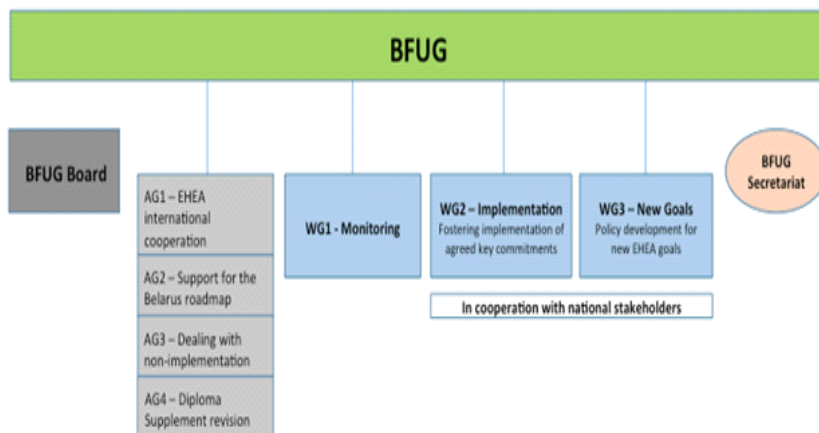


Figure 1. BFUG Organization Chart 2015-2018 (Source: EHEA, 2014)

¹ Seminars are included in the Bologna Work program (elaborated after each ministerial conference and approved by the BFUG, and aim to address specific action lines) for the inter-ministerial period.

The BFUG is made up of representatives of the participating countries, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO, Education International, ENQA and BUSINESSEUROPE. The BFUG is responsible of the actual work and for the development of the overall process. "It develops and decides on the rules and working methods, and sets up working groups, task forces and similar, comprising BFUG members, but on occasion also other parties, also through Bologna Conferences and seminars". Figure 1 presents the organization chart of the BFUG, including both its Working Groups (WG) and the Ad-Hoc Working Groups (AG). Beside these bodies, there are also consultative bodies such as the Council of Europe, EUA, ESU and EURASHE, but also "stakeholder organizations" which, broadly speaking, represent the higher education community.

The BFUG work is supported by the Bologna Secretariat. The Secretariat is hosted in the country which holds the next ministerial meeting. Its mandate corresponds with the period between the ministerial meetings, and its main aim is to ensure the continuity of the Bologna reforms by supporting the BFUG and its spinoff bodies² by preparing draft agendas and reports, notes or minutes. Furthermore, the Secretariat has to provide reliable and current information and data about the progress of the educational reforms within the Bologna Process.

As far as the Board is concerned, its main aim is to prepare the BFUG meetings and therefore it usually meets every six months before the BFUG meetings, overseeing the work of the groups. It consists of the EHEA co-chairs (the EU Presidency country where the ministerial meeting took place, plus a non-EU Bologna country) and the European Commission and the consultative members (Council of Europe, European University Association - EUA, European Student Union - ESU, The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education - EURASHE).

² Board, Working Groups, Networks, Ad-Hoc Working Groups, Seminars.

Supranationalism

The *intergovernmentalist* aspect does not fully capture the Bologna reality; there are also *supranational* aspects, most of the time neglected by scholars. This aspect implies that international organizations, more specifically EU institutions and agencies, have the power to shape and influence policy-making through their social and cognitive features (Martens et al., 2004, p. 2). As such, starting with 1993, the European Community competences expanded increasingly towards education (the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty, European Council 2000 Lisbon Presidency Conclusions). As far as the “European” character of the BP is concerned, the Council of Europe plays an important role.

First, the contribution of the Council of Europe is reflected through the European Cultural Convention, (an international legal treaty created in 1954), which is one of the conditions for becoming a member in the BP. In the 1980s, the Council of Europe contributed to the model of inter-university cooperation as the privileged framework for student and staff mobility. Then, in 1997, the Council of Europe together with UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the LRC). The Convention is an international agreement, which has been ratified also by non-member states, and which aims to facilitate the recognition of studies. Starting with 1999, the Convention had to be ratified by all participating countries in the BP (Rauhvargers and Bergan, 2008).

It is worth mentioning the fact that one year after the Bologna Declaration was signed, the EU adopted the Lisbon Strategy, EU’s 2000 overarching development plan. Accordingly, in the Berlin Communiqué (2003) it is stated that “Ministers take into due consideration the conclusions of the European Councils in Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002) and calling for further action and closer co-operation in the context of the Bologna Process.”

Furthermore, the Commission, through its memoranda and publications, contributes to opinion formation. Additionally, a more direct and technical form of governance, besides the regulations, refers to the use of material and financial means and incentives (Batory et al., 2011). Assessing among others the involvement of supranational institutions in European higher education, Barkholt (2005, p. 25) claims that even though higher education is not under the supervision of EU

institutions, the European Commission does play a significant role in this sense, specifically through programmes such as Erasmus (promoting student and teacher mobility) and through the “European dimensions” of higher education (curricular development), or lifelong learning. Moreover, the choice for the open method of coordination (OMC)³ to implement the BP comes exactly from the European Commission, which developed the method in order to implement the Lisbon Strategy, including the goal of making Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.

At the Prague ministerial meeting in May 2001, it was decided to formally accept the Commission as an additional full member. Therefore, the Commission certainly is in a position to influence the direction of the BP, its role as a partner alongside the participating countries is a normative influence to drive policy implementation. Currently, there are many joint initiatives between the BP and the EU such as the ones addressing the need to improve the existing synergies between the Bologna higher education developments and the European Research Area, or the Europe 2020 Strategy.

EU Level	BP Level
Characteristics	
Policy entrepreneurship from some national capitals and the active involvement of the European Council in setting the overall direction of policy	The role of the founding countries: France, Italy, Germany, the UK. The “supervision”/ “observatory” role of the Commission. The countries taking over the responsibility of hosting the Bologna Secretariat and the forthcoming ministerial conference
The predominance of the Council of Ministers (or an equivalent forum of national ministers) in consolidating cooperation	The Bologna Follow Up Group oversees the process between the ministerial meets at least once every six months and chaired by the

³ According to the Official website of the European Union, the OMC is a framework for cooperation between the EU Member States. Under it, member states evaluate one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice play virtually no part in the OMC process. The OMC takes place in areas which fall within the competence of the member states. It is based principally on: jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council); jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines); and benchmarking.

	country holding the Presidency of the European Union and is supported by a Bologna Secretariat
The limited or marginal role of the Commission	Apparently limited or marginal role of the European Commission
The exclusion of the EP and the EC] from the circle of involvement	The exclusion of the EP and the EC] from the circle of involvement
The involvement of a distinct circle of key national policy-makers	e.g. In Romania: Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI)
The adoption of special arrangements for managing cooperation, in particular the Council secretariat	Bologna Secretariat provides first draft agendas for BFUG meetings, has a role in drafting official documents within the European Higher Education Area and provides background discussion documents, liaising with relevant authors as appropriate.
The opaqueness of the process, to national parliaments and citizens	Resistance from some governments, from universities and students alike.
The capacity on occasion to deliver substantive joint policy	e.g. The creation of the European Higher Education Area by 2010
Variants of IT occurring outside the EU on policy issues connected to EU policy arenas, characterized by	
The use of conventions or separate treaties under international law as the primary legal instruments	Lisbon Recognition Convention Lisbon Cultural Convention Declarations Communiques
A membership different from that of the EU	e.g. Armenia, Russia
Central role being played by ministers and officials	Central role being played by ministers in charge of higher education
Very limited access for national parliaments and usually no transnational parliamentary forum	Very limited access for national parliaments and usually no transnational parliamentary forum
Limited opportunities for the involvement of societal groups or stakeholders	Limited opportunities for the involvement of societal groups or stakeholders, however there are some e.g. European Student Union

Source: Author's compilation

While acknowledging that these elements are found also in other EU (and non-EU) initiatives such as Common Foreign and Security Policy, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Monetary Union

or EU Justice and Home Affairs, from *Table 1* it can be noted that not all of the Intensive Transgovernmentalism characteristics fit to the Bologna in the same way. However, similar structures and bodies exist at the BP level but these consist mainly of state actors and other social or community groups.

As a conclusion for these aspects, it can be claimed that the BP is a complex process which brings together different modes of governance, of actors and institutions, a fact which can explain, for instance, why certain countries implement certain commitments, whereas other do not. However, the question of why some countries are predisposed to respond to soft law and voluntary agreements such as the BP case is still, largely, unanswered

Policy Transfer and the Bologna Process

Given the specific components of the Bologna Process, such as its character of acting as a policy model (through the joint decision-making between the Ministers of Higher Education from the member states, including the regularly occurring steps in the policymaking process), of using the open method of coordination (including the definition of common objectives to guide national policy, translating guidelines into national action plans and evaluating and benchmarking of national performance), and also its intergovernmental aspect, the Bologna Process can be identified to guide further investigation from the perspective of policy transfer.

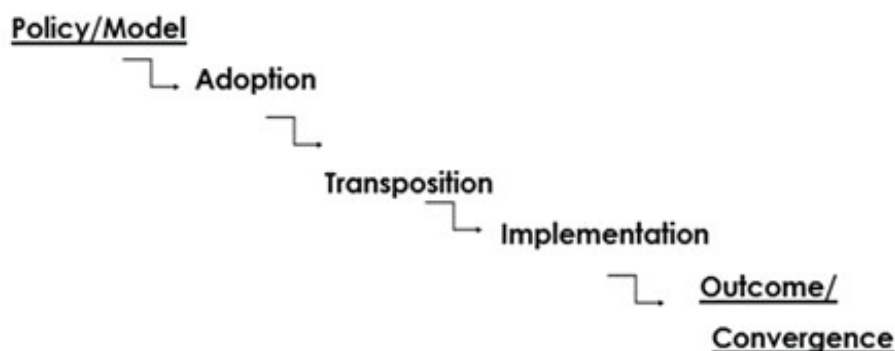


Figure 2. Bologna Process policy design

Figure 2 shows the ideal policy design of the BP, namely a policy model (conveyed through the common commitments) which is used for the development of national policies; this begins by adopting the necessary legislation which provides a legal framework for addressing the policy issue at hand. Once the necessary framework is adopted at national level, the next step for the competent authorities is to translate these policy provisions into operating guidelines, action plan strategies, etc. The implementation phase refers to the stage in which these policies are put into effect at the level of higher education institutions. In other words, it refers to the practical implementation European integration scholars talk about when referring to the establishment of the necessary agencies, of the tools and instruments, of the monitoring and compliance mechanisms at the lowest institutional level (Versluis 2007, p. 53). The adoption, transposition and practical implementation stage involves solely the country at hand and its capacity to put in practice what is desired. Last but not least, as stated in the BP goals, ideally these policies will lead to convergence across participating countries, that is the process of becoming more similar (Kerr, 1983), a coming together of two or more distinct entities or phenomena. This final stage refers mainly to the final outcome of all participating countries, and their summing up of their achievements.

Before reflecting on how this policy model is working in practice, in the next sections of this paper I will be using the conceptual framework put forward by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 9) who look at the *policy transfer process* through a framework which is organized around several questions:

1. *Why do actors engage in policy transfer? And why is the Bologna Process transferred?*
2. *Who are the key actors involved in the policy transfer process?*
3. *What is transferred?*
4. *From where are lessons drawn?*
5. *What are the different degrees of transfer?*
6. *What restricts or facilitates the policy transfer process?*
7. *How is the process of policy transfer related to policy “success” or policy “failure”?*

What is the Nature of the Bologna Process Policy Transfer? Why Do Actors Engage in Policy Transfer? And why is the Bologna Process Transferred?

According to the literature, countries engage in policy movement processes for several reasons. Maggeti and Gilardi (2015) provide several reasons for policy *diffusion* (emphasis added): the successes or failures of previous experiences, that policy is highly valued by peers, provides legitimacy to adopters or is widely accepted as an appropriate solution to a given problem, and the need to maintain or improve one's attractiveness with respect to its competitors (p. 1-2).

As far as the Bologna Process is concerned, it is transferred for several reasons. First, through signing the membership, the member states agree to transfer it. The Sorbonne Declaration is a document through which the founding members committed themselves to achieve the agreed goals – among which student mobility, international recognition and attractiveness, employability – reflecting their political will for a mutual benefit, and for Europe. Moreover, the fact that it invited other countries to join the initiative, made it open, emphasized the political aspect of the Process and the long-term goal of “consolidating Europe’s standing in the world”.

Another reason is the existence of the supranational institutions and treaties which actually push member states to implement certain policies, including the conditions for being a BP member (e.g. countries should be signatories of the European Cultural Convention and the Lisbon Recognition Convention).

Then, through the communiqués and declarations produced by the Ministers, member states and the involved actors are encouraged to promote the idea of specific measures in order to

“facilitate the proper and full implementation of the agreed Bologna principles and action lines across the European Higher Education Area, especially at the national and institutional levels, among others by developing additional working methods, such as peer learning, study visits and other information sharing activities” (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010).

To learn from each other “we call upon all actors involved to facilitate an inspiring working and learning environment and to foster student-centred learning” (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010) or to

“to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms” (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

Through cooperation in higher education, countries can strengthen their higher education system, and address common problems which otherwise could not be dealt with at the national level or by themselves. For policy-makers, introducing reforms through a common initiative would be easier than facing the potential opposition at domestic level, as cooperation can overcome resistance from universities, academics and students alike. Besides, it is a driving force in moving forward common reform agendas, it allows countries to engage in joint actions and deliver common services, and enjoy the potential benefits of cooperation. Broadly speaking, cooperation in higher education can contribute to fostering greater regional integration, competitiveness and economic growth.

What is Transferred? From Where Are Lessons Drawn?

According to Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) what is transferred are policy goals and instruments, administrative techniques, institutions, ideas, attitudes, concepts but also negative lessons. Analysing this aspect in the Bologna Process case requires looking at different aspects.

As mentioned above, through the ministerial meetings, participating countries agreed upon several commitments / policies or action lines which member states have to adopt and implement. However, while there is a lot of talk about the implementation of the Bologna Process and the consolidation of the EHEA, there is no comprehensive inventory of the Bologna policies (Zgaga, 2012). Moreover, from a conceptual point of view, it is not clear about the implementation of what we talk when assessing the level of implementation within the Bologna Process.

A simple look at the Bologna Declarations and Communiqués reveals that implementation is used when referring to reforms, goals, objectives, principles, recommendations, conventions, European standards, priorities, guidelines, strategies, tools, action lines, commitments, but also more concrete elements such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS, mobility or quality assurance.

What is special about the Bologna Process is the fact that reaching the common objectives (that is harmonisation of the European higher education system), through the above-mentioned action lines, entails that in some cases, at the policy level there is no conceptualisation of what is referred to by certain policies, how it should be designed or implemented, and therefore, it is left at the attitude of each member state to decide how and in which way to meet these goals. Nevertheless, some other action lines are more concrete and specific (e.g. the introduction of Diploma Supplement or ECTS) and therefore it might be clearer what and how things should be done. However, based on these broad action lines and on the guidelines provided by the Bologna follow-up groups⁴, most of the member states submitted national action plans (Rauhvargers & Bergan, 2008), which represent either a mixed collection of best practices from elsewhere, with national priorities, or a repackaging or adaptation of existing policies.

According to the 2016 EHEA website: “various instruments have been developed, adopted and implemented at the European, national, regional and institutional level aiming at facilitating fair recognition of foreign qualifications and/or study periods abroad. Those instruments are amongst others, the ENIC and NARIC networks, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement (DS), the overarching and national qualifications frameworks (QFs), the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ESG), etc.”

Currently, the literature on policy instrumentation has been on the rise, mainly due to the new forms of governance and policy implementation outcomes. There is a generally agreed statement that policy instruments are techniques or tools available to governments for implementing the desired policy objectives. The roots of these policy instruments can be found merely in the policy design literature, where

⁴ According to the official Bologna Process website July 2007 - June 2010, the BFUG is composed of representatives of the member states, European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education, European University Association, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, European Students' Union, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Education International Pan-European Structure, and BUSINESSEUROPE. The BFUG oversees the process between the ministerial meets at least once every six months and chaired by the country holding the Presidency of the European Union and is supported by a Bologna Secretariat.

it is argued that the choices for certain policy instruments affect the later implementation stages (Sidney 2006, Schneider and Ingram 1990). Lascoumes and Le Gales (2007) define a policy instrument as:

“a device that is both technical and social, that organizes specific social relations between the state and those it is addressed to, according to the representations and meanings it carries. It is a particular type of institution, a technical device with the generic purpose of carrying a concrete concept of the politics/society relationship and sustained by a concept of regulation” (p. 5).

More precisely, they perceive an instrument as “a type of social institution (census taking, map making, statutory regulation, taxation)” which is highly related with a technique or tool. A technique is a “concrete device that operationalizes the instrument” whereas a tool is “a micro device within a technique” (Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007, p. 5). Accordingly, they claim that a policy instrument reveals the type of relationship between the governing and the governed, and it produces a specific effect which structures public policy.

These behavioural assumptions of the policy tools are the main concern for Schneider and Ingram (1990), who provide a typology of tools and how these can help in fostering behaviour. In the following section, I will use Schneider and Ingram’s (1990) typology and reflect upon the existing Bologna policy tools and instruments.

The first type of policy tools are the *authority tools*. These are defined as “statements backed by the legitimate authority of government that grant permission, prohibit, or require action under designated circumstances” (p. 514). In the case of BP, these types of tools refer mainly to the Bologna declarations, communiqués but also policy statements, which are the result of the ministerial meetings or policy forums. As an immediate step after the ministerial meeting, these types of documents represent political stances taken by high representatives. Generally speaking, there is a commonly agreed statement that those policy decisions are legitimate and likely to be implemented if top representatives agreed on those decisions, and have the relevant authority to claim further action. This category also includes the conventions (e.g. Lisbon Recognition Convention), strategies (e.g. Strategy for the EHEA in a global setting), guidelines (e.g. the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education), institutions (e.g. European Association for Quality

Assurance in Higher Education), but also other tools such as ECTS or the Diploma Supplement.

A second category are the *incentives tools*, which assume “that individuals are utility maximizers and will not be positively motivated to take policy-relevant action unless they are influenced, encouraged, or coerced by manipulation of money, liberty, life, or other tangible payoff” (p. 515). While coercion is not an option in the field of higher education in Europe, since it is an area which falls under the national governments competencies, there are financial tools which target mainly mobility schemes, joint programs and other Bologna areas which overlap with the European Commission’s agenda in the higher education field.

Capacity tools represent a third category in Schneider and Ingram’s (1990) category. Such tools:

“provide information, training, education, and resources to enable individuals, groups, or agencies to make decisions or carry out activities. These approaches assume incentives are not an issue, but there may be barriers stemming from lack of information, skills, or other resources needed to make decisions or take actions that will contribute to policy goals” (p. 517).

Within the Bologna Process, these capacity tools are reflected through several elements. First, there are trainings on different aspects of the BP, which bring together the responsible actors for the implementation of those elements. Such an example is the training on “Higher Education Reform in Europe: The Bologna Process” organized by the National Academic Recognition Information Centres, on the recognition of higher education qualifications. Another manifestation is through the development of data collection mechanisms (Leuven/Louvain-la Neuve Communiqué 2009) which allow countries and institutions to compare themselves across different aspects in order to know what is going on in different settings (e.g. Bologna with Student Eyes). In a similar fashion, the aim of highly desired multidimensional transparency tools (such as rankings) is “to enable understanding of the diversity of higher education provision, nationally and cross-nationally, in order to support users in making informed decisions” (Vercruysse and Preoteasa, 2012, p. 13).

What Are the Different Types and Degrees of Transfer? How is the Bologna Process Transferred?

The literature identifies two main types of policy *transfer*. The first one refers to *voluntary* transfer, where countries which are dissatisfied with their current policies seek to transfer more effective and efficient policies from other countries, or they are also learning and getting inspired from other countries and therefore adjusting their existing policy. The second type of transfer is the *coercive* one, which can be direct and indirect. The former refers mainly to the situation when an institution is forcing a policy on another institution or country, in most of the cases the existence of a supranational institution and sanctions is essential for the transfer. The latter refers to a certain degree of international or supra-institutional influence, and that country's understanding of being mutually dependent on the others and therefore, the fear of being left behind. In the case of BP, at the country level there is a clear voluntary aspect of the BP; however, once there is a law or a regulation in place which targets higher education institutions or agencies, the transfer becomes mandatory.

According to Rose (1995), these types of transfers are strongly connected with different degrees of transfer. The first type is *copying*, where a policy is transferred and more or less it stays intact. *Adaptation* refers mainly to the extent to which that policy once moved is adjusting, based on the contextual differences. *Hybridisation* is actually combining distinguishable elements from more different policies whereas *synthesis* is actually combining different elements into a complete new, distinctive policy. Last but not least, *inspiration* is often uncritical, is a new approach which goes beyond a particular transfer. This type of discussion has also led to contradictory evaluations of the BP in terms of success or failure. Such discussions have been driven by the proximate causes of the observed success or failure of such policies. In an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of policy success and failure, McConnell (2015; 2010) discards the binary distinction between success and failure and constructs a continuum on which multiple policy outcomes can be situated. As such, he argues that since policies are having different "realms" (process, programs and politics), they may fail or succeed in each of these "and along a spectrum of success, resilient success, conflicted success, precarious success and

failure” (McConnell 2010, p. 345). Accordingly, the idea he puts forward is that one should look at the different dimensions of a policy/set of policies and examine how success and failure manifest within those dimensions.

These aspects can be also visible at the empirical level. As mentioned before, recent Bologna implementation reports (2012; 2015) have shown that there is no visible geographical pattern in terms of Bologna implementation, rather participating countries react differently to the commonly agreed policies. As such, some governments have taken serious steps in ensuring that the two-cycle system (bachelor-masters) is a reality (around 90% of the participating countries) other governments show grey areas when it comes to recognizing prior learning credits (e.g. France, Britain), whereas others completely fail to provide completely free education for tertiary level students (e.g. Turkey). In terms of processes, studies have shown that for example, in the field of quality assurance, monitoring and enforcement agencies contribute to shaping the outcome of the intended policies.

What Restricts or Facilitates the Policy Transfer Process?

According to the literature (Rose, 1995), transfer is more likely to happen when there are fewer elements of uniqueness in that policy and also whether policy-makers preferences and values are in line with that policy, when the institutions to deliver that policy are more similar, when both countries, the importing and exporting, present similar resources to implement that policy. Moreover, it also depends on the simplicity of the cause-effect structure of that specific policy and on its potential scale of change (measured as outcome produced).

Besides these, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996), add few other reasons such as whether the policy is clear, concise and has a single goal, it depends also whether the problem the importing country is a large-scale one and its complexity, whether there is a direct relationship between the problem and the policy solution to be adopted. It also depends on the degree of the perceived side effects of the policy, on the level of information agents have about how that specific policy operates in the exporting country, the easiness of identifying the predicted

outcomes, and the existence of a certain level of persuasion (interest groups, agencies, NGOs, etc.). Following this perspective, Cairney (2011, p. 35) provides a fairly comprehensive list of explanatory factors for policy success: (1) the policy's objectives should be clear, consistent, well communicated and understood by the policy protagonists and targets; (2) when implemented, the policy should solve the problem it was intended to tackle; (3) resources should be allocated to the program as planned; (4) choosing skilful and obedient bureaucrats helps to reduce their discretion and thus, leads to a policy that is implemented as intended; (5) dependencies in the relationships between different actors and/or agencies in charge of implementation should be reduced so as to encourage cooperation; (6) support from policy makers and interest groups should be maintained throughout the policy cycle so as to ensure both its development and its continuity; and finally (7) exogenous factors such as wars and crises should be taken into account because they could undermine the policy process.

Based on a literature review on the Bologna Process and on the existing implementation theories, *Table 2* presents the parties responsible for different policy making stages implementation and the relevant factors corresponding to these stages:

Bologna Process	Implementation stages	Responsible parties	Factors
Supranational level	Decision-making	Bologna structures	Sociopolitical conditions, Consensus, policy clarity and interdependence, norm internalization, mode of governance, EU institutions, funding, monitoring and enforcement)
Country level	Adoption	Central level	Legislation- Parliament Ministerial orders, Governmental decisions, supranational pressure, sociopolitical conditions, coordination and communication)
	Transposition	Administrative level	(Ministry, HE institutions, agencies and bodies, experts and professionals, interest groups, policy legitimacy/fit, national priorities and interests, cooperation, policy instruments)
	Implementation	Institutional level	(HE institutions discretion, faculty, academics, staff support, funding, demand for change)
System wide	Outcome / Convergence	Participating countries	Adoption, Transposition, Implementation

Table 2. Factors affecting the implementation stages

Reaching the common objective of convergence, harmonisation, compatibility, comparability and the creation of a common European higher education area requires to explore what are the driving forces which stand between what is intended (policy model) and what is expected (outcome/convergence). The focus on the adoption, transposition and practical implementation stages has been triggered

by the fact that these stages represent, as presented in *Table 2*, different levels of implementation. For example, a country can have in place the required legal framework; however, there is nothing concretized in term of actual policies. Such a differentiation would allow for a better understanding of how different stages develop and the extent to which they precondition each other. Moreover, this aspect is relatively understudied, the existing scholarship lacking a theoretically grounded and methodological sounded explanation for the presented empirical puzzle. For example, the policy model aspect and Bologna developments have been the main area of concern for many scholars (Keeling, 2006; Matei, Craciun and Torotcoi forthcoming). Despite these scholarly trends, there is little literature on the national context and conditions participating countries present.

Conclusion

The Bologna Process is a complex setting, with a lot of actors involved and different aspects to be considered, such as country specificities (form of government, type of higher education system, etc.). As such, for the Bologna Process to be studied as a policy movement process requires a multilevel approach, including looking at the micro level and a detailed assessment of each stage in the implementation process. This paper aimed to describe the mode of governance within the Bologna, its actors, bodies and more specifically what it consists of in terms of policies. I have argued that in order to understand how the multilevel governance works for the BP, and how transfer takes place, one should distinguish between different stages and levels of implementation.

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The 2017 University Metaranking Romanian University Ranking*

Daniel David (*Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca/UBB*),
Ovidiu Andronesi (*Harvard University/HU*), **Carmen Buzea**
(*Transilvania University of Braşov/UTB*), **Bogdan Florian** (*National
University of Political Studies and Public Administration/SNSPA*),
Silviu Matu (*Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca*),
Lazăr Vlăsceanu (*University of Bucharest/UB*)
Corresponding author: Prof. Daniel David, (e-mail:
daniel.david@ubbcluj.ro)

Abstract: This article continues the work done for the 2016 University Metaranking and updates its results for the 2017 edition, with the new data available for 2017. The 2017 University Metaranking relies on the results of the performance of Romanian universities in international league tables / rankings in the field of higher education. The results are discussed from a qualitative and quantitative point of view; furthermore, a sensitivity analysis is also applied to them. Moreover, alongside the global results, the article discusses results on domains and subjects. Starting from the resulting metaranking, the article proposes a possible classification of Romanian universities into four classes and also suggests possible future public policies concerning especially (research) funding of performant universities at national level. Potential international and national developments are also discussed, with a view of supporting Romanian universities to improve their performance at international level.

Keywords: Romanian metaranking, higher education, university, league tables, meta-analysis

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I. Introduction

The Romanian Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, through a High-Level Experts Group, elaborated and published in 2016 the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi, Banabic, Buzea, David, Florian, Miroiu, Murgescu, Prisăcariu and Vlăsceanu, 2016). In this metaranking, Romanian universities were ranked according to the combined results of their individual performances, as these were reflected in the international academic rankings of universities.

The G3A Think Tank¹ verified the robustness and stability of the results of the 2016 University Metaranking on the basis of a sensitivity analysis – using deciles instead of quintiles – and confirmed through the G3A – 2016 University Metaranking the results adopted by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research (David, Corlan and Frangopol, 2016).

In this article, we are updating the metaranking of the responsible Ministry with the new data available for 2017 in the international university rankings. Moreover, in order to answer a number of debates on the 2016 University Metaranking, this metaranking is accompanied by a clarifying qualitative analysis and by a discussion on the ranking on domains.

II. Global Analysis of Universities

As shown in the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi et al., 2016), a modern university deals with knowledge. In other words, it deals with generating knowledge through research, with disseminating knowledge through education (teaching/learning) and with using the knowledge for services towards society. It is obvious that education is the key element in a university, as it differentiates universities from other research units (e.g. research institutes) and from those offering services towards society (e.g. companies). Some universities remain focused

¹More details available here: <http://rpss.inoe.ro/articles/grup-de-analiza-atitudine-si-actiune-in-politica-stiintei-din-romania-think-tank-g3a-infiintat-ca-urmare-a-propunerii-mes>

especially on the educational component, transmitting the existent knowledge and having an academic profile focused on bachelor studies (similar to the American colleges), often with a local/regional reach. Other universities, alongside education, also develop the component involving services towards the community (relationship with the society / the socio-economic environment), becoming thus entrepreneurial universities; however, these also usually have a local/regional reach. Finally, in line with the *Humboldtian* model, some universities not only generate new knowledge through research, but place research at the basis of education (consequently students become not just users/assimilators of knowledge, but also knowledge creators, more performant and better integrated on the labour market and within society), as well as at the basis of the services towards community (which thus become innovative / with a competitive advantage); this way, *Humboldtian* universities acquire an academic profile focused on university studies at bachelor/master/doctoral level, with a national and international reach (some of them, through exceptional results, become *world-class*).

The global analysis and evaluation of universities are fundamental for understanding comprehensively the quality / competitiveness / excellence of the academic environment in universities. A university with a national and international reach – especially when it becomes a *world-class* type, as well – in principle cannot be well ranked in domain rankings, but not be present in global rankings. This is because a university of this type meets the minimal quality standards in almost all its programmes (which makes it visible in rankings), is competitive in most rankings and achieves levels of excellence in a number of representative ones (competitiveness / excellence ensures a top position in rankings). Consequently, global evaluation of universities is a comprehensive diagnostic for the quality / competitiveness / excellence of the academic environment from universities.

II.1. Qualitative Analysis

II.1.1. *International university rankings of reference* (which use global academic indicators – included in the 2017 University Metaranking):

1. The Chinese ranking *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (ARWU/Shanghai ranking) includes only one Romanian university, namely Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca/UBB, which ranks on 601 – 700 place internationally, in the *Candidates* section (candidates for the Top-500), a section first introduced in 2017 (<http://www.shanghairanking.com/ARWU2017Candidates.html>). The ranking is based on educational and research indicators (with emphasis on Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics publications and on graduates' prestige).

2. The ranking published in United Arab Emirates by the *Center for World University Ranking (CWUR)* – includes two Romanian universities: UBB (ranked first in Romania and on place 939 at international level) and the University of Bucharest / UB (ranked second in Romania and on place 975 internationally) (<http://cwur.org/2017/romania.php>). The ranking includes indicators regarding the quality of education (awards/medals of employees and graduates, etc.), research results (with emphasis on Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics publications, including innovation aspects) and the relationship with the socio-economic environment (graduates holding top-management positions, etc.).

3. In the Dutch ranking *Leiden Ranking (CWTS)*, Romania is represented by just one university, namely UBB, ranked on place 826 internationally.

(<http://www.leidenranking.com/ranking/2017/list>) The ranking is based on research indicators, expressed especially through Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics publications, and on the relationship with society/the socio-economic environment (through joint publications with industrial partners, etc.).

4. The Taiwanese ranking *Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities (NTU)* includes only the Politehnica University of Bucharest (UPB), on place 701 – 800 internationally (http://nturanking.lis.ntu.edu.tw/DataPage/OverallRanking_Countries.aspx?query=&country=Romania&y=2017). The ranking is based on

research indicators (with emphasis on Web of Science / Clarivate Analytics publications and citations).

5. In the British ranking *QS World University Rankings* by *Quacquarelli Symonds* (QS) are included four universities from Romania: UB on place 701 – 750 at international level and other three universities on place 801 – 1000 at international level, namely (in alphabetical order): Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași / UAIC, UBB and West University of Timișoara/ UVT (<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2018>). The ranking is based on educational indicators (academic reputation, etc.), research indicators (with emphasis on the Scopus database) and indicators regarding the interaction with society/the socio-economic environment (employers' reputation, etc.).

6. The Spanish ranking *SCImago Institutions Rankings* (*SCImago*) includes 21 Romanian universities (25 academic institutions in all). At global level, among universities, the best ranked is UPB (place 545 internationally), followed by UBB (second at country level and on place 583 internationally) and by Technical University of Cluj-Napoca / UTCN (ranked third at country level and 613 internationally) (<http://www.scimagoir.com/rankings.php?country=ROU§or=Higher%20educ.>). The ranking is based on research indicators (with emphasis on publications indexed in the Scopus database), including indicators connected to innovation – development, and on indicators regarding the relationship with society/the socio-economic environment.

7. The British ranking *World Universities Ranking* by *Times Higher Education* (*THE*) includes five Romanian universities. UBB is ranked on the 601 – 800 place internationally, and other four Romanian universities are included in this ranking on places 801 – 1000, namely (in alphabetical order): UAIC, UB, Grigore T Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy from Iași / UMF – Iași and UVT (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2018/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/locations/RO/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats). The ranking is based on educational indicators, research indicators (with emphasis on publications and citations

taken from the Scopus database) and indicators regarding the relationship with society/the socio-economic environment (income from industry, etc.).

8. The Turkish ranking – *University Ranking of Academic Performance (URAP)* – includes 17 Romanian universities. UPB ranks first in the country and on place 709 internationally, UBB is second in the country and on place 739 internationally and UB ranks third at country level and on place 764 internationally. (<http://www.urapcenter.org/2017/country.php?ccode=RO&rank=all>) The ranking is based on research indicators (with emphasis on Web of Science / Clarivate Analytics publications and citations).

9. The American ranking *Best Global Universities* by *US News (USN)* includes nine Romanian universities (8 ranked and one not ranked). The university ranked first in Romania and on place 583 internationally is UBB, followed by UPB (second at country level and on place 730 internationally) and by UB (third at country level and 753 internationally) (<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/search?region=&country=romania&subject=&name=>). The ranking is based on research indicators (with emphasis on bibliometric factors of publications included in the Web of Science/ Clarivate Analytics database).

If we are to analyse the best three position at country level, in five (ARWU; CWUR; CWTS; THE; USN) out of the nine reference rankings UBB ranks first in the country, in three (QS; SCImago; URAP) ranks second in the country and in one (NTU) is not included. UPB is included in three (NTU; SCImago; URAP) of the nine reference rankings and holds the first place at country level, in one of them (USN) ranks second and in the rest (ARWU; CWUR; CWTS; QS; THE) is not included. Of the nine reference rankings, UB ranks first at country level in one ranking (QS), in two others (CWUR, THE) ranks second and in two others (URAP, USN) ranks third, and in the rest of the rankings is not included (ARWU; CWTS; NTU) or holds other places (ranked fourth in SCImago).

II.1.2. Other university rankings (that also use academic indicators and/or indicators relevant to academic activity, but without these being predominant and/or comprehensive/global).

1. The Spanish ranking *Webometrics* includes over 100 Romanian institutions. At country level, the best ranked is UBB (place 865 at international level), UB ranks second (1162 internationally) and UAIC ranks third (1321 internationally) (<http://www.webometrics.info/en/Europe/Romania>). The ranking includes academic indicators and indicators regarding online popularity. A category of this ranking, which could potentially be used independently, is *Transparency or Openness* (Google Scholar Citations), where the ranking, at country level, is as follows: UB (1168 internationally), UBB (1187 internationally) and UMF-Iași (3983 internationally); however, this category is still in an experimental phase (beta version: <http://www.webometrics.info/en/node/169>).

2. The Australian ranking *uniRANK* includes several dozens of Romanian educational institutions (<http://www.4icu.org/ro/>). UBB ranks first among Romanian universities, followed by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies / ASE which ranks second and UPB ranking third. The ranking is based on the universities' online popularity.

3. In the *Nature Index* ranking, the first three positions at country level, among universities, are held by UBB, UB and UVT respectively (<https://www.natureindex.com/country-outputs/Romania>). Among all academic institutions, the first place in the country is held by 'Horia Hulubei' National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering and the second place by the Romanian Academy. The ranking is based on top publications only in natural sciences (with emphasis on Web of Science / Clarivate Analytics publications), however without offering a global evaluation which would include domains/fields beyond natural sciences (e.g. life sciences / physics / earth and environmental sciences / chemistry).

II. 2. Quantitative Analysis – 2017 University Metaranking

As previously stated, the methodology used for the 2017 University Metaranking was developed by the *High Level Experts Group* from the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research and on its basis

the 2016 University Metaranking was elaborated (Andronesi et al., 2016). We mention it briefly below (from Andronesi et al., 2016, pp. 269 – 270):

“Firstly, we defined a set of principles that would guide the methodologic approach for the 2016 University Metaranking:

- 1st Principle: The rankings included in the 2016 University Metaranking rely dominantly on academic criteria/indicators. The selection of these rankings relies on the analyses carried out by IREG – *Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence* (<http://ireg-observatory.org/en>) and on the UNESCO analysis (UNESCO, 2013).

- 2nd Principle: Each ranking included in the 2016 University Metaranking has the same weight. In other words, we do not consider one ranking more important than the other and we emphasize the fact that each, in turn, generates a relevant quantity of knowledge about the universities it analyses.

- 3rd Principle: Only those ranking that offer a global evaluation of universities are to be included in the 2016 University Metaranking.

- 4th Principle: The methodology is externally audited and, where possible, result validation is verified through complementary analyses and/or through comparisons with other data available.

Starting from these principles, we selected for analysis and inclusion in the 2016 University Metaranking the following international rankings: (1) *Academic Ranking of World Universities* / ARWU (education and research) (2) *Center for World University Rankings* / CWUR (education and research); (3) *Leiden Ranking* / CWTS (research); (4) *Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers of World Universities* / PRSPWU (New note: now called NTU) (research); (5) *QS-Top Universities Ranking* / QS (education and research); (6) *Scimago Institutions Ranking* / Scimago (research dominant); (7) *Times Higher Education–World University Rankings* / THE (education and research); (8) *University Ranking by Academic Performance* / URAP (research); (9) *World’s Best Universities Rankings* / US-News (New note: now called USN) (research).”

The manner in which the international rankings of universities were combined in the 2016 University Metaranking was the following: Each of the rankings mentioned above was divided into five (5) equal classes (quintiles – in order to highlight intuitively in the international university rankings the following levels: superior, average-superior,

average, average-inferior and inferior) (New note: The reference was the number of ranks, not the number of universities, as more universities can share the same rank):

- 1st Class – including universities situated in the first 20% of the total ranks included in the rankings;
- 2nd Class – including universities situated on the next 20% of the ranks (12% - 40%);
- 3rd Class – including universities situated between 41% and 60% of the ranks;
- 4th Class - including universities situated between 61% and 80% of the ranks;
- 5th Class - including universities situated between 81% and 100% of the ranks.

When the number of ranks in a ranking was not a multiple of 5, the grouping interval between the 5 classes was rounded up to a whole number. The necessary adjustment, as a result of this rounding up, was applied to the last class (5th Class, which included up to 4 more or less ranks than the interval established by the rounding up.) (New note: Just like in the 2016 University Metaranking, in all rankings, in cases in which the ranks were presented as interval, both for establishing the place of the university as well as the number of ranks in the ranking, we used the best rank.)

The universities placed in various classes received points as follows: 1st Class – 5 points, 2nd Class – 4 points, 3rd Class – 3 points, 4th Class – 2 points and 5th Class – 1 point.

Each Romanian university consequently cumulated a score which reflects the sum of points received as a consequence of being included in one of the classes of each analysed ranking.

As we showed in the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi et al., 2016) of the nine rankings included in the metaranking, only THE ranking conditions clearly the inclusion of universities in the ranking by the universities' consent. Generally, inclusion in the eight rankings is not dependent on the university's wish or consent to be included. However, even though most organisations publishing such rankings do not require universities' consent to participate in the rankings, the majority of the latter are also based on empirical data supplied by the

universities. Consequently, the universities' consent to participate is presumed, but it is not sufficient for the university to be included in the ranking.

Moreover, on the basis of the experience with the 2016 University Metaranking, the universities that are interested in being evaluated at international level had the opportunity of applying explicitly for being examined with the view of being potentially included in university international rankings. The THE ranking even invited only those universities which have achievements and which enjoy a reputation visible at international level. Thus, only the wish of one university to be included is not enough, not even for THE ranking, which states that: *"...If you can't find a university when you search the rankings by university name, it could be because that university is not ranked, or is known under a different name. Try searching the rankings by country instead, or search the university directory to find an unranked university. A university may not be ranked for two reasons: either it does not fulfil the inclusion criteria for the rankings, or it did not score highly enough to be included. A university is not included if it does not teach undergraduates, if it teaches only one subject, or if it produces fewer than an average of 200 research papers a year..."* (see <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/how-use-rankings-frequently-asked-questions>).

Finally, we remind you that all rankings included in the metaranking, both in 2016 as well as in this article, had to fulfil simultaneously the following criteria: (1) to offer a global score of the university and (2) on the basis of the global score to establish ranks. If there were several global scores, then the reference is the one presented by default by the ranking. Of the international rankings, following the methodology of the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi et al., 2016) we have not included U-Multirank, because, through its explicit engagement, (1) it does not offer a global score; (2) it does not offer ranks and (3) it allows for thousands of versions by combining criteria/indicators.

The results of the 2017 University Metaranking are presented in the table below. Of the 92 Romanian universities (55 public and 37 private universities), only 23 universities, all public, have an international presence. This does not imply that the remaining Romanian universities do not have an important social function; this,

when it exists, is probably relevant and has an impact at local/regional level.

Table 1. 2017 University Metaranking (Global analysis of universities)

Position in Meta- ranking	University	Total points - quintiles
1	Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca / UBB	14
2	University of Bucharest / UB	10
2	Politehnica University of Bucharest / UPB	10
3	Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi / UAIC	7
4	West University of Timişoara / UVT	5
4	Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Bucharest / UMF-Bucharest	5
4	Iuliu Haţieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj-Napoca / UMF-Cluj-Napoca	5
4	Grigore T Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iaşi / UMF-Iaşi	5
4	Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iaşi / UTGA	5
5	Technical University of Cluj-Napoca / UTCN	3
5	Politehnica University of Timişoara / UPT	3
5	Transilvania University of Braşov – UTB	3
6	Bucharest University of Economic Studies / ASE	2
6	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca / USAMV Cluj-Napoca	2
6	University of Craiova	2
6	Ovidius University of Constanţa	2
7	Victor Babeş University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Timişoara / UMF-Timişoara	1
7	University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova / UMF-Craiova	1
7	University of Oradea	1
7	Dunărea de Jos University of Galaţi	1
7	Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu	1
7	Oil & Gas University of Ploieşti	1
7	Valahia University of Târgovişte	1

Note: The total score of Romanian universities included in the metaranking is of 90 points. Romanian universities not present in the table are the ones not included in any of the 9 international rankings of universities included in the 2017 University Metaranking. For clarity, the order of presentation of universities with the same number of points / same position in the metaranking is established, in the table, according to the alphabetical criterion combined with the type of university (e.g. comprehensive vs. specialised).

II.2.1. Sensitivity Analyses

In order to verify the robustness of the global analysis results, we carried out a series of supplementary analyses, taking into consideration two aspects.

Firstly, in the cases where there were intervals for describing the position of the last universities, we also took into consideration the weakest rank of the intervals in order to establish the number of ranks in those particular rankings. In this situation, there are two changes in the number of points of Romanian universities included in the 2017 University Metaranking (Table 1), namely UBB's score increases by 1 point (it receives one extra point in the ARWU ranking), the same as UB's score (it receives one extra point in the QS ranking). However, the alternative used in the 2017 University Metaranking (Table 1) was also used in the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi et al., 2016), consequently any evolution of the scores must be analysed by using the same methodology.

Secondly, for the SCImago ranking, after consulting with the authors of the ranking, we carried out a re-calculation of the ranks, using the global score, only for the universities in the ranking (without any other types of institutions). This second analysis did not lead to any change in the resulting scores of the Romanian universities included in the 2017 University Metaranking (Table 1).

III. Analysis of Universities on Domains and Subjects

Domain and subjects analysis is very hard to integrate and to quantify, as the domains/subjects are not defined in a consistent manner in the various university rankings (e.g. the name of the domains/subjects, the fields they cover, number, content, etc.). Nevertheless, we can formulate a number of general tendencies (for details and nuances, however, we recommend the individual analysis of each ranking).

III.1. Domains

A domain includes several subjects. In what follows we will present the position of Romanian universities that rank first at country level in various academic domains (in the order from Table 1), as these are defined and publicly visible in the various international university rankings. (Note: Some universities may receive individually further information about more detailed positioning at country level, but many of these are not publicly assumed by the rankings, probably because there are minute differences that do not cross the threshold of public/international relevance):

UBB ranks first in the country in the following domains: Arts/Humanities (QS, THE), Life/Earth Sciences (CWTS, Life Sciences – together with UB in THE), Socio-Economic Sciences (CWTS), Math/Informatics (CWTS), Physics and Engineering (CWTS) and Biomedical Sciences/Health (CWTS).

UB ranks first at country level in the following domains: Natural Sciences (QS), Life Sciences (THE – jointly with UBB) and Social Sciences (QS).

UPB ranks first in the country in the following domains: Engineering/Technology (QS; Engineering – NTU).

III. 2. Subjects

In this section, we present the ranks held by Romanian universities that hold the first place at country level in various academic subjects (in the order from Table 1), as they are defined publicly visible in the various international rankings of universities (Note: Some universities may

receive individually further information about more detailed positioning at country level, but many of these are not publicly assumed by the rankings, probably because there are minute differences that do not cross the threshold of public/international relevance):

UBB ranks first in the country in the following subjects: Math (ARWU – alongside UB; NTU. URAP; USN), Biology (THE; URAP), Life Sciences (URAP); Geology (URAP); Psychology (URAP); Psychology/Cognitive Sciences (URAP); History (URAP); Modern Languages (QS – alongside UB); English Language/Literature (QS – alongside UB); Language/Literature/Linguistics (THE); Art/Design (THE), Sports (THE – alongside UB), Engineering (USN) and Mechanical Engineering (ARWU).

UB ranks first at country level in the following subjects: Math (ARWU – alongside UBB; QS), Chemistry (QS, NTU – alongside UPB), Physics/Astronomy (QS – alongside UPB; Physics – URAP), Modern Languages (QS – alongside UBB), Linguistics (QS), English Language/Literature (QS – alongside UBB) and Sports (THE – alongside UBB).

UPB ranks first in the country in the following subjects: Engineering (URAP), Electrical/Electronic Engineering (ARWU; QS), Material Science/Engineering (URAP; USN), Chemical Engineering (ARWU; URAP), Mechanical Engineering (URAP), Chemistry (NTU – alongside UB; URAP; USN), Physics/Astronomy (QS – alongside UB, Physics – USN) and Informatics/Computer Science (URAP).

UVT ranks first at country level in Physics (ARWU).

Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Bucharest / UMF-Bucharest ranks first in the country in the following subjects: Medicine/Health (ARWU; URAP; USN).

Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași / UTGA ranks first at country level in Commerce/Management/Tourism/Services (URAP) and Environmental Sciences (URAP).

ASE ranks first in the country in the following subjects: Economy/Econometrics (Economy – ARWU; QS).

Additionally to the universities included in the global analysis from Table 1, the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest / USAMV-Bucharest ranks first at country level in the following subjects: Agriculture/Forestry (QS).

IV. Conclusions and Discussion

The global analyses use both criteria/indicators dependent on the size of the institutions, as well as criteria/indicators that are not dependent on it. UBB, UB and UPB – universities that have a similar number of academic/research staff – are the ones best positioned in the international rankings (regardless of the weight of the two types of criteria/indicators), which shows that their positioning cannot be explained (only) by the institution's size, but also by its capacity of fulfilling quality/competitiveness/excellence criteria.

IV. 1. Global Analysis

As we have previously showed, of the approximate 92 active Romanian universities, of which 55 are public and 37 private, only 23 universities (all public) have an international presence. This does not imply that the other universities do not have an important social function, but the latter is probably relevant and has an impact at local/regional level.

In the case of the best ranked three universities in the country, the 2017 University Metaranking, in comparison to the results of the 2016 University Metaranking, UBB increased its score by one point (by being included in ARWU) – holding its first place in 2017 as well (just like in the 2016 metaranking), UB remained at the same level, and UPB increased its score by two points (by being included in NTU and by a better ranking in USN).

The university from the *Universitaria Consortium* are the most **visible** academic group of Romanian universities in the international area of the academic environment (38 points of the total of 90 points obtained by the Romanian universities): UBB (14 points), UB (10), UAIC (7) and UVT (5). UBB, UB and UAIC differentiate more clearly from the other 23 universities included in the 2017 University Metaranking, with a higher **impact** on the international academic area. ASE's score (2) is explained by the fact that it is a specialised higher education institution, the only of this type from the *Universitaria Consortium*; indeed, its performance at subject level positions ASE on the top position in the country in Economy/Econometrics.

Technical universities from the big/traditional Romanian university centres have a **visible presence** in the international academic area (21 points): UPB (10), UTGA (5), UPT (3) and UTCN (4). UPB distances itself visibly in this group, having an **impact** that is similar to some of the best positioned universities of the *Universitaria Consortium*.

The medical universities from the big/traditional Romanian university centres also have a **visible presence** in the international academic area (17 points): UMF – Bucharest (5), UMF – Cluj-Napoca (5) and UMF-Iași (5). To these, other universities from important academic centres are added, with a **promising presence**, which are included in an international ranking of universities: UMF – Timișoara (1) and UMF – Craiova (1).

The emergent comprehensive universities from important academic centres are **visible** and have a **promising presence** in the international academic area (12 points): Transilvania University of Brașov (3, with a visible presence), University of Craiova (2, with a visible presence) and Ovidius University of Constanța (2, with a visible presence). To these other universities are added, from representative academic centres, with a promising presence, which are included in an international ranking of universities: University of Oradea (1), Dunărea de Jos University of Galați (1), Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (1), Oil & Gas University of Ploiești (1) and Valahia University of Târgoviște (1).

Of the **universities with an agricultural-veterinary profile**, USAMV – Cluj-Napoca (2) has a **visible presence** in two international rankings of universities.

The total score of the five universities from the *Universitaria Consortium* represents 42% of the total number of points obtained by the Romanian universities in the international university rankings. If we are to add UPB's contribution, which has a performance similar to some of the most performant universities from the *Universitaria Consortium*, then the percentage reaches 53%.

IV. 2. Analysis on Domains/Subjects

As previously stated, the results of the analyses on domains/subjects are difficult to quantify and synthesize. The reader can, however, analyse carefully the results presented under Section III, in order to

formulate their own conclusions and decisions. Broadly speaking, we can notice that, generally, the first place at country level on domains/subjects is held by universities that are positioned on the top three places in the country in the global analysis – namely UBB, UB and/or UPB – to which are added, in Physics UVT, and on subjects, the specialised universities (e.g. ASE, UMF – Bucharest, USAMV – Bucharest, UTGA).

V. Implications

In conclusion, as stated before, the analysis shows that only 23 universities from the country, all public, have a minimum international visibility (approximately 42% of the total number of public universities in the country and 25% of the total number of active universities in the country), considering that currently we have in Romania 92 active universities of which 55 public universities and 37 private ones. As we mentioned before, this does not automatically imply that the remaining universities do not have an important social function, but the latter, when present, is probably relevant and has an impact only at local/regional level.

This ranking highlights again the existence (see also Andronesi et al., 2016, David et al., 2016) of at least four classes of universities in Romania: (1) national universities, which are **visible** and have an international **impact** (with *world-class* potential); national universities which are internationally **visible**; (3) emergent national universities, with a **promising presence** at international level, and (4) universities with a **local/regional impact**. Consequently, public policies regarding higher education, especially public funding of university research, should be differentiated, through distinct mechanisms, according to the type of universities, so that each one would reach its potential and/or the mission undertaken through its *University Charter* (local / regional / national / international / *world-class*). Indeed, the funding of Romanian universities is unpredictable and often below the required amount of quality assurance, not to mention the amounts required to reach competitiveness/excellence. As mentioned as well in the 2016 University Metaranking (Andronesi et al, 2016), Babeş-Bolyai University from Romania, ranked first in the

country in the 2016 and 2017 metarankings, has an annual budget which is about 10 times smaller than Washington State University, a university ranked among the last ones in the ARWU international ranking (Top-500). Consequently, if funding were an indicator taken into account by international rankings – considering that it can attract human resources of high quality and can maintain a competitive academic environment, both with an impact on a university's position in the rankings - , Romanian universities would be placed on much better positions in international university rankings, given that some have, even now, when they are underfunded, remarkable performances.

In a recent speech given at Sorbonne University – titled *Initiative for Europe* -, the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, expressed the idea that there is a need for “European universities”, an idea to become an institutional reality in the future: “...*I believe we should create European Universities – a network of universities across Europe with programmes that have all their students study abroad and take classes in at least two languages. These European Universities will also be drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence. We should set for ourselves the goal of creating at least 20 of them by 2024. However, we must begin setting up the first of these universities as early as the next academic year, with real European semesters and real European diplomas...*” (see at: <http://international.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2017/09/29/macron-sorbonne-verbatim-europe-18583.html>).

Are we ready for at least the top Romanian universities of the 23 universities included in the 2017 University Metaranking to be included in the 20 European universities? In this context, it is worth considering whether more performant universities from Romania would deserve to be supported explicitly in order to become European universities, in the meaning expressed by the president of France. For example, the National Rectors Council / CNR (see the CNR Resolution from Târgu Mureş from 2016, available in Romanian here: <http://www.cnr-romania.ro/rezolutie-consiliul-national-al-rectorilor-tirgu-mures-9-octombrie-2016/>) proposed supporting the positions of researchers in universities through an independent mechanism, which could stimulate the innovation and excellence component from the structure of a European university.

If we do not understand and we do not support these developments from the Romanian academic environment, we will once again be left out of the game played in the big league of the academic environment, with a negative impact on student training and on country competitiveness.

Note: Some universities may be classified in domains/subjects in which they do not have formal bachelor degrees (often neither master degrees) and/or which do not correspond to the domains/fields established administratively in Romania. This happens because an international university does not define itself only through undergraduate programmes (bachelor), but also through graduate programmes (research master / doctoral / postdoctoral programmes / research schools), defined at an international level. It is possible that between the time of analysis of international rankings and the publishing date of the article, some rankings of domains/subjects adjusted some scores. For example, when the article was published, in the domain/subject analysis, in the THE ranking, in Sport, only UBB, and not UB as well, ranked first in the country, and in Biology the first position is jointly held by UBB and UB. We remind you again in this context of the recommendation included in the article, namely to check directly the rankings concerning domains/subjects; the article includes only general trends, in contrast to the metaranking of global score, where the analysis is precise / quantitative (Table 1). Moreover, we remind you that the metaranking is subject to all limitations of the rankings it includes.

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University Culture: An Analysis at the Level of Research and Educational Units (using the Competing Values Framework)

Claudia Rus (*University Babeş-Bolyai /UBB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, e-mail: claudiarus@psychology.ro*),
Sofia Chirică (*UBB, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, e-mail: sofiachirica@psychology.ro*), **Dan Chiribucă** (*UBB, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, e-mail: dchiribuca@socasis.ubbcluj.ro*),
Simona Mălăescu (*UBB, Centre of University Strategy and Quality Management, e-mail: simona.malaescu@ubbcluj.ro*)

Abstract: The aim of the present study was to investigate the current organizational culture in one large Romanian university, using the Competing Values Framework (CVF). Specifically, we aimed to identify the current overall culture profile and the cultural dominant dimensions at the level of the education and research units. The data was provided by 898 participants, coming from 96 teaching and research units, using a paper-and-pencil form of the ipsative Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument, Part 1. The data was analysed at the level of the organizational units. The results indicated that the overall culture profile of the analysed units comprises a combination of the four cultures, with the predominance of the values of bureaucratic and human relations/clan cultures. This profile was not fully invariant across the six dimensions of the organizational culture: (1). dominant characteristics; (2). organizational leadership; (3). management of employees; (4). organizational glue; (5). strategic emphases, and (6). success criteria. The predominance of the values of bureaucratic and human relations/clan cultures is confirmed in three of the six cultural dimension profiles, namely, the organizational leadership, strategic emphases, and success criteria.

Keywords: organizational culture, Competing Values Framework, university culture profile, ipsative OCAI

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I. Introduction

One type of the organizations having a great impact on the development, growth, and welfare of the society, particularly on the communities that include them, is represented by the higher education institutions such as universities (Gasca-Pliego & Olvera-García, 2011). Universities are considered complex organizations with multiple objectives and standards in teaching, research, and community service that are forced by the changes in their environments to reflect on their functions in society (Kantanen, 2005). They shape individuals and society (Heap, 2016). At the same time, in its course of action, as a result of the existing increased competition to attract more high-quality applicants, severe research funding cuts, and strong globalization of education, the university adopts a market orientation and manages its reputation (Folch & Ion, 2009; Ressler & Abratt, 2009; Kallio, Kallio, Tienari, & Hyvönen, 2015). This is the case also for one of the largest university in Romania, Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (UBB). To face the aforementioned environmental challenges, UBB manages its reputation by striving to ascent the international universities league tables and to maintain the top position achieved in the national metaranking of the Ministry of Education and Research (2016) through a strong emphasis on advanced research and teaching.

According to The Strategic Plan for the 2016-2020 period, this emphasis aims to strengthen the role of UBB as an institution responsible, active, and capable to produce competent graduates for the society, development projects and solutions to major issues and to establish structural correspondences between itself and world-class universities in the European and Atlantic environment (Centre for University Strategy and Quality Management, Babeş-Bolyai University, 2017). These stated strategic goals increasingly determine the work and the actions of the individuals and groups within the university. To achieve high performance and to be successful, UBB embraces the values of "*Traditio et Excellentia*" and expects that its internal stakeholders will embrace and share these espoused values, too, and that the enactment of the university strategic goals will be highly guided by these shared values.

Literature reveals that a socially shared value system within an organizational context reflects the culture of that organization (Zohar & Hofman, 2012). Organizational culture is an important social characteristic that influences organizational, group, and individual behaviour (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011) and explains why organizations do what they do and focus on what they focus on (Schneider, González-Romá, Ostroff, & West, 2017). Furthermore, it can manifest as motivation that drives the organizational members to formulate, initiate, and implement certain ways of action (Schein, 1985) and it represents their learned way of thinking (Chirică, 1996).

The role that organizational culture plays in organizational level processes and outcomes has been largely discussed by scholars from various fields. Although it was postulated and strongly agreed among scholars and practitioners that organizational culture can be a source of the competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Chan, Shaffer, & Snape, 2004), organizational performance (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992) and effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983), only relatively recently the links of organizational culture to organizational and individual level outcomes were documented using empirical and meta-analytical investigations (Hartnell et al., 2011; Sackman, 2011; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). While some studies provide empirical support for the effects of the organizational culture on organizational and employee level outcomes (Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, 2008; Bezrukova, Thatcher, Jehn, & Spell, 2012; O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014), others revealed no association or provided mixed results.

Literature reveals a strong emphasis on developing organizational culture's theoretical boundaries (Hartnell et al., 2011). Many definitions and underlying instruments of organizational culture were developed (Martin, 1992; Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2011; Taras, 2006). However, many of the organizational culture conceptualizations include common characteristics such as being shared among members (Louis, 1985; Glisson & James, 2002), having a multilevel nature and existing at multiple levels (e.g., group and organizational levels; Detert, Schroeder, & Mauriel, 2000), influencing employees' attitudes, thinking, and behaviours (Sathe, 1985; Smircich, 1983), including collective values, beliefs, and assumptions (Schein,

2004; Schneider et al., 2017) that are distinctive for the organizational members and, in general, tacit and relative (Louis, 1985; Sathe, 1985; Schneider et al., 2017).

In what regards the content of organizational culture, there is a strong consensus among scholars that it consists of different elements such as values, beliefs, assumptions, ideologies (Schein, 2004; Schneider et al., 2017), and the ways these are transmitted through symbols, language, narratives (myths, stories), and practices (rituals and taboos) (Schneider et al., 2011). These elements are hierarchically ordered from deeper to more surface levels (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 2004; Zohar & Hofman, 2011). The deep-level may include basic assumptions, values, and/or beliefs about the organizational context that have shown to be successful in the past and are, therefore, now ingrained, taken for granted, and unquestioned (Detert et al., 2000; Schein, 2004). They represent the essence of an organization's culture (Zohar & Hofman, 2011). In contrast, the surface-level consists in observable artefacts or (behavioral) manifestations of the deep-level elements, such as organizational structures and processes, myths, stories, language, signals, policies, and procedures. Schein (2004) considers that there is an intermediary-level comprising the espoused beliefs, values, and ideologies. These elements are considered as a subset of the surface-level artefacts. Furthermore, a great variety of the surface-level elements can represent manifestations of a few basic assumptions, beliefs and core values (Zohar & Hofman, 2011).

An organization's basic assumptions or successful solving solutions to fundamental organizational problems on internal integration and external adaptation, validated by the (collective) experience and transmitted to newcomers (Schein, 1985) can be found in the organization's goals, mission and policies, but they can also cover the distance between what is formally declared by the organization as its way of action (espoused theory of organizational action) and what is actually taking place in the organizational action (theory-in-use of organizational action) (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Any basic assumption can result in a variety of (espoused) values and beliefs, giving rise, in turn, to a variety of observable or reportable artefacts. Considered as important elements of the culture-generating process, core values refer to the shared moral criteria or action standards that define what is good, desirable, and right (Zohar & Hofman, 2011). Values can activate

unconscious assumptions, thus, influencing the individual and the collective behaviour of the organizational members often without their awareness of the content of these values (Jackson, 2002). Values can serve as a foundation for the organizational members' beliefs formation and attitudes development.

Several authors consider that deep-level elements of an organizational culture and their surface-level manifestations can be reflected in different cultural types. Several cultural typologies resulted from the consideration of different dimensions regarding organizational effectiveness criteria (organizational focus, organizational structure, and organizational means-ends; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Denison, 2001; Denison & Mishra, 1995), social interaction (solidarity and sociability; Goffee & Jones, 2001), and behavioral orientation (people vs. task and satisfaction vs. security; Cooke & Szumal, 1993, 2000). Thereof, a well-known typology in understanding and describing an organization's culture is provided by the Competing Values Framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). As Cameron and Quinn (2011) noted, the CVF can offer six major advantages in diagnosing and changing organizational culture: (1) practicality; (2) efficiency; (3) involvement of the organizational members (participation); (4) qualitative and quantitative methodologies; (5) manageability, and (6) validity.

In the CVF framework, organizational culture consists of collective memory systems that include core values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, and organizational members' definitions on how their organization function (Schein, 1992) and a common, consensual, integrated set of perceptions, memories, values, attitudes, and definitions (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). These elements can reflect four cultural types corresponding to the four quadrants resulted from the consideration of mainly two dimensions of organizational effectiveness criteria: (1) organizational structure: flexibility vs. stability and (2) organizational orientation: internal vs. external. The first dimension differentiates a focus on flexibility, discretion, and dynamism from a focus on stability, order and control (Cameron, 2004). The control aspect indicates that in some extent the behaviour of the organizational members is formally regulated, while flexibility reflects the degree of freedom of the organizational members' behaviour. On this continuum,

some organizations are effective if they are constantly in a change process, while others if they pursue stability and predictability.

The second dimension describes the organization's focus on an internal orientation, integration and unity or its focus on an external orientation, differentiation and rivalry (Cameron, 2004). Some organizations base their effectivity on the congruence of their internal characteristics and harmonious internal relations, while others on the interaction and competition with others from their relevant environment. The dimension describes a continuum whose one pole refers to organizational cohesion and consonance, while the other refers to organizational separation and independence.

The intersection of these two organizational dimensions give rise to four quadrants, *"each representing a set of organizational effectiveness indicators"* (Cameron, 2004, p. 4) and describing each one type of organizational culture: hierarchy (internal orientation and stability), market (external orientation and stability), human relations or clan (internal orientation and flexibility), and adhocracy (external orientation and flexibility). The four types of culture describe the core values based on which judgements are made about the way in which an organization acts. An illustration of the four types of organizational cultures is presented in *Figure 1*.

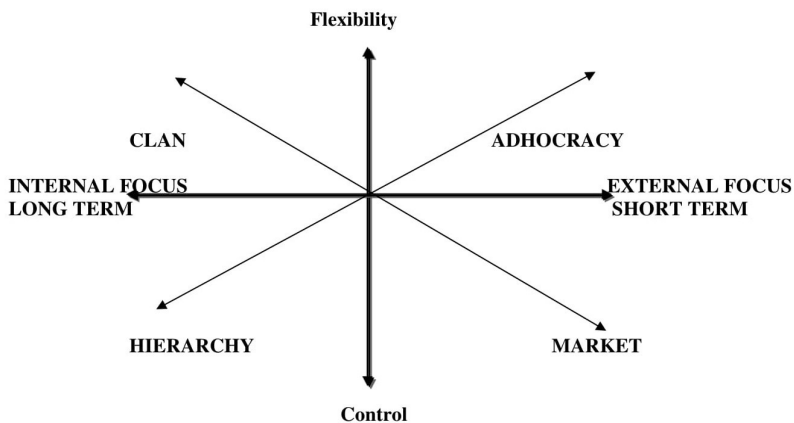


Figure 1. An illustration of the competing values model (Quinn, 1988).

In the following, we will detail each type of organizational culture included in *Figure 1*.

Human relations-based (clan) culture or the organization that is oriented towards supporting its members is characterized by participation, cooperation, and focus on the individual and social element, mutual trust, group cohesion, and individual development. The communication system is predominantly verbal and informal. In such a culture, organizational members are encouraged to express their ideas about their work and feelings towards each other. Decision-making is often based on informal contacts. Also, such an organization drives and capitalizes on the individual's commitment as a member of the organization. The human relations-based or clan culture is akin to the adhocracy type through the flexibility of the organization's course of action.

In the adhocracy culture or the innovation-oriented culture, the emphasis is on seeking new information, creativity, openness to change, anticipation of events and experimentation. Communication is informal and information is disseminated. Hierarchical control is possible, but it is not considered indispensable. In such a culture, management expects employees to be involved in work and to fulfil their obligations derived from the strategic plan to meet the organization's goals.

The third type of culture, the market one, is characterized by orientation towards goals. A strong emphasis is placed on concepts such as rationality, leadership and management by objectives, selection of information, fulfilment of functionality and group reward. The central point of this type of culture is the achievement of objectives through rational ways, in close connection with the existing external environment. The control element specific to this type of culture can also be found in the bureaucratic culture.

In the bureaucratic or the hierarchical culture type, the rules and the extent to which the organizational members comply with them are strongly valued. At the same time, more compliance with authority, rational approach to procedures, and division of labour are valued, too. The way in which the organization's activity is structured is a hierarchical one. The communication is done through written provisions, from the upper to the lower level. Power is based on formal authority.

These four culture types are assumed to compete one with the other. As a consequence, an organization will have a certain level of each culture. Organizational effectiveness will result from different patterns of cultures that are congruent with environmental demands. Furthermore, CVF assumes that organizational culture cannot be characterized by a single cultural type because there are many subunits in an organization that have different cultures at various organizational levels (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Furthermore, there is no ideal culture profile. Each organization must determine the degree of cultural development needed to succeed in its environment. A strong culture corresponds to an increased degree of effort homogeneity, a clear sense of direction, an unambiguous environment and services. The degree to which an organization needs a strong, homogeneous culture despite a mixture of cultures is determined by the environment in which the organization exists. However, the stronger the culture, the more effort the organization requires to initiate and implement the change needed to be organizationally successful. The model predicts that when the organization does anything, the organizational members in it will respond within the primary ideology that defines it or, in other words, the culture that defines it. To the degree that the afore-mentioned anything is not in keeping with the primary ideology, it will be rejected at worst and reinterpreted by the organizational members to fit the ideology at best (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). In an organization, its distinct structures / units may have a different culture from the culture of the organization as a whole.

In the Competing Values Framework and its underlying measurement instrument (The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument or OCAI), the four types of organizational culture are reflected in the following organizational dimensions: (1) dominant characteristics; (2) organizational leadership; (3) management of employees; (4) organization glue; (5) strategic emphases, and (6) criteria of success. The culture of an organization can be reflected to the same extent or differently in these six dimensions. According to Cameron and Ettington (1988), and Cameron and Quinn (1999, 2005, 2011), these dimensions are not comprehensive, but they address basic assumptions (dominant characteristics, organizational glue), interaction patterns (leadership, management of employees), and organizational direction (strategic emphases, criteria of success) that

typify the fundamentals of culture in an organization. It is important to mention that OCAI measures each quadrant-based culture profile by reference to the current and preferred organizational practices. In both cases, the measurement of (current) culture is based on observable artefacts, whereas the measurement of (ideal or preferred) culture is assumed to be driven by underlying values and assumptions (Zohar & Hofman, 2012). Thus, these six dimensions can reflect either observable and behavioural manifestations and/or their underlying values and assumptions of each cultural type. Also, it provides information about the cultural strength, type and congruence.

In an organization, there may be different degrees of congruence between these six dimensions. Cultural congruence reflects the extent to which the six dimensions are based on the same core values. Usually, successful organizations characterized by a high degree of cultural congruence have few internal conflicts and contradictions. An increased degree of cultural incongruence stimulates awareness of the need for organizational change. Furthermore, as the CVF assumes that organizational culture cannot be characterized by a single cultural type because there are many subunits in an organization that have different cultures at various organizational levels (Cameron & Quinn, 1999), the cultural congruence can differ also within different subunits of the organization and between them.

The role of the culture of organizational subunits in the emergence of the organizational culture is revealed by two research directions. The first one resides in Martin's (1992) work on the perspectives or approaches to culture: (1) the integration perspective; (2) the differentiation perspective and (3) the fragmentation perspective. The CVF and OCAI rely more on the first perspective that culture is what organizational members share or serves as the glue that holds them together and consensus about what culture exists in an organization can be detected. The second direction reveal that organizational culture is only recently subjected to academic discussions and empirical research underlined by the conceptualization of the organizational culture as a multilevel phenomenon (Chan, 2012). Based on Chan's (1998), Kozlowski and Klein's work (2000) on composition and compilation models, most scholars agree that organizational culture emerges based on a compositional model (Glisson & James, 2002; Ostroff et al., 2003; Schein, 2004). Thus, it is assumed that the culture of

the organization as a whole (organizational culture) and the culture of its units (subcultures) are theoretically isomorphic because both of them influence behaviour through shared, social normative cues (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). The CVF and OCAI consider organizational culture as a common, consensual, integrated set of perceptions, memories, values, attitudes, and definitions (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). According to these theoretical backgrounds, the culture of the organizational units (or the subcultures) can serve as clue of the culture of an organization as a whole (or organizational culture).

Although it was initially designed to identify an organization's values, the model developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999) based on the Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983) and Cameron and Ettington's (1988) work on using this framework to describe an organization's culture, it subsequently proved to be useful in applications related to organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), including academic environment (Berrio, 2003; Kwan & Walker, 2004). There are few theoretical contributions on describing and diagnosing organizational culture in a Romanian university (Lăcătuș, 2012), as well as empirical studies conducted with this framework (Nica, Constantin, Nestian & Leon, 2013). Thus, the aim of the present study was to employ the Competing Values Model to describe the culture, mainly behavioural manifestations existing in one of the most performant university in Romania at the organizational unit level (or subcultures). Specifically, we aim to investigate the behavioural manifestations of the university units' core values, basic assumptions and beliefs as they are understood, shared, and perceived by the organizational members such as academics and researchers. Thus, we will describe the strength of the existing behavioural manifestations, the cultural type and the congruence of the cultural type on the six dimensions stated in the Competing Values Model.

This study is in line with the stream of research that examines the content of the culture and evaluates the association between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990). Specifically, it provides information about organizational effectiveness by identifying the organizational cultural content, mainly the observable artefacts and behavioural manifestations that exists in the university and not by taking measures of the two concepts (effectiveness and culture).

Furthermore, the analysis of the observable behavioural manifestations of the core values can inform future changes in university in order to become more effective. Also, they can become the first target in implementing cultural changes considering that as elements of the surface level of organizational culture they are easier to change compared to the deep level elements such as core values, basic assumptions and beliefs.

II. Methods

II.1. Participants

The instrument was sent to 1472 academics and 290 researchers representing all the personnel having a job in teaching or research in Babeş-Bolyai University. Thereof, 1014 participants returned the instrument. They came from 96 organizational units such as departments and research units from 27 faculties, research centres and labs. The response rate was 57.59%. However, after the primary check of the responses offered by the participants in term of the missing data and correctness of the completion of the instrument, only 898 individual responses were considered for the subsequent data analyses. 9 incomplete responses and 107 responses with errors in terms of the completion procedure were excluded.

The final sample comprises 898 participants. More than 95% were academics (855 participants, 95.2%), while the rest of the sample comprised researchers (4.8%; 43 participants). The participants having a teaching job came from 21 faculties. They were members of 90 departments. The participants having a research job came from six research centres and institutes. The majority of the participants reported an age between 30 and 49 years (85.76%). Only 4.45% of the participants reported an age under 30 years, while 6.68% reported an age over 60 years. A small percentage of the participants, 3.12%, did not report their age.

In terms of job title, the distribution of the participants was the following: teaching assistant (15.8%), lecturer (37.8%), associate professor (25.8%), full professor (11%), research assistant (1.9%), researcher-level III (2.1%), researcher-level II (0.4%), researcher-level I

(0.3%). One participant reported two job titles, one involving teaching and the other one research. Almost 4.7% of the participants did not report their job title.

A percentage of 61.5% participants reported that they conduct their teaching and research activities mainly in Romanian language. In contrast, 25.4% of the participants reported Hungarian (14.6%), German (3%), English (5.6%), French (2%) and other languages (1.8%) or combinations between the mentioned languages. A percentage of 5% did not report the main language used in their work.

The mean organizational tenure was 18.91 years ($SD = 22.21$). Most of the participants reported that they have a full-time contract from an unlimited period (87%).

The data was analysed at the level of the organizational unit (96 teaching and research units).

III. Instrument

Considering that the theoretical model adopted in this study was the Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 1998), the instrument used to measure the content of the organizational culture was the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). OCAI was developed to measure the organizational culture types specified by the Competing Values Framework and it is the best-known instrument developed from this framework. Literature reveals that it has good psychometric properties (Choi, Seo, Scott, & Martin, 2010; DiStefano & Scrima, 2016).

This instrument offers an assessment of the organizations in terms of four culture types: (1) human relations or clan, (2) adhocracy, (3) market, and (4) hierarchy. Each culture type is assessed on six dimensions: (1) *dominant characteristics*, how the organization is as a whole; (2) *organizational leadership*, what the formal leadership in the organization is considered to exemplify; (3) *management of employees*, how employees are managed and how the work environment is; (4) *organizational glue*, the tie that keeps together the organization; (5) *strategic emphases* that define the areas emphasized in the organizational strategy; (6) *success criteria* that specify how the achievement is defined, what is rewarded and celebrated in the

organization. Based on these dimensions, the OCAI is designed to help identify an organization's current culture or the culture that exists today (part 1) and the culture that organizational members believe should be developed to match future demands of the environment and the opportunities to be faced by the organization in the coming five years (part 2) (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

In this study, we used the ipsative six items form of the OCAI instrument to assess only the current culture existing at the level of the departments and research units. The six items version have been found to be equally predictive of an organization's culture as the longer versions of the OCAI (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Each item was one of the six dimensions representing core attributes of an organization that reflect its culture. Furthermore, each (ipsative) item had four alternatives. The respondents were asked to divide 100 points, among the four alternatives, describing each of the four quadrants in the CVF, and according to how similar the description included in the statement is to the description of their department or research unit. Thus, this instrument provided data only about the subcultures that exist in university at the level of the departments and research units. Considering the constructs measured by OCAI through the current culture, the data collected reflects the perception of the participants on the behavioural manifestation of the core values, basic assumptions, and orientations of the organizational units in which they are embedded.

The higher the score given by participants for one type of culture or dimension (an alternative of the ipsative item), the more dominant that type of culture or dimension is in the analysed organization. The scoring of the instrument was conducted in line with the procedure presented by Cameron and Quinn (1999).

IV. Procedure

The data was collected through the paper-and-pencil form of the instrument after the institutional approval was obtained by the research team. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the responses, each questionnaire was coded and placed in an envelope. The instrument was distributed through the secretary office of the

organizational unit included in this study. Each participant received an envelope with one coded unfilled copy of the instrument. After filling in the instrument, the participant put it back in the envelope, closed it, and returned this envelope to the secretary office of the unit.

The research design adopted in this study was a descriptive cross-sectional one. Data collection was conducted during January-February 2015.

V. Results

For each type of culture and the six dimensions through which it can be analysed, the mean score given by the participants and the standard deviation at the level of the organizational unit were computed. For the entire sample of the teaching and research units, these statistics are included in Table 1.

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
A. Human relations culture	25.64	12.63	0.00	76.67
1. Dominant characteristics	22.75	17.04	0.00	100.00
2. Organizational leadership	25.77	17.12	0.00	100.00
3. Management of employees	28.00	18.21	0.00	100.00
4. Organizational glue	26.83	19.06	0.00	100.00
5. Strategic emphases	24.33	15.25	0.00	100.00
6. Success criteria	26.15	16.60	0.00	100.00
B. Adhocracy culture	21.15	7.81	0.00	56.67
1. Dominant characteristics	24.35	14.47	0.00	100.00
2. Organizational leadership	18.20	12.24	0.00	100.00
3. Management of employees	21.71	15.84	0.00	100.00
4. Organizational glue	19.02	12.19	0.00	100.00
5. Strategic emphases	20.87	11.76	0.00	100.00
6. Success criteria	22.76	14.53	0.00	100.00
C. Market culture	25.17	11.64	0.00	100.00
1. Dominant characteristics	31.17	18.10	0.00	100.00
2. Organizational leadership	16.64	20.59	0.00	100.00
3. Management of employees	26.26	17.22	0.00	100.00
4. Organizational glue	29.65	19.04	0.00	100.00
5. Strategic emphases	25.86	17.34	0.00	100.00

6. Success criteria	21.43	16.39	0.00	100.00
D. Hierarchy culture	28.04	13.74	0.00	100.00
1. Dominant characteristics	21.72	19.10	0.00	100.00
2. Organizational leadership	39.40	22.12	0.00	100.00
3. Management of employees	24.02	18.32	0.00	100.00
4. Organizational glue	24.50	20.63	0.00	100.00
5. Strategic emphases	28.95	19.15	0.00	100.00
6. Success criteria	29.66	19.61	0.00	100.00

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for organizational culture types and dimensions ($N = 96$ organizational units)

The results included in Table 1 reveal that at the level of the organizational unit the participants gave the highest score to the hierarchical/ bureaucratic culture ($M = 28.04$). However, the differences between the four types of organizational culture are small and less than 10 points: human relations culture ($M = 25.64$), adhocracy culture ($M = 21.15$), and market culture ($M = 25.17$). The graphical representation of the overall type of organizational culture existing within the organizational units of the university is presented in Figure 2.

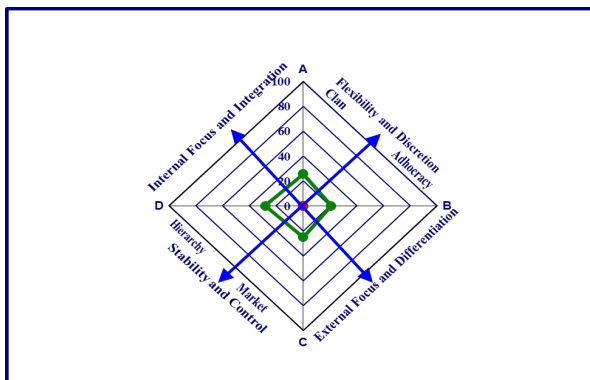


Figure 2. The overall culture profile of the teaching and research units within the university ($N = 96$ units)

These results suggest that the overall culture profile of the organizational units existing in the university is rather a mixture of the four types of organizational culture, with a focus on compliance to procedures and planning that is specific to hierarchical culture ($\chi^2 = 77.38$, $p < .001$). Participants perceive their units as simultaneously being internally oriented towards their members and control. In such a

culture, the workplace is characterized by a high degree of formalization and structuring. Procedures govern what the members of the organizational unit are doing. Those with formal authority are considered good coordinators and organizers and viewed as leaders. The goal is to make the organization work smoothly in achieving the unit's goals. Formal policies and rules are the ones that maintain together the organizational unit. The long-term orientation is to maintain stability and performance through efficient operations. Success is defined in terms of results and low costs. Human resources management focuses on job security and predictability.

Regarding the frequency (expressed as percentages) of the dominant culture type existing in the teaching and research organizational units (Figure 3), the data shows that about 64% of these units have a type of mixed cultures, that includes to a similar extent the values specific to the human relations, adhocracy, market, and hierarchical culture. There are also organizational units dominated by one cultural type. Thus, 16.67% of these units are characterized by the values specific to human relations culture. In the case of 10.42% of the organizational units, we found the specific values of the market type culture. Approximately 6% of the organizational units are characterized by values specific to hierarchical culture. No organizational unit is predominantly characterized by the adhocracy culture.

The overall culture profile with the predominance of the values of bureaucratic and human relations/clan cultures (**Figure 2**) is confirmed in three of the six cultural dimension profiles, namely, the current organizational leadership (**Figure 6**), strategic emphases (**Figure 12**), and success criteria (**Figure 14**). In the case of other two dimensions, namely, the dominant characteristics (**Figure 4**) and organization glue (**Figure 10**), the cultural profile highlights the relative importance of market values, while in the case management of employees (**Figure 8**), the cultural profile shows a relatively homogeneous mix of the four types of culture values. It seems that the perception of the organization as a whole is more guided by the explicit theory of managerial action.

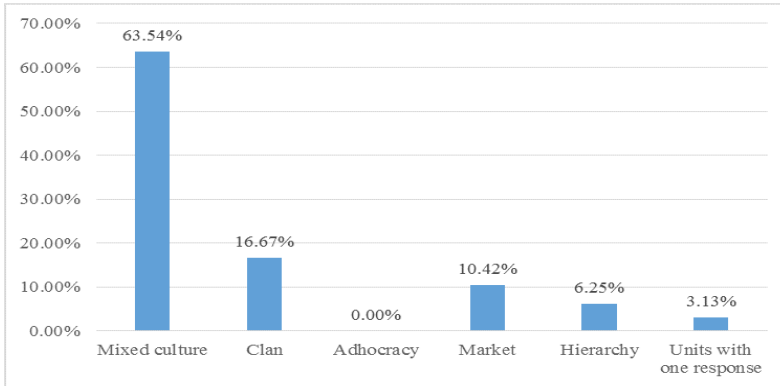


Figure 3. The frequency of the culture type of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

Thus, with respect to the dominant characteristics of the organizational unit, we found specific values of the market-type culture ($M = 31.17$), followed by the adhocracy ($M = 24.35$), human relations ($M = 22.75$), and hierarchical culture values ($M = 21.72$) ($c^2 = 257.03$, $p < .001$). The dominant characteristics culture profile of teaching and research units within the university is presented in Figure 4.

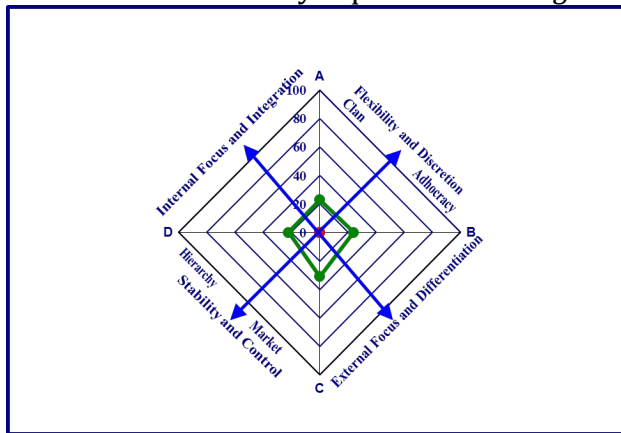


Figure 4. The dominant characteristics culture profile of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

A presentation of the dominant characteristics within the organizational units is included in Figure 5. Approximately 59.38% of these units have a combination of characteristics based on values specific to the four types of organizational culture: human relations,

adhocracy, market, and hierarchical. The dominant characteristics specific to the market type culture were found in the case of 22.92% of the analysed units, followed by those specific to the adhocracy culture identified in 9.38% of the units. There is also a small percentage of organizational units that have dominant characteristics specific to human relations culture and a combination between market and hierarchical cultures (4.17% and 1.04% respectively).

Figure 5. The frequency of the dominant characteristics of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

The organizational leadership style of the analysed units is based rather on hierarchical culture values ($M = 39.40$), followed by human relations culture ($M = 25.77$) and less by the values of the adhocracy ($M = 18.20$) and market type cultures ($M = 16.64$) ($c^2 = 703.36$, $p < .001$). This profile is illustrated in *Figure 6*.

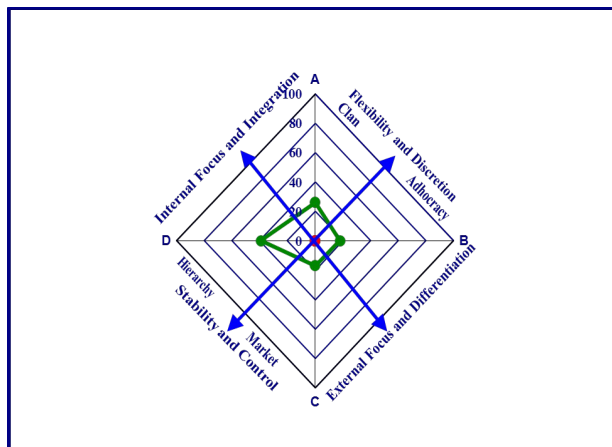


Figure 6. The organizational leadership culture profile of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

In more than half of the units analysed, the cultural dimension of the organizational leadership is based on values specific to hierarchy culture. However, approximately 38% of the units had an organizational leadership based on values specific to the four types of organizational culture (**Figure 7**). Only 7.29% of the units were characterized by a leadership style based on human relations-specific culture values. In

one unit, the organizational leadership style was based on a mixture of human relations and hierarchical culture-specific values.

Figure 7. The frequency of the organizational leadership of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

Management of employees was predominantly guided by a mixture of cultures, with strong accents of the human relations (M = 28.00) and market-type culture values (M = 26.26) ($c^2 = 88.65$, $p < .001$) (*Figure 8*).

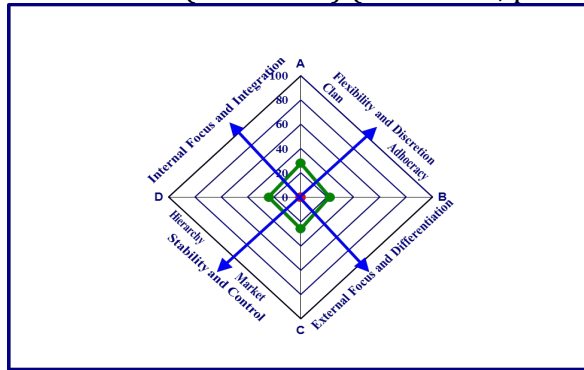


Figure 8. The management of employees culture profile of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

Specifically, the data revealed that 77.08% of the organizational units analysed were characterized by a management of employees based on a relatively homogeneous mix of values specific to the four types of organizational culture (*Figure 9*). The management of employees guided by the human relations culture values was found in 12.50% of the analysed organizational units, while 5.21% units had a management of employees specific to the market-type culture. One

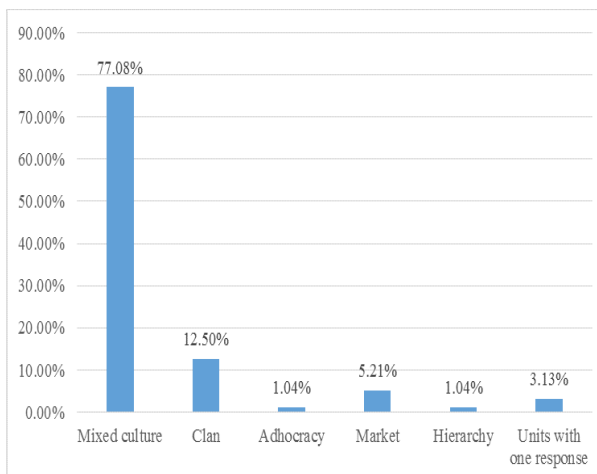


Figure 9. The frequency of the management of employees of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

department was characterized by a management of employees specific to the hierarchy cultural type, while another one based on adhocracy values.

The current organizational glue cultural dimension comprised a mixture of values in which prevailed the market (M = 29.65), human relations (M = 26.83) and hierarchical culture type values (M = 24.50) ($c^2 = 161.21$, $p < .001$) (Figure 10).

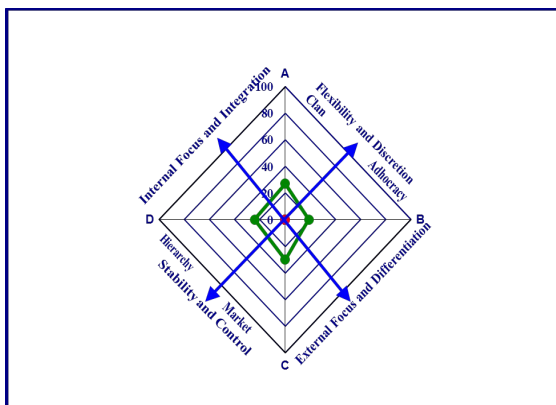


Figure 10. The organizational glue culture profile of the teaching and research units (N = 96units)

Figure 11. The frequency of the organizational glue of the teaching and research units (N = 96 units)

More than half of the analysed organizational units (64.58%) had an organizational glue cultural dimension comprising a mixture of values specific to the four types of organizational culture (Figure 11). The organizational glue based on human relations culture was characteristic to 11.46% of the units, while the one based on values of control and external orientation was found in the case of 17.71% of the units. However, the force that maintains the organization unified driven on values of internal orientation and control was characteristic to 2.08% of units.

The strategic emphases were founded on the mixture of the four types of organizational culture, in which prevailed hierarchy (M = 28.95), market (M = 25.86), and human relations cultures (M = 24.33, $c^2 = 44.35$, $p < .001$) (Figure 12).

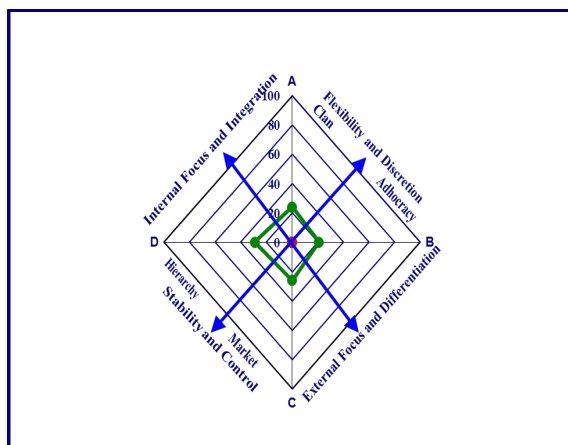


Figure 12. The strategic emphases culture profile of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

Data revealed that 76.04% of the analysed units carry out an organizational activity guided by a mixture of the values specific to the four types of organizational culture. There is a small number of units that are more characterized by strategic values specific to human relations (7.29%), market (5.21%) and hierarchical cultures (8.33%) (Figure 13).

The criteria of success were defined by a mixture of the values from the four types of organizational culture. In this mixture, the prevailing values were those of the internal orientation (hierarchy and human relations values, $M = 29.66$, $M = 26.15$) rather than those of the external orientation (adhocracy and market values, $M = 22.76$, $M = 21.43$) ($\chi^2 = 100.27$, $p < .001$) (Figure 14).

Figure 13. The frequency of the strategic emphases of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

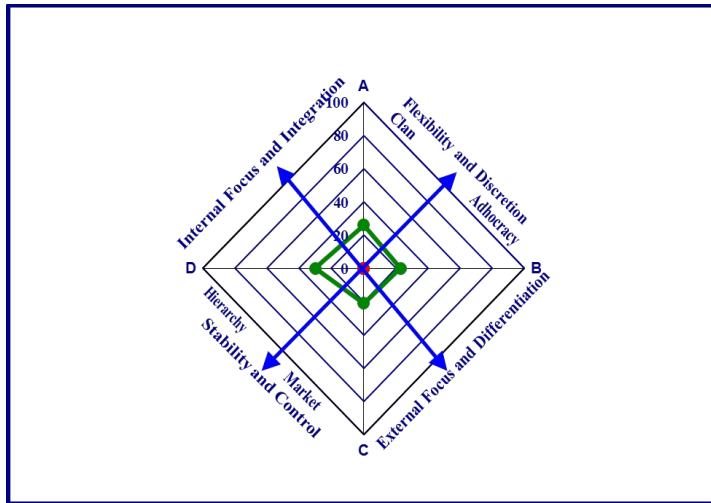


Figure 14. The success criteria culture profile of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

Almost 64% of the units defined their and their members' success based on a combination of human relations, adhocracy, market, and hierarchical values (Figure 15). Approximately 15.63% of units defined their success mainly on the basis of human relations values, 7.92% based on hierarchical culture values, while a single department considered success in terms of the combination of human relations and hierarchy values. Adhocracy was adopted by 2.08% of the units to define success, while the market type values guided the definition of success in the case of 3.13% of the units.

Figure 15. The frequency of the success criteria of the teaching and research units ($N = 96$ units)

VI. Discussions

In the present study, the Competing Values Model was employed to describe the culture, mainly behavioural manifestations existing in one of the most performant university in Romania at the teaching and research unit level (or subcultures). Specifically, we investigated the behavioural manifestations of the university units' core values, basic

assumptions and beliefs as they were understood, shared, and perceived by the organizational members such as academics and researchers. Furthermore, we described the strength of the existing behavioural manifestations of the unit culture on the six dimensions stated by the Competing Values Model: (1) dominant characteristics; (2) organizational leadership; (3) management of employees; (4) organizational glue; (5) strategic emphases; and (6) success criteria. In line with Cameron and Ettington's work (1988), these six dimensions provided information that allowed us to describe the fundamental manifestations of the organizational culture of the university's teaching and research units by addressing basic assumptions (dominant characteristics, organizational glue), interaction patterns (leadership, management of employees), and organizational direction (strategic emphases, criteria of success) that typify the fundamentals of culture.

The results reveal that the overall culture profile of the teaching and research units consists in the mixture of the human relations (commitment, communication, development), adhocracy (innovative outputs, transformation, agility), market (market share, goal achievement, profitability), and hierarchy (efficiency, timeliness, consistency and uniformity) values. The relative strength of these four cultural types is low. This cultural profile is similar to those specific to organizations from public administration (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The data shows that about 64% of these units have a type of mixed cultures.

The CVF theory suggests that culture types are expected to relate to different organizational effectiveness indicators as a function of their basic assumptions, values, and structures. The cultural mix, identified in more than 60% of the university's units, matches the environmental requirements. In the case of the university, and implicitly its units, the environmental requirements are various. As previously stated in this paper, universities are considered complex organizations with multiple objectives and standards in teaching, research, and community services that are forced by the changes in their environments to reflect on their functions in society (Kantanen, 2005). Thus, the university needs to be at the same time flexible (to initiate and adopt changes needed to its organization form) and oriented toward stability and control (to manage rapidly in an efficient and effective manner a high rate of external and internal changes, the consistency of the change in different

parts of the university is facilitated by delineating clear roles and procedures that are formally defined by rules and regulations). Simultaneously, as a result of the existing increased competition to attract more high-quality applicants, severe research funds cuts and strong globalization of education, university adopts a market orientation (Folch & Ion, 2009; Ressler & Abratt, 2009; Kallio, Kallio, Tienari, & Hyvönen, 2015). The university competes with other international and local organizations from various industries to attract highly talented job applicants and to keep them as committed, motivated, and satisfied employees. Thus, in order to be a good employer, the university needs to have an internally oriented control (e.g. the rewards procedures).

The presence of the mixed cultures in more than 60% of the units can be explained also by the particular mix of the scores of the six dimensions that reflect culture. The same strength of one culture type can be given by different combination of scores on cultural dimensions. Although the difference between the points/ scores awarded to the types of organizational culture is less than ten points and considering the rank of each culture type mean scores, we identified that hierarchical cultural elements received higher rates on some dimensions compared to those of other culture types. The inspection of the mean scores of the six dimensions used to describe each type of culture showed that the highest rank of the hierarchy culture was influenced by the score registered at the dimension of organizational leadership ($M = 39.40$). Also, in the case of 51.04% of the units, organizational leadership is based on values specific to hierarchy culture. Thus, formal leaders are considered as good coordinators, monitors, and organizers in order to ensure efficiency, timeliness, consistency and uniformity.

In terms of the congruence between the overall culture profile and the six cultural dimensions, we found that the overall culture profile with the predominance of the values of bureaucratic culture followed by the human relations/clan culture (**Figure 2**) was confirmed in three of the six cultural dimensions, namely, the current organizational leadership (**Figure 6**), strategic emphases (**Figure 12**) and success criteria (**Figure 14**). In the case of other two dimensions, namely, the dominant characteristics (**Figure 4**) and organization glue (**Figure 10**), the culture profile highlights the relative importance of market values.

Furthermore, in the case management of employees (**Figure 8**) the culture profile shows a relatively homogeneous mix of the four types of culture values. It seems that the perception of organization as a whole is more guided by the explicit theory of managerial action.

Moreover, these results permit the description of the fundamental manifestations of the university's teaching and research units' culture. The relative predominance of the market values in the case of the dominant characteristics and organizational glue cultural dimensions highlights the following basic assumptions about obtaining organizational effectiveness: achievement through aggressively competing and customer focus produces organizational effectiveness (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Thus, the organization is very results-oriented. It is considered that people behave appropriately when they have clear objectives and are rewarded based on their achievements. Furthermore, the glue that holds the organizational unit together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.

Information about the teaching and research units' organizational direction, as fundamental of culture, was revealed by the relative predominance of the hierarchical culture values on the following two cultural dimensions: strategic emphases and criteria of success. Thus, university's units emphasize permanence and stability through efficiency, control, and smooth operations and define success based on efficiency. In the organizational course of action, dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low - cost production is critical.

The interaction patterns existing within university's units are reflected on units' leadership and human resource management. We found that the leadership style is based predominantly on hierarchical values followed at a great distance by the human relation values. The management of employees is firstly based on clan culture values followed shortly by the market and hierarchy values. Considering these results, the organizational leadership style is internally oriented and emphasizes integration, being concerned with collaboration and control of the internal processes. Leaders are considered as good coordinators, monitors, and organizers but also as facilitators, mentors, and team builders. Furthermore, the means used to manage employees are the following: responding to the employees' needs, aligning human resources with business strategy, and reengineering organizational processes.

These results should be considered in the light of some limitations. Some critiques of the concepts measured by OCAI concern the fact that data about observable artefacts as elements of the surface level of the organizational culture are used to infer core values and basic assumptions. According to CVF statements, the four types of values about organizational effectiveness or the four types of culture represent opposite or competing assumptions. A different line of studies suggests that a complete description of organizational culture requires the separation of basic assumptions and core values as deep-level elements and each of these cultural elements should be both measured separately. Conceptualizations of the nature of relationships between these two cultural dimensions would be necessary in order to better describe organizational culture (Zohar & Hofmann, 2012).

VII. Conclusions

In this study, the Competing Values Model was employed to describe the culture, mainly behavioural manifestations/ artefacts existing in one of the most performant university in Romania at the organizational unit level (or subcultures). The results indicated that the average cultural profile of the analysed units comprises a combination of the four cultures in which relatively predominates hierarchy culture. Furthermore, the types of culture existing at the level of units are not fully invariant across the six cultural dimensions.

As a complex organization with multiple objectives and standards in teaching, research and community service, the investigated university is characterized by a cultural mix, identified in more than 60% of the university's units. Thus, the university manifests an internally oriented control, using enough centralization and formalization to assure its stability and continuity to obtain predictable performance outcomes. The university employees obey the management rules, but the academic managers are also recognized as good human relations leaders, using teamwork and employees' participation. At the same time, the university adopts a market orientation and is flexible enough to initiate structural changes, internal aligned, yet sensitive to a competitive complex environment.

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The University between Theory and Practice. How Romanian Aspiring University Leaders Understand the University

Sonia Pavlenko (*University Babeş-Bolyai, Centre of University Strategy and Quality Management, e-mail: sonia.pavlenko@ubbcluj.ro,*
Cristina Bojan (*University Babeş-Bolyai, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, e-mail: bochristro@yahoo.com*)

Abstract: The debate regarding the essence of the university has been going on for centuries. Certain elements of its definition may be age (or century) -specific, illustrating the university's adaptation to the contemporary needs of the society, while others are invariable throughout the centuries. Therefore, it is always a challenge to define the common elements defining the university, applicable at the time of investigation. Our article focuses on the question: *How do individuals running for leadership positions in Romanian higher education see/understand the university?* We consider them to be highly informed actors in this field, and their views are a well-informed source of primary information. Firstly, the article reviews existing approaches and definitions of a university, trying both to identify it specifically as a higher education institution and to distinguish it from potentially similar institutions. Then, through qualitative analysis of selected electoral manifestos, it identifies a number of characteristics of the institution. Based on the characteristics identified, the article discusses possible implications of the findings for the Romanian higher education field.

Keywords: university, higher education, leadership, discourse analysis

Introduction

The debate regarding the essence of the university, the possible definition of what a university is, has been going on for centuries. Certain elements of its definition may be age (or century) -specific, illustrating the university's adaptation to the contemporary needs of the society it belongs to, while others are invariable throughout the centuries. Therefore, it is always a challenge to define the common elements characteristic for the university, applicable at the time of investigation.

Nowadays, almost anyone can say what a university is, especially if one is to apply the well-known phrase: "I know it when I see it" (i.e. I can recognise one when I see one). The term "university" is ever present in the public sphere, especially today, in the knowledge-based society. Universities could even be considered an instrument of soft diplomacy, with many countries competing for "brains" through their universities. Universities are featured in the news, in social media, and in many of the everyday conversations. Nevertheless, one always wonders to what extent regular people work with the full definition of what a university is, and to what extent one understands all the various roles and functions connected to a university. People running for leadership positions in universities can be considered as highly informed actors in this field.

In neighbouring countries (such as Germany, Austria or Hungary), there are clear working differences between a university and other types of higher education institutions. However, in Romania, there is a fair amount of confusion present starting from the legislative level. For example, Romanian Law of Education does not differentiate between universities and other types of higher education institutions. For example, Art. 114 (2) states that "Higher education is organised in universities, academies of studies, institutes, higher education schools and other alike, hereinafter called higher education institutions or universities." However, the literature (classical philosophers, traditional university models, the German, French or English-speaking spaces) offers various definitions for the "university", definitions which alongside identifying the meaning of the concept also help differentiate it from other potentially similar higher education institutions.

This article attempts to compare the traditional elements composing the definition of the university with the elements present at national (Romanian) level, by looking at a number of texts drafted by people who aim to assume a leadership role in a university, i.e. running for the office of Rector (the highest executive position in a Romanian university). This can also be viewed as an assessment of the impact of the national legislation on individual understandings of concepts, namely on finding could highlight whether those running for the office of Rector stand closer to the traditional, international debates or to the national legislation. One subsequent limitation of such study is the amount of available information pointing to the manner in which would-be leaders conceive their institution as a whole, going beyond the concrete and immediate aims and objectives they proposed for their term in office, were they to be elected. Previous research (Pavlenko & Bojan, 2013) looked at the manner in which democratic concepts were reflected in the electoral manifestoes of those running for office in 2012, as it was the first time that the electoral process took place according to the provisions of a new law.

Nowadays, with the data from the second round of elections, we believe we can explore more abstract concepts, such as “*What is their understanding of a university?*.” Even though concepts are not the first ones on the debate agenda (indicators and specific objectives are more likely to be found here), we believe that they permeate one’s approach and discourse about the university and consequently they can be identified as such in text or coagulated from in between the lines.

Theoretical background

A university is usually defined as “a high-level educational institution in which students study for degrees and academic research is done” (university, n.d.). This is a rather comprehensive definition, as it highlights some of the basic characteristics of a university, which serve to distinguish it from other similar institutions. Firstly, the university is (i) an institution, and not a company; then (ii) it deals with higher education, and not with other types of education, such as vocational education, or other levels of education (such as primary, secondary, etc.), pointing, at the same time, also towards a certain, more advanced

degree of knowledge; then (iii) it grants degrees in recognition of the successful completion of a study programme/route and, finally, (iv) it carries out research activities.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, Princeton University's WordNet lexical database suggests three different (yet complementary) definitions for the university.¹

➤ First, the university is the body of faculty and students at a university;

➤ Then, the university is an establishment where a seat of higher learning is housed, including administrative and living quarters as well as facilities for research and teaching;

➤ And last but not least, a university is a large and diverse institution of higher learning created to educate for life and for a profession and to grant degrees.

This triple definition highlights other three fundamental characteristics of a university, namely: (v) a university consists of both academics and students; alongside (vi) the space in which the activities take place; moreover, the role of a university is not only to grant degrees and to carry out research activities, but also to (vii) educate for life and for a profession all those who enrol in it. The university is also the place where (viii) universal knowledge is being studied.

Throughout time, the university has been compared with, among others, corporations, companies or civic associations. However, arguing that the university is fully similar to any or all of these would be wrong, as the university is an institution with its own identity. (Some current developments also support approaching the university as one would a company, and in some specific aspects this is viable – however, we should not put an equal sign between a university and other types of institutions or companies.)

In order to be able to identify the essence of the university, Peter Milward (2006, p. 3-7) suggests the following set of questions:

◆ What is the purpose of a university? (the university is more than just a number of buildings in which the students are trained at a level higher than that of a high school);

¹<http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=university&sub=Search+WordNet&o2=&o0=1&o8=1&o1=1&o7=&o5=&o9=&o6=&o3=&o4=&h=>

◆ To what extent does the university still maintain the contact with universal knowledge? (in the Medieval Age, for instance, one could state, without being in too much error, that Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas instructor, knew almost everything that there was to know in the world; nowadays, one would be hard pressed to find a university offering courses covering the entire human knowledge. Incidentally, Hilbert (2011) showed that the amount of information available in the world has skyrocketed only taking into account the previous three decades; covering all the information available out there in any limited format or setting would be surely impossible. However, the relationship between university and knowledge is still worth exploring.)

◆ To what extent do today's universities still maintain the limitations present in the 18th century, where teaching was addressed mainly to students while research was an activity specific mainly to the academics?

In medieval times, the universities were mainly confessional institutions, which did not encourage localism. It was not unusual for a student from Cluj to study at Vienna or a teacher with an Italian background to be teaching at Paris or Oxford. They often even debated similar topics. All this was possible because they all shared the same *lingua franca*, namely Latin. Most of the times, universities benefited from various privileges granted by rulers or church leaders, or even by the Pope (a Papal Bull was often required to set up a university in the first place). Nevertheless, a significant change took place in Germany at the beginning of the 18th century, when the *raison d'être* of the universities transformed from mainly serving the church to predominantly serving the state.

Of course, there are views (old and recent alike) advocating for a university that would pursue only an economic profit. For example, in 1773, Michaelis, an academic at Gottingen University, in his *Raisonnement über die protestantischen Universitäten in Deutschland*, suggested that universities should be organised as a state economic enterprise, and serve the specific economic needs of the state (for instance, naval training should be available only in the states that border a sea).

More recently, the manner in which the university is defined seems to gain in diversity. One possible choice for a university is to choose between being an academic enterprise or an entrepreneurial institution. On the one hand, the university should only handle knowledge as an aim in itself, for the sake of knowledge, while, on the other, it should prioritise responding to the needs of the community through educating the required workforce and offering marketable services.

Another pair of alternatives is the apparent choice between being focused on teaching or on research. A research university puts research at the root of all its activities (including teaching and third stream activities), while the alternative is to focus on the teaching process. John Henry Cardinal Newman (1907), for instance, suggested that a fundamental element of university education resides in the fact that students and teachers live in the same space, so that one student's education can only be accomplished not by the mere acquiring of knowledge specific to a certain subject or field, but by sharing the same atmosphere with the teachers. In his famous *Discourse V*, Newman articulates his ideas as follows:

It is a great point then to enlarge the range of studies which a University professes, even for the sake of the students; and, though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of universal learning, considered as a place of education. An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other. Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only pursues a few sciences out of the multitude. He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its

great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. (Newman, 1907, p. 101)

Newman suggests that bringing together a group of students and teachers for a (longer) period of time is much more important than a certain exam or teacher for a true higher education. In his wake, campus residency is considered as an important part of a liberal type of education.

This idea was intensively debated in the Transylvanian space as well, at the beginning of the 20th century, when it was decided to set up a new institution of higher education in Cluj. Vasile Pârvan (1919) (who gave the inaugural speech), suggested that the Oxbridge collegiate model be adopted; this would allow the students to acquire, alongside specialised knowledge, a certain type of culture (according to the field they were studying) and to form their characters. A further objective suggested by Pârvan was the promotion of “letters, arts and sciences” – pure and applied ones – which would inevitably offer new spiritual values.

Another possible definition of the university is the one quoted by Times Higher Education² and belonging to Peter Knight, who defines higher education “in highly pragmatic terms based on entry standards. It consists, he suggests, of courses that are “difficult, stimulating, challenging and exciting.”

The manner in which the university is defined must, however, adapt and reposition itself according to elements present in their socio-economic context, which might have been more recently included in the debate, included, but not limited to: access, equity, curriculum, student experience, etc. For instance, the 1997 Dearing Report allowed some universities to define themselves as “business-facing universities” as it defined universities as being places of research and advanced learning, and situated them at the edge of educational policy. Nevertheless, if we are to take into account that knowledge is at the root of economic prosperity, universities should also be at the heart of economic policy (this was implemented in the UK, for example, in the late 2000s, when the governmental Department responsible for higher education was also responsible for business).

²<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/diversity-challenge/400160.article>

Given the large diversity of possible definitions, we should also mention the most popular one when it comes to pinpointing what a university is, namely the one expressed by the philosophical founder of the University of Berlin, Wilhelm von Humboldt. He argued (1903) that the teaching and research activities should take place in the same institution and be carried out by the same individuals. Moreover, it would be necessary for universities to tackle the issues that are not yet solved, be them in research or in teaching (in opposition to schools, which should only deal with the universally accepted and non-disputed knowledge). According to the German thinker, the best way in which universities can serve their community and the state is to suffer no interference from the state. Consequently, the entire university edifice is based on university autonomy and academic freedom. For Humboldt, all the knowledge is situated under philosophy's cupola. Humboldt was the one who opened the debate concerning the definition of the university, alongside its mission and roles in the community.

The university's mission is also a fundamental factor in defining and differentiating it from other institutions. Jose Ortega y Gasset remarked in 1930 that an institution cannot be configured as an assembly of practices unless, beforehand, it had defined rigorously and successfully its mission (Ortega y Gasset, 1999, p. 16). And in order to establish the mission of the university, Ortega y Gasset tried to identify its functions, namely: "transmission of culture", "teacher training", "scientific research and educating the new scholars".

The aforementioned THE article also quotes Leslie Wagner, who stated that "*University* is an elastic term, used by some to include and some to exclude." If we are to rely on this, the possibilities of defining the university become almost infinite. However, we believe that a clear, consistent and transnational definition of universities would help in drafting policies in the field of higher education and in clarifying the meaning of "higher" from "higher education". Despite the potential variations in definitions, a number of fundamental axioms remain central for the mission of any university, namely the freedom of expression within the limits of the law, the freedom of thinking within the society's ethical framework and the freedom to question universally accepted axioms. Lord Dearing suggested that similar to the manner in which medieval communities were built around castles, the castles of

the future who will “feed” the communities from an economic and cultural point of view are the universities.

Methodology

Sample selection

In Romania, according to the provision of Law no. 1/2011 (also known as National Education Law), each university can initially vote (through a referendum) for the manner of electing their rector (either by an electoral vote or through a selection process administered by a specially appointed committee). All universities we included in the sample opted for electing their rector. Thus, candidates had to submit a “Managerial Programme” alongside their CV. A number of debates between candidates were also organised in some universities.

For the purpose of this article, we selected the top six universities in the country from the point of view of their performance. On the one hand, we included all the universities from the *Universitaria Consortium* (in alphabetical order: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași/UAIC, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca/UBB, Bucharest University of Economic Studies / ASE, University of Bucharest/UB and West University of Timișoara/UVT), i.e. one specialised institution in business and economics – ASE and four comprehensive universities; on the other, we also included in the sample Politehnica University of Bucharest/UPB because of its overall performance in the 2016 Romanian University Metaranking (available in Romanian [here](#)). UPB ranks third at country level, the remaining top five positions being held by the comprehensive universities of the *Universitaria Consortium*. The slightly lower position of ASE can be explained through the fact that it is a specialised institution, not a comprehensive one, and thus it might not be visible in all international rankings, which cover a large variety of fields.

Starting from the selected universities, we identified the managerial programmes of the candidates in the 2016 elections (all programmes were accessed during 2016). We selected only the programmes drafted by the ones who won the elections, on the presumption that these programmes included concepts regarding the university that resonated with a wider part of the academic community.

In total, we analysed 6 managerial programmes trying to identify as many defining characteristics of a university as possible, but starting from the defining elements identified in the literature. Some of the programmes also belong to rectors in office running for a new term; however, we did not differentiate them among the sample, and we referred to all their authors as “aspiring” or “future” rectors (even though some of them had already been in office for one term).

Text analysis

We analysed the manifestoes in the sample initially using the floating reading (Moscovici & Buschini, 2007), in order to identify to what extent the elements of the definition of the university (from the literature review) appear. As stated before, the definition of the university consists both of century-old elements (such as the marriage between teaching and research) and of newer elements (such as third-stream activities). After identifying their presence (or absence), we commented on the possible implications these entail. Then we explored the presence and/or absence of additional elements pertaining to the most used elements associated with the university (for example, the international league tables), discussing them in turn, as well.

Findings

Half of the analysed manifestoes explicitly referred to the university as an “academic community”, not just another (public) institution. The university seen as community is a key element, present in connection to the academic institution from its very beginning. The manifestoes showed explicit awareness of the university being more than just its institutional structure. Moreover, most of them also included students in this community. However, there is an explicit difference being often made between academics and researchers (intrinsic part of the community) versus administrative staff (which only supports the aforementioned community).

Research is the second key element to be found in connection to what a university is throughout the centuries (de Ridder-Symoens,

1992). Naturally, the reach of science has greatly expanded over centuries, but research as such is one of the pillars at the foundation of any university. As such, research is a topic that is found across all manifestoes analysed. It is considered important in all its aspects, starting from policy, going through funding and quality assurance and ending with its overall potentially beneficial impact on the university as a whole. Research is recognised as something that needs to be nurtured, assumed and, at the same time, laid at the basis of all the other activities of the university. This is potentially explained also through the former political background of the country, namely the fact that in communist times, research had been taken out of universities and research activities were strictly supervised. Nowadays, research seems to take an increasingly stronger hold in the Romanian universities included in the analysed sample, with all candidates recognising its important role and positive outcomes. Many a time research is also linked with innovation, excellence and better funding.

The fact that research is featured so frequently and almost universally in all electoral manifestoes analysed is no surprise, if we are to consider the performance of the respective universities in international rankings (many of which including indicators linked directly to research outcomes). In its turn, this also entitles for high expectations for their respective universities – given that these universities are the most performant at national level, many manifestoes mention a increased international visibility (alongside internationalisation of studies and, sometimes, better performance in international rankings.) There are voices in literature (for example, Liessmann, 2009, p. 9-10), who argue that rankings, improperly approached, could bring more harm than benefit to a university, for example suffocating its academic freedom, especially when they are allowed to become instruments of external control. If it only wants to achieve a good position in the international rankings, the university could run the risk of using only these for reference, and this lose sight of its true roles and functions.

Naturally connected to research, knowledge is also an important factor, considered explicitly linked to the university is all of the manifestoes from the sample. The university is not only the depositary of knowledge (and the one passing it forward to future generations), but also the one which discovers new knowledge and the one which

applies existing knowledge in new, innovative manner. These findings mirror to a great extent the connection between the university and knowledge investigated by the philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1999). He found several types of relationship, namely: the university is the depository of knowledge as well as a generator of new knowledge; at the same time, the university filters the knowledge through a filter, that is dependent on the social, economic and political context, before multiplying it and disseminating it towards others. In Ortega Y Gasset's words: one of the fundamental functions of a university is to "create a cultivated individual, which sees their path in life in a clear light" (1999, p. 79-80).

The future university leaders are also concerned with the training of students – but with only some of them approaching the concept of educating the individual as a whole, and not just in their individually chosen field of study. Some manifestoes include the fact that the university should train not only specialists in a field, but well-rounded citizens of the world of tomorrow.

Education is one of the prevailing topics of all electoral manifestoes, permeating all the topics addressed by the candidates. This ties in closely with the concept of *Bildung*, defined in literature most often as not just the simple confrontation of individual students with the subject studied, but also as their active participation to an educational community (in the sense used by Newman, for example), thus contributing, at the same time, at the formation and modelling of the community of which they are part of. The debate regarding the role of higher education institutions and training/education (understood as *Bildung*) and the relationship of the individual with knowledge is still going on nowadays, even though it started more than two centuries ago. In *Theorie der Unbildung* (2008), Liessmann talks about three possible embodiments of the concept: *Bildung*, *Halbbildung* and *Unbildung*. In Liessmann's view, the issue today is not a degradation of the idea of *Bildung*, but rather the lack of a normative idea of education. *Bildung* is no longer an objective and a measure in producing science, in learning and in teaching. And the result of this loss is that education has reduced its scope, and science and knowledge have been degraded to just a measurable indicator for human capital. We feel that a familiarity of the entire academic community and even the possible inclusion among a university's objective of *Bildung* (and not just various aspects of

education and training) would bring added value to the overall institutional performance.

The aspiring leaders see the university as one connected to its community in one form or another, be it more closely, through third stream activities, or more loosely, as a minimum reaction to today's general socio-economic context. It is clear that neither of the candidates see the university as the medieval Ivory Tower, a seat of learning which was not interested in any connections with the outside world. Two such manifestoes take the university's role even a step further, configuring it as a "public intellectual" (through its academics), actively engaged in the debates in the public sphere. As the university has a privileged relationship with knowledge (and one could even extrapolate this to truth), it is the one bearing the responsibility to educate not only the students enrolled in its courses, but also the society at large for everyone's (current and future) benefit.

A university being a "public intellectual" ties in with the cultural function of the university. Seen at the intersection of the university's relationship with knowledge, on one hand, and with its community, on the other, the cultural function of the university is to be found at the centre of the three traditional universities functions, namely teaching, research and third-stream activities. A university's cultural function usually includes: (i) setting professional standards, (ii) acting as a cultural filter, (iii) being a pro-active communicator, (iv) being a public intellectual, assuming both the role of consciousness and critic within society, (v) the university as a creator of social citizens, (vi) the university as an innovation generator and (vii) the university as a generator of national intelligence. We can safely read in-between the lines of the mentioned manifestoes that all these components mentioned above are closely tied to the university's role as public intellectual, and are implicitly (and concerning specific aspects, explicitly) connected to it.

Student training is closely linked to ensuring the infrastructure required for higher quality education and training. Approaches to infrastructure vary widely, from one approaching the topic only at the level of principle to a completely opposite one, mentioning in minute detail what improvements are going to be made to what specific buildings and laboratories.

There was no lengthy mention of diplomas (except for the case of double and joint degrees). Degree-granting power is one specific characteristic of a university, yet the manifestoes analyses did not approach the topic. One possible explanation could be that the diplomas for degrees are granted jointly by the university and the national Ministry of Education, and thus the university's responsibility could be perceived as being reduced.

Moreover, maybe a sign of our times, there is no mention of universal knowledge. Naturally, it is impossible to achieve as such nowadays, but it should be replaced at least with an attempt at a global vision and/or understanding of the field of knowledge one is part of. The university seems to be losing its universal reach, increasingly becoming a *fragmen*versity. Comprehensive universities are still further from running this risk than specialised universities. The university may be intrinsically connected to knowledge in a variety of ways, but not to universal knowledge any-more. Specialisation in one field or another is encouraged, alongside multi- and pluri-disciplinarity. We may infer from in between the lines that all manifestoes authors are aware that today there is no one person able to accumulate the entire knowledge existing on the planet.

The manifestoes assume an intrinsic academic freedom for the universities, while recognising possible vulnerabilities (especially connected to the unpredictable financial and legislative aspects). All candidates include reactive responses of universities to their environment, but only some (about half from the sample) suggest proactive actions as well, such as assuming an active role as a public intellectual or lobbying for specific provisions of legislation.

Conclusions

The electoral manifestoes analysed cover many of the elements defining a university, even though in variable proportions. However, there is an obvious absence of conceptualising the university at its more abstract levels. Most of the time, the electoral manifestoes seem to assume that the definition of the university is common-sense, and is shared by all its actors and stakeholders. The majority of programmes speak about what a university does, or how it relates to its various stakeholders, but do

not to define what they understand by “university”, as the very essence of the concept, or the individual’s understanding of the institution. Further work could explore in more depth this aspect, given that the literature addressing it covers entire centuries, and the presence of a commonly shared understanding (in the shape of a definition) could only be beneficial.

One could argue that a leader who is familiar with such as *idea*, *mission*, *vision*, *values* and the like would bring an added value to their term in office; however, we consider these to be fundamental concepts alongside an understanding of what the university is (or should be) and what it does (or it should do) to any successful term in office.

One can set many aims and objectives for any type of institution – but as long as they do not define their understanding of the institution clearly (and currently this is probably due to the existing legislation), they will lack the complete understanding of how those aims and objectives can be actually reached. If one was to focus exclusively only on details and missing the global concept would be a classic case of “not seeing the forest for the trees”. Consequently, we believe that a full understanding of the university, included explicitly, and not only implicitly in electoral manifestoes, which later have the potential of becoming standards for institutional, more detailed strategies, programmes and measures, should also be as detailed and as literature-grounded as possible.

Understanding such global concepts connected to the university (what it is, what it does, intrinsically) would help consistently both any future person holding a position of leadership and the university itself in orienting desired courses of action. A self-reflexive university that understand its essence through its actors and stakeholders could define easier a (better) destination for its future.

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Pull Factors Attracting Romanian Students to Babeş-Bolyai University

Attila Gábora (*University Babeş-Bolyai, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, e-mail: attila_gabora@yahoo.com*),

Simona Mălăescu (*Faculty of Geography, Human Geography and Tourism Department, e-mail: simona.malaescu@ubbcluj.ro*),

Sonia Pavlenko (*University Babeş-Bolyai, Centre of University Strategy and Quality Management, e-mail: sonia.pavlenko@ubbcluj.ro*)

Abstract: Student recruitment and the geographic area from where a university is recruiting its students play a key part in institutional development and in the position a university holds in national and international rankings. Therefore, successful universities assign important resources to attracting students to the educational programmes they offer. The location of the university also plays an important role in student motivation when choosing an educational offer. In this article, we focus on the main pull factors that attract students to Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, we analyze how the city and the university's pull factors have changed in the past years, assuming that these changes, namely the institution's and the city's increasing attractiveness, had an influence on the recruitment area of students. Our hypothesis is that the increasing attractiveness leads to more students coming from a national recruitment area, instead of local and regional areas, where the main base of students of the institution used to be in the past. In the second part of this article we present recruitment data for the past five years, focusing on the recruitment area and the county of origin of the students, in order to confirm our hypothesis.

Keywords: university, higher education, student recruitment, pull factors

Introduction

Student recruitment plays a significant role in every university's strategies and policies. In this article, we analyze the recruitment area of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania during the past five years (2013-2017). To this aim, we discuss the university and the city pull factors and how these contribute to a changing recruitment area. In this respect, the university has played an increasingly important role on a national level, aiming to achieve one of its most important objectives, namely to become an internationally relevant comprehensive, yet research-intensive university.

Theoretical background

Regardless of motivation (shrinking of the demographics, increase of the competition, higher education and higher education institutions (HEI)' transformation, the dynamics of national educational policies, scarce governmental funding per student capita), universities have always paid a large amount of attention to researching students' recruitment. Surprisingly, in what concerns the spatial dimension of the recruitment area, the studies modelling the universities' recruitment areas represent just a niche of this body of literature. Starting early (during the 60s and 70s), a diversified thematic ranged from Schöfer's (1975) contribution on the implications of the *Central Place Theory*, in assessing the level and the strategic location of the institution, to the gravity model in shaping students' preferences. However, the most rapid development in the field of studies focusing on recruiting areas of students happened during the 90s with the development of (Arc)GIS as a tool for analysis and processing the demand for education and enrolment, the spatial relationship modelling and plotting a lot of data, collating data on enrolments of the university or higher aggregate entities with existing census data on the stock of general population and its characteristics.

Of all available publications, research on the United States educational context was overwhelming (*Figure 1*) leading with almost two third more studies than the volume of studies published by the

next ranked country. Articles published by authors from the United States and the UK alone are 10 times higher in number (873 papers) compared with the third ranked country (Australia, 88), the rest of the universities ever publishing an article on the topic in the last half of the century are situated in countries with under 50 studies published during the period 1950 – 2017. Apart from the practical interest in findings, namely the research funding and the spearheaded methodology, research on the topic in the United States is stimulated by the amount of statistical data available for analysis on the volume, socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance of the recruiting pool on one hand, and the records of the recruited students by the universities, on the other. Due to the differences in the data collection process (some of it, if collected at all), few of the methodologic tools and research designs applied to the American context can be replicated in other higher education contexts (Mălăescu & Speranza, 2013). In its turn, the research in the United States put continuous pressure on the optimisation of the data collecting system. For example, Alm and Winters (2009) pointed out the need to include more relevant intra-state geographical data, because most studies focused at the time on interstate migration for education, although many of the recruited students belonged to the state in which the institution was located. Read et al. (2005) stressed the need of increasing research on data in university admission records, finding simultaneously that GIS and geodemographic data available to be active on competitive higher education markets at the respective time was also scarce.

Studies concerning the the spatial representation of data on preschool population in terms of volume and performance on final exams from pre-university cycle are still in the centre of the focus. The demographic transition from large number of cohorts (that characterize still developing or former socialist pro-natalist societies) to a more planned dimension of the family, or countries severely affected by aging and lower birth rates is still a challenge some HEIs have to overcome in Taiwan (Kao et al., 2018; Lai & Hsieh, 2017) and in Romania (Mălăescu & Speranza, 2013; Mălăescu, 2015).

Current HEIs environment has become increasingly complex and it is difficult to forecast the future of some academic programmes, as important mutations take place in university rankings and policies.

Policies relying on enhancing research funding or lowering the tuition fees in order to attract students were found recently to have no effect (Weimar & Schauburger, 2017) on students' motivation.

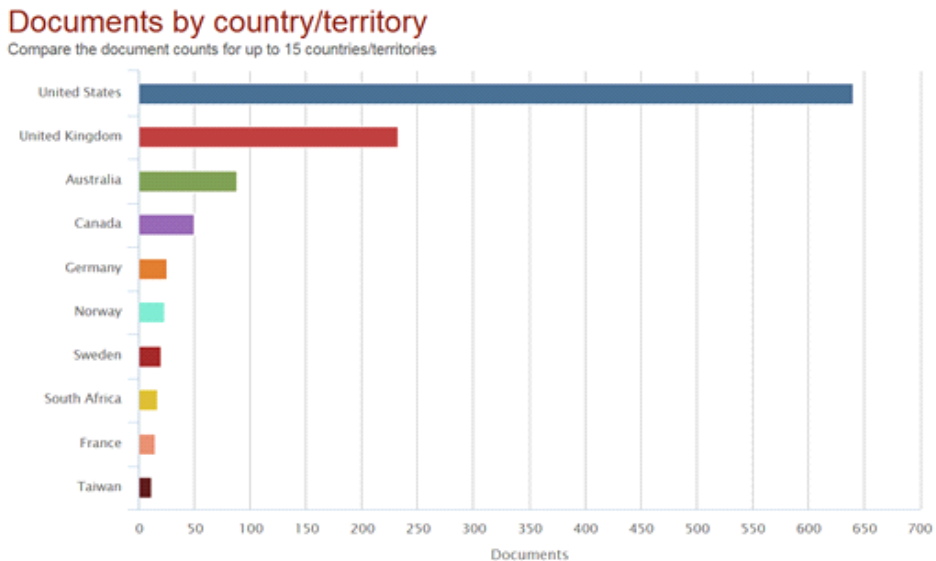


Figure 1 The geographical distribution by affiliation of the university of the articles published between 1950 and 2017 in journals indexed in Scopus.

The policy of recruiting returnees (graduates returning from study abroad) to lecturer positions is partly responsible for the further decline in students' confidence in domestic universities and the policy of admitting international students has triggered domestic tensions on the issue of educational quality and equality (Song, 2017). The struggle of negotiating managerial objectives such internationalisation and becoming a *World Class* university while remaining a massive domestic university has proven to be a challenge (Song, 2017). We may say, not just for the Chinese universities, but for UBB Cluj-Napoca as well: the university aims to become an important international research-oriented university, and at the same time to remain the most important regional university in Transylvania.

Research on student motivation and universities targeting opened to new factors like sport orientation of future students in order to enhance their employability (Griffiths, 2017) – employability rate of graduates being another university constraint highly prized in

students' prioritisation of university choice. Griffiths (2017) pointed out that employability of students can be enhanced through participation and volunteering in sport, which is shown to be a worthwhile investment because the employers praise a history of sport participation (voluntary experience included) when recruiting graduates; sport history might constitute a good indicator of candidates with desirable traits for employment. Another interesting factor mentioned was the importance of local sport teams in the urban area the university is localised, Weimar and Schauburger's (2017) study showed the importance of this issue in students' motivation for choosing a university.

The issue of equity and broadening the access to higher education of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is also present in the recent literature. In this respect, Rainford's study case (2017) raised concerns that under the so-called enhanced equity, selection measures can, in fact, reproduce inequalities, and instead of broadening access to higher education, some programmes focus on "ensuring that students already on a path to higher education choose this institution in preference to others" (Rainford, 2017, p. 45).

Classic factors shaping policies regarding student choice and the recruitment by universities which were studied previously are still taken under consideration. Most of the studies on university recruitment areas highlighted the role of the distance between the students' residence and the university centre of the programme they were applying for (Farr, 2001; Read *et al.*, 2005) combined with other, sometimes geographically, dependent variables such as:

- ◆ socio-economic background of the recruited (and financial support policies and university tuition fees),
- ◆ status in relation to the geographical location of residence,
- ◆ the power and rank of institutions offering higher education, and relationships of proximity (Ayad, 2007),
- ◆ training preferences of prospective students and the involved changes in the specific application training, universities taking in consideration the spatial imprinted socio-economic profile of the region or area (Read *et al.*, 2005; Mălăescu & Speranza, 2017).

However, studies show that the competitiveness and reputation of universities are key determinants of the size of the impact area in

recruiting students (Lowe & Viterito, 1989). In their review, Alm and Winters (2009) mentioned the studies on the influence of policies regarding tuition and scholarships offered to attract students. They referred to Tuckman's study (1970) showing that high tuition fees at state level influence interstate migration (emigration for studies), results supported by other studies, too, (Mixon, 1992 quoted in Alm and Winters, 2009), while large grants have a completely different effect. Hoxby (2004) reviewed the literature regarding the influence of tax policy and study support on the recruitment of students, while Martin (2003 quoted in Pogodzinsky, 2007) took a very important step forward in what concerns the operational aspect, namely building a model of optimal tax retaining.

As for the methodological instruments, while the past decade favoured massively the quantitative large data plotting in ArcGis (Read et al., 2005; Ayad, 2007; Herris & Marble, 1997) or Experian system's MOSAIC™ (Read et al., 2005), recent literature, although using large amount of data (Kao et al., 2018), oriented itself also towards the qualitative and especially mixed-methodology in order to explore the causal "*Why?*"s. Lai & Hsieh (2017) used multiple criteria decision making (MCDM) methodology to analyse a series of interview-questionnaires. Kao et al. (2018) used the Visual Basic and C# languages to write a college-student source-inquiring website in which they obtained the trend of application number and the birth population of the school year. Ahmad and Hussain (2017) used the analytic hierarchy process method in order to examine the relative importance of motivational factors in influencing the choices of the foreign students applying for a program in the United Arab Emirates universities. As early as 2005, Read et al. stressed that the results of the investigations using GIS can be a valuable starting point in carrying out further studies based on qualitative methodology that can better explain the identified patterns. They also stressed the need for profiling a particular area in terms of the students recruited, and not only of the targeted students.

Pull factors of UBB and of the city

In this study, we argue that the location, namely the city where the university is located, plays a key role in students' choice. Like Becker and Kolster (2012) argue in their study on international student mobility, push and pull factors represent an important aspect of student mobility: push factors, which initiate a student choice to leave their home town or region and migrate to a new city, and pull factors, factors that attract students to a particular city, or a higher education institution. In our case, push factors are very diverse and changing, and concern the home town and students' social and demographic background, so in this study we are focusing on the other side of the medal.

Using Becker and Kolster (2012) list of pull factors, we will present Babeş-Bolyai University (UBB) and the city where it is located, Cluj-Napoca. We hypothesise that these pull factors, i.e. the city's increasing attractiveness, and UBB's policies aimed at becoming a relevant national and international research-oriented university during the past years, should attract an increasing number of students from a national area of recruitment (UBB's key area of recruitment was, in the past, at local and regional level). We present the changes occurring in the past years in these pull factors, and we analyse the past years recruitment area of students enrolled in first year of study, to find out if there was any change, whether the share of the national recruitment area increased over time. Our data is represented on the one hand, by the university's own available databases, and on the other hand, by migration data from the National Institute of Statistics, data from 2011 National Census, and data from a migration report published by the World Bank (Cristea, et al., 2017).

The most important pull factors of a city as a study destination (Becker and Kolster, 2012) are the knowledge and awareness of the city, the quality and reputation of education, the cost of higher education and living, safety levels, levels of internalization, living, study and work environment and social and geographical linkages of the students. In our case, at a national level, Cluj-Napoca is a well know city, with a great reputation when it comes to education, especially because of Babeş-Bolyai University. In 2017, 15% of the Romanians who

planned to migrate in the following 5 years considered Cluj-Napoca as their primary destination, this mean approximately 250,000 migrants (World Bank 2017). The most important motivations behind this are the increased quality of life, the educational services and the attractive labour market. At national level, the city has one of the biggest values of the Local Human Development Index, of the Cultural Vitality Index and one of the most dynamic and higher-education oriented labour markets in Romania. 43% of Cluj-Napoca Functional Urban Area population is represented by migrants, and almost 40% of these migrants are below the age of 35: students and young professionals. The city has the second most important airport in the country, and international companies play a key part in the region's economy, alongside the IT sector, education, health services and creative industries.

The most important pull factors of a university are a wide knowledge and awareness of the institution, a high perceived quality and reputation of the institution and its education and research, recognition of degrees, the cost of higher education, the nature of governance and administrative procedures, the safety level, the level of internationalization, the living, study and work environment and social and geographical links of students.

UBB is the Romanian university which has the highest overall visibility in international rankings. A meta-analysis carried out as a national exercise in 2016 (available in Romanian [here](#)) ranked UBB first; as it cumulated the highest number of points awarded for being present in various international university rankings, which take into account the overall performance of universities. Of the nine rankings considered, UBB was included in seven, while the university placed second at national level was included in six.

Both the city and the university pull factors registered an increase in the past years, Cluj-Napoca and Babeş-Bolyai University becoming increasingly attractive from this point of view. The only pull factor which plays a negative part in students' choice is the increased cost of living, as the city has the most increased prices of apartments and rent. As we previously stated, this increasing attractiveness should be reflected in an increasing share of students from a national area of recruitment. In the following sections, we are going to analyse the UBB recruitment area for the past 5 years (2013 – 2017), by level of recruitment (local-regional-national), county of origin of the students,

focusing on the changes that we can identify. We do not claim that pull factors are the only, or the most important influence on students recruitment trends: further studies and more complex available data are necessary to find correlations between area of recruitment and pull factors. But based on previous studies presented in the literature review, we believe there is a strong connection between student recruitment and pull factors of a city and of a university.

Findings

Area of recruitment (%)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Local	24.9	24.9	24.3	23.3	20.7
Regional	35.4	37.0	36.8	35.7	35.0
National	33.4	35.5	37.3	38.7	40.4
Other	6.3	2.6	1.6	2.3	3.9

Table 1. Share of different levels of recruitment area

The three levels of recruitment, in our case, are represented by Cluj County considered as the local area, the counties in Cluj's proximity, considered as the regional area (namely Bihor, Sălaj, Maramureș, Bistrița-Năsăud, Mureș, and Alba), and the other Romanian counties as the national area of recruitment. The "Other" category is represented by international students and by missing data. Also, it is important to mention that most students from the national area of recruitment are from Transylvania, from counties from the intra-Carpathian area (approximately 60% of the students from the national area come from Transylvanian counties).

As we can see in *Table 1* above, in the past five years there has been an important increase in the share of the students coming from the national area of recruitment, and an important decrease in the share of students from Cluj county, the local area of recruitment.

The increased share of students recruited from other regions brings evidence of successful policies in increasing the prestige of the university as a future *world class* university. In terms of student

recruitment, this dynamics proves the continuous strengthening of the character of a “university of choice” instead of a “university of proximity” (Spinelli, 2000; Smith et al., 2002). Two main probable causes are responsible for the decrease in students recruited locally: the continuous demographic shrinking of the recruiting pool and the increase of elite high-school graduates lured by Western universities. Although we lack data in order to test this hypothesis for Cluj-Napoca, it is highly probable that we have to face this challenge of competing for the elites considering that in a short period of time, i.e. the last three years (2013 - 2017) the volume of elite high-school graduates recruited by foreign universities from Romania increased by around 20%.

The regional level did not change in any notable way. As we can see in *Table 2.*, the increase of national area of recruitment comes mostly from counties from Moldavia (Suceava, Neamt, Galați, Botoșani, and Bacău). It seems that students from these counties, even though the city of Iași and its educational services are closer, started to consider Cluj-Napoca as a better alternative for a university degree.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Alba	4.7	4.5	5.2	4.6	4.5
Arad	0.9	0.9	0.8	1	0.9
Argeș	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3
Bacău	0.5	0.8	1	1.3	1.3
Bihor	3.2	3.2	3.5	2.8	3
Bistrița-Năsăud	8	8.3	8.1	8.1	7.7
Botoșani	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.3	1.6
Brăila	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Brașov	1.4	1.8	1.7	2	1.6
București	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6
Buzău	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Călărași	0	0	0	0	0
Caraș-Severin	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
Cluj	24.9	24.9	24.3	23.3	20.7
Constanța	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5

Covasna	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.3	3
Dâmbovița	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Dolj	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Galați	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
Giurgiu	0	0	0	0	0
Gorj	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6
Harghita	5.6	5.7	4.9	5.6	5.4
Hunedoara	4	4.1	4	3.7	3.6
Ialomița	0	0	0	0	0.1
Iași	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5
Ilfov	0	0	0.1	0	0.1
Maramureș	8.5	9.1	8.6	8.3	8.7
Mehedinți	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Mureș	5.4	5.8	6.1	6.5	6
Neamț	1.3	1.7	2.2	2.4	2.9
Olt	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Prahova	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4
Sălaj	5.6	6.1	5.3	5.4	5.1
Satu Mare	5.9	5.5	6.4	5.3	5.2
Sibiu	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.7
Suceava	3.9	4.7	4.6	4.9	5.3
Teleorman	0	0	0	0	0.1
Timiș	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
Tulcea	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Vâlcea	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
Vaslui	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3
Vrancea	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Other	6.3	2.6	1.6	2.3	3.9

Table 2. Share of students by counties

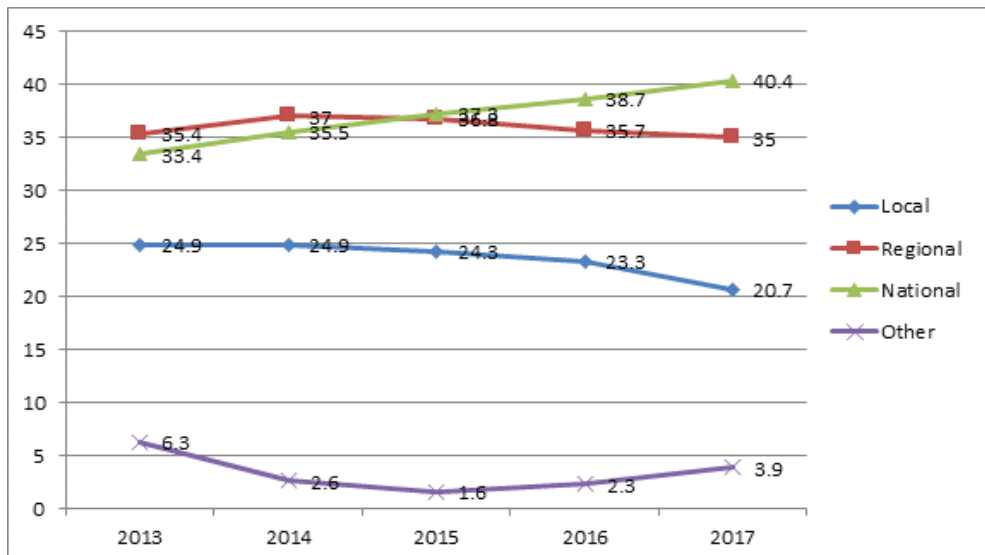


Figure 2: Share of different areas of recruitment

The dynamics illustrated in *Figure 2* shows that the national area of recruitment increased from 33.4% in 2013 to 40.4% in 2017, becoming the most important level of recruitment, more important than the regional area, which remained at 35%. However, the local area had an important decrease, from 25% in 2013 to 20.7% in 2017.

Conclusions

As a conclusion, we can confirm our hypothesis: an increasingly attractive university and city, with stronger pull factors, attract more students from the national area of recruitment. The city is becoming more and more attractive to migrants, especially for the young generation, due to its attractive education, flexible and well-paying labour market, internationalization, cultural and economic lifestyle. This attractiveness, the pull factors of Cluj-Napoca, and the UBB's aiming to become an important research-oriented university at national and international level, holding increasingly better places in international university rankings, i.e. the pull factors of the university, resulted in this increased share of students from the national level of recruitment. At this time, this level has become the most important

recruitment level for Babeş-Bolyai University. Further studies, both quantitative and qualitative, are necessary in order to explore in-depth student motivation, and to find stronger statistical connections between pull factors and recruitment area. If we can supplement the data set analysed in this article with solid information about motivation, the process of choosing an educational offer and a city, we could achieve a more detailed picture about student recruiting at Babeş-Bolyai University.

No matter how reassuring we find the results of this study at national level, the findings of this analysis bring empirical evidence for the need to secure the university's prestige as one of the most competitive universities in terms of academic training, research and career opportunity design. This imperative must compensate the increased marketing and recruitment strategies targeted by foreign universities for Cluj-Napoca in recent years in order to maintain the quality of the recruited body. As long as we no longer compete in a national arena, we need sound long term policies in order to face the challenges in the global market: demographic aging and shrinking of the recruitment pools, the continuous homogenisation process of living costs and academic taxes in the European Community, the head-hunting of elite students in order to show relevant outputs in terms of doctoral research, high labour market insertion rates and management position occupancy through alumni tracer studies.

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