TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

PART 1: FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHER(S) 6

The rear view mirror may not suffice in the next 40 years
CHARLES BÉLANGER 7
EAIR Forum – Some memories and reflections
MARIANNE BAUER 8
EAIR – From early beginnings towards consolidation
ULRICH TEICHLER 9

PART 2: LOCAL HEROES – REFLECTIONS FROM FORUM HOSTS 11

2003 EAIR Limerick Forum
PATRICK CASHELL 12
2007 EAIR Innsbruck Forum – With a rucksack through Higher Education galaxies
STEPHAN LASKE AND MAXIMILIAN EGGER 14
2012 EAIR Stavanger Forum – “The times they are a-changin”
JAN ERIK KARLSEN 16
2014 EAIR Essen Forum – Diversity in Higher Education
MATTHIAS KLUMPP 18
2016 EAIR Birmingham Forum
MARK O’HARA, DAVID KANE AND JAMES WILLIAMS 20

PART 3: UNSUNG HEROES – REMINISCING GOOD MEMORIES 22

A Special Forum
TINE BÜCHLER POULSEN 23
Memories from EAIR adventures
JOUNI KEKÄLE 24
My participation in EAIR Forums
KATHI A. KETCHESON 26
EAIR and the policy-research nexus
NOËL VERCRUYSSE 27

PART 4: NEWCOMERS – EXPERIENCES & FIRST IMPRESSIONS 30

Eair Porto Forum 2017 – A newcomer’s perspective
NADINE ADAMS 31
Experiences and reflections: Global institutional research
PIERRE MERCIER 33
EAIR newcomer’s challenges and experiences
JENNY WIKLUND 34
A newcomer’s perspective to EAIR
MATTI KAJASTE 35
First impressions from a newcomer to EAIR
MOSES KEBALEPILE 36

PART 5: SO FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE 37

A perspective from the South
JAN BOTHA 38
AIR: A new vision
ELLEN PETERS 39
EAIR – 40 years
ERIC CORNUEL 41

PART 6: WINNERS 42

Third most cited paper in TEAM
LEE HARVEY 43
2017 – Winner Best Poster Award
FIREWEINI G/EGZIABIHER BIRHANE 45
2008 – Winner first Best Paper Award
CHRISTIAN HUBER 46
2010 – Recipient EAIR Award for Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education Research, Policy and Practice (OCHE)
JANE KNIGHT 47

PART 7: LINKING RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE – “SERIOUS REFLECTIONS” 48

Research and policy in UK Higher Education
MICHAEL SHATTOCK 49
Has research influenced practice and/or policy in outcomes assessment in the US?
TRUDY W. BANTA AND CYNTHIA A. COGSWELL 54
The role of *TERTIARY EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT* (TEAM)
MALCOLM TIGHT 57
Building bridges between research, policy and practice
INGVILD MARHEIM LARSEN 61
Higher Education and economics in EAIR
JOSÉ-GINÉS MORA 66

INTRODUCTION

The role of higher education is increasingly important to policy makers, practitioners and the public in the context of 'massification' and the rise of the knowledge society. The various stakeholders are interested to know whether higher education systems and institutions are fulfilling their tasks related to teaching, research and third mission activities. More specifically, there are important policy and strategic issues and challenges related to student learning, teaching, quality assurance, funding and staffing as well as career progression. Related to these issues and challenges, many questions pop up that warrant proper investigation and require evidence-based solutions. Higher education researchers (both discipline-rooted academics and institutional researchers) play a pivotal role in these investigations.

The latter category of institutional researchers became even more relevant and important in the more recent contexts of New Public Management (with stakeholders asking higher education institutions to account for their activities) and institutional autonomy (with more leeway for institutional strategies that would need to be built upon proper analyses of, for instance, institutional strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

In order to develop the profession of institutional researchers further the American Institutional Research (AIR) association was established in 1965 to understand the nature of the emerging field and to respond to the needs of its members. In the founding year of EAIR (1979), institutional re-search was a well-developed field and recognized management (support) function in the USA therefore. EAIR went through similar phases as AIR, with the major strategic advantage of being able to learn from its 'big sister'. The association started with a small but enthusiastic group of people attending AIR, who realized that a separate organization back in Europe might better serve the needs of Higher Education institutions across the Atlantic, offering greater freedom to address different issues and to set their own agenda. The differences between institutional research practices in the USA (with specialized and compartmentalized efforts and activities) and Europe, paved the way for an independent European association.

The first EAIR Forum at the Sorbonne University, Paris, attracted 26 participants including 21 Europeans, half of them from administration and another half academics and directors of institutional research. During the first years, the Forum was organized under the umbrella of AIR. Much of the effort was on the shoulders of a few contributors with little personal or financial support, and events were hence rather informal and small. That said, important objectives were achieved in the early days, with, for example, the Uppsala Forum in 1982 as a landmark event. In 1985, EAIR set up a campus-based office at one of the founding partners´ higher education institutions, the University of Twente and this could be seen as the first phase of EAIR developing its own identity and attract-ing a larger audience to its Forums. The new association was formally registered in 1989 (under Dutch legislation) as a membership organization, although the ties with AIR continue to be cherished.

EAIR was established as a collegial association within higher education with a focus on the relation-ship between research, policy and practice in higher education in Europe. As argued above, EAIR has developed from its roots as a European 'version' of AIR, widening its sphere of interest to policy at all levels, institutional, national and international. Although the initials refer to institutional re-search, in 2009 the EAIR formally added 'The European Higher Education Society' to its logo and then appended the strap-line 'Linking Research, Policy and Practice'. This reflects the direction that EAIR had taken in the intervening years: it had crossed boundaries between types of activities and seeks now to cater for a mix of researchers, lecturers, students, administrators, managers and policy-makers. Crossing boundaries means sharing best policy and management practices, learning from peers as well as exchanging and reflecting upon research findings.

Most probably the success of EAIR relies on three pillars. Firstly, institutional research is an important aspect for higher education institutions with increased autonomy and therefore it is key to get international experiences and knowledge in that field. Secondly, EAIR is a professional non-profit organization with lean structures, a professional secretariat and highly committed colleagues with volunteers in different functions at their own institutions also willing to invest time and energy in their EAIR tasks. Finally, the international network links to national and international institutional research associations are a crucial prerequisite for a global balance and position between research, policy and practice. These pillars are crucial to offer and support the services of the Association to its members and to the broader community.

Today, institutional research has reached a professional level with a growing number of academics and policy makers engaging in the task. However, institutional research needs further attention and development in Europe. As long as reporting is the most dominant task and as long as institutional research is not clearly recognized and rather isolated from other research within higher education institutions, EAIR´s mission remains to connect research with practice and to gain visibility for its impact on higher education development. In essence, professionals, equipped with sound knowledge, a comprehensive understanding of higher education developments and the unique-ness of the specific institutional context, and analytical skills related to the collection, analysis, and reporting of data and information are needed. These higher education professionals understand the institutional context and information and are an important enabler of effective strategic planning. Most probably this group of people more important in higher education development and change than ever before. Institutional strategies for adequate positioning, challenged by competition, will take advantage of the knowledge, skills and competences of this group. According to the EAIR philosophy though, their role will only flourish if their work is sufficiently connected to the academic research function and to practice. This unique mission makes EAIR a vital partner and under-lines the importance of this association in Europe. However, as MIT professor Alan Kay pointed out 'the music is not in the piano'; even though EAIR's mission, structures and procedures have been in place for a long time, it is the Association's members (researchers, practitioners and policy makers) who bring things to life and determine the future of the Association.

To celebrate 40 years of EAIR therefore, we compiled this volume and thought it appropriate to ad-dress the rich variety of experiences and contributions to our Association. We start off with reflections of the founding fathers and mothers of the Association. We then give the floor to those that have been heavily involved (e.g. as Forum Chairs) in the organization of annual Forums. We also thought it appropriate to make space for those that have been attending the Forums on a regular basis over many years, while at the same time giving voice to those that are newcomers. Then we offer space to international associations from the field as well as to those that have been granted EAIR awards to reflect on their experiences. Finally, we underline and echo EAIR's mission "linking research, policy and practice". In the somewhat longer contributions to that last section, experts reflect on those linkages.

PART 1

FOUNDING FATHERS & MOTHER(S)

CHARLES BÉLANGER

THE REAR VIEW MIRROR MAY NOT SUFFICE IN THE NEXT 40 YEARS

Our 40-year journey brought us closer together, made possible by new technological advances, including the cell phone (1979), the PC (1981), World Wide Web (1991), Google (1998), smart phone (1999), Facebook (2004), and Twitter (2006), among others. We are now better able to communicate, collect data, disseminate and share information, learn from each other, reach new clienteles, market products and services, and regulate relationships (social media) between individuals as well as between providers and consumers. Other emerging technologies include automated cars, drones, genomics in the prediction of diseases, and artificial intelligence (AI). We now stand at the cusp of taking us to another level in a palpable future. How far will that take us? The crystal ball gets less readable. If we believe that AI will revolutionize the world, we should also ensure that postsecondary education does not abdicate its role and responsibility of critic, investigator, and arbiter in many of the situations brought about by technological innovations. This may not always be comfortable for us, but there are values such as freedom of speech and expression, independence of thought and action, transparency and accountability, and inclusion that are worth fighting for and cannot be left to popular tribunals or mechanical devices. Institutional research can play a critical role in monitoring these issues along with traditional tasks. It would be a poor cliché to affirm once again that higher education is at the crossroads; that is where it should always be.

International data indicate that inequalities have stabilized between countries but have increased within countries. We must continue to question the role of postsecondary education and technology in reducing disparities and making the planet a better place to live. Let's take AI as an example. We already use AI in many basic tasks. When our iPhone is predicting the next word in a text message or Google anticipates a search, this is AI in action. AI can be compared to a mirror; it projects what it sees. What are our basic purposes in engaging in postsecondary education? Our traditional answers among others have been knowledge, critical thinking, adaptability, and a middle-class full-time job. Automation is no longer a problem simply for low-skilled workers since it is affecting workers in the middle class with medium skills as well. These are disruptive innovations having a huge effect on the workplace and posing a challenge to postsecondary education.

More and more we are witnessing the parting of the Red Sea between knowledge capable to solve routine and complex technical tasks mostly contained within the STEM disciplines and professions and knowledge fit to increase human capabilities in cognitive, affective, and behavioural diagnoses. On the technical side, AI will make advancements that are unimaginable today. At the same time, these innovations will confront the human race with difficult value decisions, whether medical, genetic, climatic, ethical, political, social, or else. As we – postsecondary individuals and institutions – stand in front of the mirror, what kind of values and purposes will be reflected and projected in us? AI will be helpful in narrowing down the choices and potential errors, but we have to provide options that will drive us to treat humans and the environment better. A combination of artificial and human intelligence is our best bet.

MARIANNE BAUER

EAIR FORUM – SOME MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS

EAIR – 40 years!
It arouses in me a bundle of positive memories from Fora all over Europe. As an example let us look back to the first EAIR-Forum in Budapest in August 1996, which I remember with great pleasure.

I am curious to see what kind of paper I presented there. It is titled *´Responses of Academe to Quality in Higher Education – A Comparative Study of England and Sweden´.* My co-author is Professor Mary Henkel at Brunel University, and I am pleased to find that our work contributed to the *EAIR Objects, Article 2e:` encouraging comparative research into national higher education systems´.* There were at that time hardly two more different higher education systems in Europe. Since then I believe they have learned something from each other.

From the Budapest Forum – 22 years ago – in between all professional meetings, sessions and events, I also remember intensive social activities, where new contacts and acquaintances were shaped while enjoying Budapest´s many tempting and interesting cultural places – like an aromatic visit in the large market- hall, a relaxing stay in a thermal bath, a respectful visit at the Raoul Wallenberg memorial, a lovely organ concert in the Matthias Cathedral together with Dutch friends and - unforgettable - an excursion on the Danube river to the Margaret Island, on which the whole group nearly got stranded. This is just one example of the rich spectrum of European cultural exchange that EAIR work and Fora imply.

The great variety of higher education systems makes Europe an excellent area for comparative research and exchange of experience. Its rich affluence of historical meeting-places from ancient capitals like Paris, where EAIR Forum started, and this year´s impressive Budapest, to the many delightful university-towns like Bergen, Louvain, Maastricht, San Sebastian, Trier, Turku, Warwick… awakes interest for more historical knowledge about the development of higher education in Europe and wish for cooperation for its development.

In the nineteen-sixties and earlier higher education research and development were focused on teaching and learning – the primary tasks – but as higher education reforms were initiated in many countries, it became obvious that the often old European higher education systems were disparate. Furthermore it was observed that many aspects of institutional character affect the quality of the ultimate goal of student learning.

The founding of EAIR in 1978 was thus an appropriate response to the demand for exchange of experience among European higher education institutions, and among various types of academic staff, not only researchers and teachers. The initiation of the journal TEAM in 1995 was a next effective step for disseminating new ideas and knowledge beyond the Forum participants.

For an early member of EAIR like me it is with deeply felt joy and satisfaction I can observe that EAIR, after forty years, is still going strong, and I wish all members another successful Forum in Budapest 2018, to be followed by many more for the eternal development of higher education institutions in Europe and elsewhere.

ULRICH TEICHLER

EAIR – FROM EARLY BEGINNINGS TOWARDS CONSOLIDATION

The 1970s were years of vivid debates and many efforts to reform higher education across European countries. The rapid expansion of higher education and the students' critique in various European countries are most often named as factors having spurred reforms during those years. But these years were not confined to reform actionism. Rather a strong need was felt to analyse the developments of higher education carefully and to formulate evidence-based policies and strategies. As a consequence, research on higher education – hardly existing at all previously in many European countries – began to grow, and interest increased in a dialogue between higher education research and practice.

Actually, two European associations emerged in the 1970s aimed at stimulating such a dialogue. First, the European Association for Research and Development in Higher Education (EARDHE) emphasized reflection on teaching and learning. A major backbone for these activities were centres for teaching and learning, Hochschuldidaktik, onderzoek van onderwijs or similarly, which had been founded t many higher education institutions to conduct research and to provide services for improvement of teaching. In the 1990s. however, this association faded away, its role was taken over by an association with a broader regional coverage: the Consortium for Educational Development (ICED).

Second, the European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR) was founded in the late 1970s with the intention to stimulate the dialogue of research and practice notably in areas of higher education policy and management. Its foundation and its name was inspired by the impressive development of institutional research in the U.S. – practice-oriented research closely linked to the leadership of individual universities and often focusing on developments of the respective institution. This association survived changing policy climates around higher education over four decades up to now, even though only very few higher education institutions in Europe established such practice-related research units.

In the 1980s, higher education policies in many European countries lost their degree of innovative enthusiasm, but the need for an intensive dialogue researchers and practitioners in the area of higher education continued to be felt. Actually, research on higher education – in academic units of higher education institutions or in specialized government-sponsored research institutes – even grew more during this period. In order to strengthen this research through international cooperation and to broaden the comparative knowledge base on higher education, the author of this article took the initiative together with some colleagues in the late 1980s to found the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers. CHER aims – now for three decades successfully - at enhancing the communication among higher education researchers. It is European-based in its theoretical and thematic focus, but comprises scholars from many regions of the world.

When the author of this article terminated his activities of building up CHER towards a stable association, the EAIR responsibles invited him to become president of EAIR. This was a gesture to underscore that the different associations promoting the generation and dissemination of higher education research notice and reinforce the complementary role of the others. The EAIR president usually is envisaged to be a symbolic figure rather than an organizational driver. But during the years 1998 to 2002 a need was felt that the EAIR president plays a very active role for what can be seen retrospectively as period of transition. Ways were found to get rid of accumulated debts. A permanent home for the office was found in Amsterdam. The EAIR-initiated journal Tertiary Education and Management (TEAM) moved towards a stronger publisher and was embedded into solid arrangements of editorship. Responsibilities within EAIR were distributed on various shoulders.

Altogether, the challenge of these years was to move EAIR from an association characterized by a strong role of a few pioneers towards a consolidated setting with a broad range of actors. This was a complicated process, because EAIR could not – like the other associations - rely on a single solid group of backers, because institutional research had not become a widespread phenomenon in Europe. Thus, EAIR was bound to remain an atypical association. Its annual forum of dialogue between different actors was its outstanding feature. And this could only stabilize, if varied actors enjoyed playing a role in the stabilization of such opportunities for dialogue. The author of this article is especially grateful to Karí Hyppönen, Bente Kristensen, José-Ginés Mora and Bjørn Stensaker for their support of these steps. After four years of efforts for consolidation, we were sufficiently satisfied with the results that we encouraged one of the pioneers of EAIR. Roddy Begg, to take the lead for the publication of a book on the first 25 years of EAIR. In the hope that this would not be the history of an eventually extinct species, we opted for a book title which claims lasting importance: "The Dialogue between Higher Education and Practice".

In looking back now at the list of "Distinguished Members", scholars honoured for their contributions to research, presidents (with such symbolic leadership functions), chairpersons, secretaries, etc., we note that more than hundred persons have played an important role during these four decades to support EAIR as an organizational basis of intensive communication. They made sure that not the initially expected emergence of strong institutional research became a life-or-death issue for EAIR, but rather the attractiveness of a dialogue between higher education researchers, persons doing such research along other major tasks and practitioners interested in the relevance of systematic knowledge.

PART 2

LOCAL HEROES

REFLECTIONS FROM FORUM HOSTS

PATRICK CASHELL

2003 EAIR LIMERICK FORUM

The European Higher Education Society (EAIR), established in 1978 to engage, support and promote institutional educational research across the European Higher Educational Space, celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2018. Milestones in any organisation indicate significant vision, dedication and input from its members, with the passage of time, external recognition and widespread endorsement follow. Over the years, EAIR has shown all the hallmarks of success through its ethos of communicative inclusivity that extends beyond academic Graduate Schools to include the educational management sector and strategically-placed external stakeholders. This anniversary year, EAIR takes the opportunity to revisit some key milestones over its 40 year existence.

In 2003, the 25th Silver Jubilee Forum was held in Ireland at the University of Limerick. Entitled "Building Bridges and Enhancing Experience," it highlighted the relationship between Higher Education, the socio-economic context and the wider demographic environment. Building Bridges was intended to capture and further enhance already existent associations between the higher level institutions across the European Space as well as reflecting the aspiration to create new ones. Symbolising the construction of meaningful relationships between the distinct third level institutions themselves but also between their strategic partners and the wider socio-cultural community, the metaphor of the bridge refers to the effort to unite individual educational and social institutions, connecting people and ideas with research networks. The subtitle, "Enhancing Experience" on the other hand, captures the elaboration of knowledge that occurs in discussion following the formal elements of the schedule, which includes the development of ideas that takes place at the convivial level through conversation and social exchange.

In my capacity as Deputy Registrar of the University of Limerick, and as longstanding member of EAIR (as former Forum Chair, Executive Board Member and Editorial Board Member) I had the honour of chairing this milestone Forum in UL, with support from the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Five keynote presentations were scheduled for the 2003 Forum in Limerick. Institutions and organisations represented included: Budapest (UNESCO-CEPES), Brussels (EUA), Melbourne University, and the Higher Education Authority (Ireland). The presentations stimulated a significant amount of in-depth discussion and analysis and were invariably followed up by extensive après-presentation informal conversation.

Six Tracks were scheduled at the 2003 Forum and almost a hundred session papers were presented. The range of topics covered was broad and inclusive: Governance and Leadership; Quality Development and Accreditation; Higher Education, Local, National and International; Higher Education and the World of Work; the Student Experience; Management in Higher Education / Optimizing Resources.

Ultimately the 2003 Forum at UL facilitated a combination of "road-tested" topics as well as the exploration of new themes, including those reflective of the host institution's specific educational / research strengths and interests.

Apart from the academic content, attendants of the 2003 Silver Jubilee Forum in Limerick were introduced (some for the first time) to the cream of Irish traditional culture, during which great "Craic" was enjoyed by all. The Banquet was held in the elegant and historic Dromoland Castle, a venue frequented by several former US Presidents and global superstar entertainers, including The Beatles.

Forum participants were invited to attend a Hurling match (Ireland's famous National sport) reputed to be the fastest and most skilful field game in the world. Definitely not for the faint-hearted!

Overall, the EAIR 25th Silver Jubilee Forum at UL was a scholarly, stimulating, exciting, and most of all, thought-provoking academic-plus conference. In short – a highly successful event!

STEPHAN LASKE AND MAXIMILIAN EGGER
2007 EAIR INNSBRUCK FORUM

WITH A RUCKSACK THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION GALAXIES

Change is a constant element in academic institutions. Consequently the quest for a clear identity is a prevailing feature of contemporary university life. The internationalisation and globalisation of science, increased autonomy, intensified competition, the efficient and effective use of resources, evaluation and accreditation, employability and accountability, technology transfer, brain drain, etc. are only a few of the modern buzzwords in higher education. And yet, they are not mere words – they produce effects (and side effects); they are catalysts for institutions and the people working in them, be it teachers, researchers, students or administrative staff. As a consequence, academic institutions have to undergo constant re-positioning; they have to work on their own identity and communicate this identity in a competent manner both internally and externally. However, this process of identity formation is associated with considerable difficulties and conflicts; it is kind of a learning journey. For example tradition vs. modernisation, decentralisation vs. central control, process vs. outcome orientation, standardisation vs. differentiation, the formation of elites vs. mass studies, and finally performance vs. conformance – form some of the ambiguities academic institutions have to confront and which cannot be solved easily.

For the Innsbruck Forum in 2007 the local organizers, the programme committee members and EAIR, therefore, wanted to invite participants to join in a kind of adventure trip. After a period of intensive reforms in the Higher Education Sector around the world, the implementation of a new University Organization Law in Austria, and given the above mentioned conflicts and tensions we were looking for the identity of higher education institutions: "In Search of Identity: Dilemmas in Higher Education". It was therefore an intellectual

adventure, during which the manifold dilemmas of these organizations should be uncovered and discussed. On the way to this summit, different foothills had to be discovered. They were entitled: Between university and multiversity: Analysing institutional change; managing paradoxes: grounding big ideas; breaking with rituals: making sense of quality work; students expectations – institutional responses?; constructing meaning from performance measures; crossing boundaries: collaborating and/or competing?; matching staff, structures and resources.

When we met in base camp, the Innsbruck University School of Management, participants not only symbolically experienced the meaning that HE-institutions always are under construction: Two months ago the building inspectorate decided to establish a construction in order to protect visitors from glass falling down from the ceiling.

At base camp participants were provided daily with the joint provision of food for thought: internationally famous mountain climbers have been giving important tips for our search in the daily plenary sessions: Barbara Czarniawska (Sweden), José-Ginés Mora (Spain), Lee Parker (Australia), and Alison Wolf (UK).

So that the expedition members don't fall during their search or lose themselves in the intellectual jungle, seven mountain guides as track chairs were on hand to assist. They knew their way in impassable territory, were used to large obstacles and had the aim to lead their group so far that they at least acquired new insights and outlooks. When an expedition member felt that a track didn't lead to one of their destinations or has been too strenuous, they could join another group on another track. The route itself is often the destination: The route is made by taking it.

Naturally the expedition leaders did take care to provide the necessary implements during the ascent, so that the intellectual success didn't founder due to technical problems. Technical assistants were available as Sherpas. The support by our student group has been praised enthusiastically when we reached our summit.

Adventurers don't only have a „technical" goal, though. They also allowed social common interests to arise, new contacts to be established, taking joint delight in successes, laughed together about taking no-through roads and even made plans to attend high-altitude training together in the near future in order to appear as a team in the coming forum. True to the motto, only he who knows where his roots are knows his identity, we celebrated the end of our adventure in the imperial palace of the Habsburgers in Innsbruck.

We don't know whatever participants of the forum took home in their rucksacks – be it new learnings and ideas about the identity of their home institution, new relationships, or good memories. For us a very small, but nonetheless convincing symbol for the sustainability of EAIR fora we experienced, when three years later we met by chance a participant of the Innsbruck Forum, being equipped with the conference rucksack from 2007. He was still travelling through Higher Education Galaxies...

JAN ERIK KARLSEN
2012 EAIR STAVANGER FORUM

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN"

During 2011 and 2012, Europe experienced serious economic and societal downturn. Many had concerns about these rather abrupt changes in the hinterland of higher education. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) took a clear stance in its Ministerial Conference in Bucharest in April 2012, urging Europe's nations to invest more in higher education, communiquéing that «Europe is undergoing an economic and financial crisis with damaging societal effects. [...] Higher education is an important part of the solutions to our current difficulties»[1].

EAIR shadowed this plea by making «The Social Contract of Higher Education» the main theme of the 2012 EAIR 34th Forum in Stavanger, Norway. The issue reflected that the challenges had become serious core business of the European higher education society. Among the ideas and presentations that spurred the richest and most lively discussions to address both the EHEA appeal and the conference theme, we find the following:

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) Social Contract. The need to reflect more on the social construction of this concept was quite evident. In the sector as a whole, and not the least among the institutions, there was much emphasis on economic aspects, and on expectations from demanding stakeholders. The key relation that spurred debate was that between HEI and government. Would society accept the present HEI deliverables and their assumed quality? Status quo or change?

Sectorial Dynamics stood out as a theme having wide appeal. Would the ever-stronger endogenous and exogenous shocks that affected the sector be driving adaptations or sowing seeds of change? Main drivers of the dynamics were new inter-relations patterns; ad hoc co-operation, co-optation, competition, and HE policy making shifting to the supranational arena.

Governance was highlighted. How do we design, maintain and run a robust sector and robust HEIs? Is size an indicator of excellence? What is the 'right' size for a HEI? Is quality a rhetorical wildcard or an empty signifier rather than a useful vehicle of continuing improvement? The theme of resilience (especially in challenging times) caught wide interest, and resulted in the book «Resilient Universities: Confronting Changes in a Challenging World» edited by Jan Erik Karlsen and Rosalind Pritchard, with most of the chapters developed from papers presented at the 2012 conference.

Paradoxes and **open-ended questions** in large numbers emerged through discussions, roundtables and workshops. Future images of HEIs were given relatively little general attention within the sector relative to contemporary educational relevance and quality. Moreover - magic numbers rule! The rankings and scoring are the Billboard list of HEIs. Was a self-fulfilling prophecy of decreasing public funding emerging? Will elitist education a priori suppress massification and vice versa? Is there really anything such as an academic identity anymore?

Mission Possible? Lise Degn won the Outstanding Paper Award and Rimantas Vaitkus et al. the Best Poster Award. Besides, the participants enjoyed the fjord sailing on board two old vessels, the visit to the Iron Age Farm and some even managed to climb the Pulpit Rock (location for the 2018 "Mission: Impossible – Fallout").

Bleak or bright HE futures? In hindsight, the 2012 Forum elucidated the contemporary changes that highlighted the shared governance of European HEIs. Higher education experienced a rapidly changing landscape. Demographic features indicated that the sector could no longer expect to grow, except in the form of lifelong learning. Public reforms showed that HEIs must meet the demands of a modernized public sector. At the same time, we recognize the role of research and science in creating a knowledge society more than before. Another trend that was recognizable all over Europe was the professionalization of administration and management of HE institutions. The HEIs could not ignore or avoid these changes; all had to be met constructively.

Summing up, I think we defended the Forum's aspiration to be a residence for the HE knowledge frontier proponents quite ably in Stavanger. During the Forum, the region's cooperative tradition was evident. From tackling sudden changes and cancellations to the social events, it was *dugnad spirit* all the way.

1 EHEA Ministerial Conference Bucharest Communiquè, p 1. The communiqué can be found at http://media.ehea.info/file/2012_Bucharest/67/3/Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf

MATTHIAS KLUMPP
2014 EAIR ESSEN FORUM

DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The overarching theme of diversity in Higher Education systems and institutions was basis for the 2014 EAIR Forum in Essen, Germany entitled 'Higher Education Diversity and Excellence for Society'.

For the Essen forum, this had at least three dedicated topical representations and places within the program and discussions in the Forum: (a) student diversity is an important issue in most higher education institutions, the University of Duisburg-Essen being no exception. In the Ruhr area and notably Essen, up to 40% of students have an international and/or migration background. At the same time, also access diversity is a huge topic as many students enter universities in professional and part-time settings aside from the usual high school degree. This tendency is familiar with many universities around the world – and the core discussion topic was also at the forum, how to keep up teaching excellence and assure high quality learning with increasing diversity of student groups. This applies within one classroom as well as also within one university across study programmes and subject areas or science disciplines. Specific measures were discussed how to use diversity as an enabling perspective and instrument in teaching and learning, from international perspective integration to the mentoring and peer-to-peer help of students themselves. It was also stressed that diversity can in no circumstances lead to a lowering of quality aspirations and learning expectations. This has to be made clear by university management as well as each and very lecturer in order to avoid wrong agenda setting topics for academics and students.

(b) Diversity and excellence in research are less seen as contradictory as the inclusion of the "global great minds" automatically defines a broad variety and diversity in every science field. But still, there are also dangers to this, from the watering down of scientific standards to all-out rejection of outsiders as lately discussed with regional university authorities in Europe, namely Switzerland. The discussion at the EAIR Forum in Essen was directed at the strategies and instruments how universities might attract the best minds in order to compete in increasingly global research settings and given the university ranking comparative game in a global level. In this regard, diversity is seen as a positive influence for reaching research excellence, within single institutes and research groups as well as on the institutional and system level of higher education.

(c) Finally, also the example of the University of Duisburg-Essen itself as a former reform university and founded as a new type in the higher education landscape ("Gesamthochschule") propagates the institutional dimension of higher education diversity: How institutional divide and diverse institutional groups are enhancing or hindering the overall system performance in higher education. This was addressed with the Forum conference in many sessions too, indicating that higher education politics is on the one hand propagating increased institutional diversity in order to align with diverse population and student groups – but on the other hand in terms of international research comparison also very much looks into one specific type of a world class (research) university.

Finally it has to be emphasized that diversity and excellence question were also interactively connected to the question of how universities relate to the society at large. This requires a multi-stakeholder understanding of what is expected from the higher education system as well as individual university institutions. There is no objective and profile that "fits all", higher education is in itself a very diverse and complex undertaking in every place around the world. There might be not two alike answers to the simple question what the objectives and performance expectations of a university constitutes. Therefore, many stakeholders have to convene and interact, discuss and decide which profile and bundle of objectives is at a current point in time necessary to advance the mission and performance of any one institution. But altogether universities are important institutions in our societies – and we have to engage them, interact with them and support them in multiple ways in order to achieve long-term results for our societies.

MARK O'HARA, DAVID KANE AND JAMES WILLIAMS

2016 EAIR BIRMINGHAM FORUM

The theme of working beyond the traditional boundaries and confines of Higher Education was what drove our conference in Birmingham in 2016 entitled, 'Collaboration, cooperation and capacity building through HE partnerships'. Universities have always undertaken partnership activities, whether inter-departmental, inter-institutional or indeed with local communities and the scientific, artistic, industrial and commercial sectors of the economy. At the time this theme was particularly pertinent in a UK context in the run up to the Brexit Referendum. Little did we guess as conference organisers just which way that vote would go. The conference itself focussed very much on the nature of partnership working in and with Higher Education and included some thought provoking and quite challenging perspectives from outside as well as inside the Higher Education sector. What do Universities and their potential collaborators need to know about partnership-working? What principles and practices hold partnerships together and underpin successful outcomes? Equally, partnerships are living, breathing things, they are dynamic and mutable over time. What are the challenges faced in developing and sustaining these collaborations through these change processes as policy contexts shift, institutional priorities change, old partners leave, new ones join and individual personnel move on? These were just some of the issues the Forum set out to give delegates the opportunity to debate.

Since the Birmingham EAIR Forum, the UK higher education community has, unsurprisingly, been particularly anxious about Brexit and its potential outcomes. Higher education within the European Union is fundamentally about developing collaborative partnerships and Brexit is clearly a serious threat to British participation on numerous levels. The main concerns in this respect focus on the future of staff and student mobility and research funding; there is also a potential impact on the Bologna harmonisation process. It is anyone's guess what agreements will be made and how Brexit will actually affect higher education but there are already signs of trouble. Even before the March 2019 deadline date set for Brexit to become a reality, it seems that potential students are being put off coming to study in the UK because of the uncertainty; we suspect also that some UK citizens with dual nationality will be looking to study abroad; there are numerous rumours of funded research projects having been scuppered in the application process.

In response to concerns such as these, both Universities UK (representing the UK's higher education sector) and the European Universities Association have been concerned to reassure the sector that current arrangements will remain in force until the official exit but have now come to the position that collaboration and partnership is at the core of our values in academia and that these principles provide a sure basis on which to proceed post-Brexit. Strategy has to be built on reliable data and this is something that is missing in the Brexit process. Clearly, more research is needed into the experiences and perceptions of staff and students in higher education of Brexit and this has been the focus of much of the work of the new Centre for Brexit Studies, set up at Birmingham City University shortly after the Birmingham EAIR Forum.

It is heartening that associations such as EAIR have, to date, refused to allow Brexit to distract it from one of its central missions to offer a forum for discussion for colleagues in higher education from across Europe and further afield. At the Birmingham Forum, whilst Brexit was a topic of conversation, it was not one that caused dissention. The Association has existed for 40 years and has been an inclusive organisation, including members from countries as far afield as the US, Australia, South Africa and China to name but a few. What the Birmingham Forum highlighted was that the trends and patterns in higher education are international and not dependent on individual political events, what Marc Bloch once called the 'scum of history'.

PART 3

UNSUNG HEROES

REMINISCING GOOD MEMORIES

TINE BÜCHLER POULSEN
COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

A SPECIAL FORUM

Once more, the date is approaching where my colleague is jumping up and down as a happy bunny at my office reminding me that the time for signing up for EAIR forum is near, if we want to secure us a space. That annual process makes me look back to the several Forums I have been lucky to join.

I look forward to each EAIR forum. Besides the opportunity to visit very different places in Europe, always providing good and surprising experiences, it is also the occasion to revisit my "EAIR Family". Like in other families, you do not necessarily have conversations with everybody during or under the gatherings – but you know what they stand for, and with most, reunions are nice. And like other families, the EAIR group grows over time – with some leaving, for good or to return later. But with the EAIR family there are always interesting discussions and nice gatherings to look back to!

The Forum formats have developed over time. The First Forums I participated in were traditional conference formats, with endless jumping from on track to another to gather the best titbits. One had to be fast, because there was a struggle to acquire speakers' handouts, of which there were always too few. Laying your hands on one meant you had to copy it to everybody back home. That has fortunately changed. Maybe because I have learned by changing my behaviour that staying in the same track provides for deeper insight and better discussions – but also because the format changed with the introduction of SIGs – Special Interest Groups. They have become a good opportunity to exchange experiences and share knowledge, somewhat like a workshop. The SIG dialogues also became a good venue for the creation of new contacts, leading to better preparation for the real event. I hope there is still energy and desire in the organization to keep SIG going. The Workshop format has spread to some of the presentations, making more of them relevant to each other, opening for new forms of presentation and more participant input. The use of IT and Internet has also come to play a more natural role in EAIR, as platforms for knowledge and information sharing, as well as an active learning element during presentations. That suits EAIR really well! With so many professionals disseminating knowledge, pedagogical development ought to evolve naturally; the pedagogical innovations that we work hard to introduce to our students should be introduced and tested at EAIR meetings.

It has been my privilege to acquire these insights in trends and discussions from elsewhere and become prepared for their arrival in my own local context – and that happens surprisingly often. At times, I hear older EAIR family members declare that everything was better before and that the golden moments are becoming few and far between. That remains the role of the older generations – and as my former boss said, if you come home from a conference with at least one good point, it has been a success. Measured that way, EAIR has been a success for me – every time!

Congratulations to the whole EAIR family with the first 40 years!

JOUNI KEKÄLE
UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

MEMORIES FROM EAIR ADVENTURES

My relationship with the EAIR started in 1994, when I attended my first Forum in Amsterdam. I cannot recall who recommended the Forum, probably Seppo Hölttä, but I was glad that I attended. I remember that some track had been cancelled when I was having my presentation. Suddenly, the large room where I had my speech was packed by people searching for a substituting session. My topic at the time, leadership in Academia, was fashionable, which may have contributed to the number of participants in the session. Externally it was a successful session. Internally, I was not too sure; I was excited and could not remember anything afterwards. I had just recently started to work on my dissertation, and that was my first proper international speech.

What was most impressing about the EAIR Forum, however, was that some of the brightest names in Higher Education studies attended, and that they were so nice. Burton Clark was present, and he was very nice and supportive. He was kind enough to single my presentation out in his final remarks. I was sold to EAIR immediately, and have attended EAIR Forums after that whenever this has been possible.

There is a great continuity in the kindness of the participants. EAIR has been called a Forum with a Smile. Good treatment and a welcoming attitude towards newcomer and other participants has become a trademark of the EAIR. And you meet leading and well-established scholars in Forums.

A good choice by the EAIR has been to concentrate on linking research, policy and practice. There is a clear attempt to bring practical solutions and applications on board, while at the same time favouring empirical and theoretical research in the field. This approach is very much in line with the trends leading towards expectation of social relevance from Higher Education.

The venues and the people have played a crucial role in my continuous enjoyment in these meetings. When the sheer locations and great cities are considered, among some of my personal favourites have been San Sebastian, Amsterdam, Zürich, Valencia, and Stavanger.

Then the social aspect and the great people. Some pictures of memorable, meaningful and funny occasions came to mind. Participation in the program committee with Attila Pausits and others in the lovely Krems. Discussing with Roddy Beck in Berlin, when a rather big spider runs across the floor between us. A long walk in the middle of the night with James Williams in Rotterdam, from the city centre to our hotel – which took us a couple of hours, at least, and included passing of a gang. The assertive, but friendly editorship on Rosalind Pritchard and Jan-Erik Karlsen in connection to Resilient University –book after the Stavanger –forum. A dinner with Jan-Erik in Porto when a young seagull watches over our meals from a distance of half a meter. Walk in the lovely Barcelona with Jaana Puukka. Watching the cabaret in Warsaw in Forum Banquet with Michael Shattock and his lovely wife... Just to mention a few random memories, which make me miss the Forums.

Indeed, the EAIR is an adventure. Fear not, it is not about spiders or gangs, but it surely is about great people, and new, sometimes unexpected experiences. Moreover, it is especially about thinking and understanding higher education. The EAIR has meant to me a good possibility to get a grasp of our fascinating world. Many of the ideas and discussions have tended to end up in an article; some other may have not. Still, all the forums have greatly shaped my understanding of these institutions. In my view, no other association even comes close. Long live the EAIR. You are the best!

Jouni Kekäle, Former EC member and a long-time EAIR fan.

KATHI A. KETCHESON
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

MY PARTICIPATION IN EAIR FORUMS

I first attended an EAIR Forum in 1999, in Lund, Sweden. I had submitted a successful proposal and shared 30-minute presentation slot with a delegate from Spain. When we introduced ourselves, she asked me to help her with audience questions at the end of her talk. I realized then my enormous privilege to attend a European conference conducted in my native language, English. My first experience revealed the extraordinary opportunity EAIR offered to engage with colleagues from a wide variety backgrounds and to expand my own understanding of the common ground we share.

Since Lund, I have attended several EAIR Forums, including Berlin, Porto, Barcelona, Rome, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Rotterdam, Birmingham, Krems, and back to Porto. Each one was a unique opportunity to participate in discussions around important issues. At my first Forum, I was amazed to meet an Australian delegate who had spent an entire day traveling around the world to deliver a paper. My trip from the west coast of the U.S. seemed very short! Social dinners and banquets also have been a rich part of my Forum experience. I think of the canal boats in Copenhagen, arriving to the sound of Viking horns echoing over the water; good conversation with sparkling wine at Park Guell in Barcelona; and, most memorable of all, dinner at Taylor's port winery in Porto, Portugal, on September 11, 2001.

This was the evening I felt the strength of fellowship and unity among my EAIR colleagues most profoundly. I had travelled to Porto with my husband and another colleague from the U.S. On that Tuesday, we left the Forum in the late afternoon to have a few hours of sightseeing before the banquet. Portugal was a beautiful and mysterious place to us: we could say only a few words in Portuguese, so we were completely unaware of what was being said on the radio during our taxi ride to the Ribeira. It was only on our trip back to the hotel that we heard George Bush, with a Portuguese voice over, saying words like, "four airplanes," and "this terrorist act." We rushed into the hotel to see the television images of airplanes crashing into the World Trade towers.

Determined to carry on, we dressed for the banquet and joined our somber colleagues for the ride to Taylor's. It was an evening I will never forget. The kindness, support, and fellowship shown us by our fellow EAIR delegates meant everything to us during that devastating time. Gazing out over the Tagus River, seeing the lights of the city and the faces of our friends around us, enjoying a beautiful meal, was magical. We returned to Porto in 2017, to another successful Forum and another evening at Taylor's, the memories of that tragic day far behind us.

Thank you to EAIR and all the delegates over the years for sharing your knowledge, insights, and, most of all, your fellowship. I have a learned much from every Forum and I look forward to learning more in future.

NOËL VERCRUYSSE
FORMER DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING FLEMISH GOVERNMENT

EAIR AND THE POLICY – RESEARCH NEXUS

The mission of EAIR is to support research and development in higher education research, policy and practice to the general benefit of higher education. One of the aims among the others of the EAIR is to disseminate information that supports policy-making, policy implementation and good practice in higher education. The mission and the aim mentioned are a good starting point and provide an argument and a reason for policy makers within the ministries to become involved in the work of EAIR.

As a civil servant I was serving the department of higher education within the ministry of education and training of the Flemish Community of Belgium for 37 years. I was involved in all aspects of policy making in the area of higher education: degree structure, qualifications frameworks, access and progression, institutional organization and governance, quality assurance, funding, student affairs, staff affairs, recognition, internationalization and in particular the European Union, the Bologna process and ASEM.

From the very beginning I was as a policy maker interested in the literature and studies about higher education: policy papers, research findings, studies and reports ….

I consider close contacts and interaction between policy makers and higher education researchers of great value for both groups. To my opinion that goes beyond the mission and the aims of EAIR as defined in the above paragraph. It is about establishing and creating networks and connecting policy makers, higher education practitioners and higher education researchers. Reconnecting the Research-Policy-Practice Nexus in higher education as William Locke called it in his paper[2].

For me the benefits were and are still obvious: a better understanding of and gaining deeper insights in how higher education systems are functioning and how the system can be affected by policy measures both in positive and negative sense. I have benefited a lot from the analyses, schemes and figures made by higher education researchers.

Attending the annual EAIR forums was for me a kind of an intellectually energizing moment – although not all papers were of equal relevance or quality - my batteries were charged before the start of the new political and academic year. Being back in the ministry I felt myself ready to address the enduring and the upcoming policy issues sometimes real challenging ones but mostly very practical problems.

For me as a policy-maker meeting up with colleagues from other ministries has been one of the most rewarding experiences of attending EAIR, and I think it is very unfortunate that the number of representatives of ministries has declined substantially during the last decade. I have also enjoyed meeting up and have conversations with researchers from nearly all European countries, North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, and

[2] William Locke, Reconnecting the Research-Policy-Practice Nexus in Higher Education: "Evidence-Based Policy" in Practice in National and International Contexts, Higher Education Policy, 2009, 22, (119-140).

Israel. Over three years, I have also seen some shifts in geographical representation away from the Netherlands, to Portugal, Italy, while the Nordic countries remained represented by large numbers. I can remember the competition between countries about the highest number of representatives in the annual forum.

In particular in the past two Bologna decennia I have organized many activities involving higher education researchers. Most of them were also active EAIR members. Having met them during the EAIR annual forum was very helpful and useful to get them involved and to convince them to participate in our activities.

I would like to mention two activities. In 2007 the former minister of education, Frank Vandenbroucke, asked us to coordinate a project aiming at collecting the findings and insights of higher education researchers regarding the different policy aspects and issues that could be at stake in the Bologna process beyond 2010. Frank Vandenbroucke, being a researcher himself in political sciences and now professor at the University of Amsterdam, was seeking the views of researchers in the light of the preparation of the Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial Bologna conference in 2009. He believes that the work of the researchers could contribute to a more in depth and enlightened discussion of the future of the Bologna process, a discussion that should go beyond the mere technical and practical issues. He would also like to bring more policy oriented and political higher education issues on board of the Bologna process. Barbara Kehm, Bjørn Stensaker and Jeroen Huisman were willing to support and coordinate the implementation of that project and to act as the editors of the resulting book: The European Higher Education Area: Perspectives on a Moving Target (Sense publishers, 2009).

Another project was the organization of a policy seminar dedicated to the Bologna process. The aim of that seminar was to establish a dialogue between higher education researchers active in the area of the Bologna process and staff members, practitioners and students of the Flemish higher education institutions. Afterwards one of the participants told me that it was the first times that she heard the views of international higher education researchers and that the seminar was a real eye opener for her. This kind of feedback encouraged me to follow that path and pattern. Later on I have organized country seminars to foster automatic recognition, peer learning activities regarding the permeability between different types of higher education, reversed peer reviews aiming at fostering the implementation of the Bologna key commitments (qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and recognition). I was always very pleased to have at least one higher education researcher on board who was ready to share his or her findings, to set the European scene and to give a keynote address in order to start the debates.

Also by drafting the report of the BFUG working group 'on implementation' I have largely drawn upon the research findings of Bologna researchers[3].

[3] Eva Maria Vögtle, Higher Education Policy convergence and the Bologna Process. A cross-national study, Palgrave Macmillan 2014;
Christina Sin, Amelia Veiga & Alberto Amaral (2016) European Policy. Implementation and higher education. Palgrave Macmillan;
Johanna Witte, Change of degrees, degrees of change (2006) Enschede CHEPS/UT ;
Martina Vukasovic and Mari Elken, Higher Education Policy Dynamics in a Multi-level Governance context: a comparative study of four post-communist countries, in Pavel Zgaga, Ulrich Teichler and John Brennan (eds) (2013) The Globalisation Challenge for European Higher Education: Convergence and Diversity, Centres and Peripheries, Peter Lang.

To my opinion the success of those activities was for a great part due to the opportunities offered by the EAIR annual forum to meet and to interact with higher education researchers.

EAIR should try to reconnect the policy-research nexus in higher education. In his aforementioned paper William Locke made some suggestions how to do it. I would like to recommend two of them:

– Making research findings more accessible to policy makers as that is already the case with the Future of Higher Education Bologna Researchers' Conference;

– Establishing for a/platforms/policy seminars that bring together higher education researchers and policy makers to discuss the research findings of a set of papers dedicated to a theme or issue.

Hence, my closing plea to EAIR is to work to re-attract and challenge the policy makers with the research findings of the many excellent EAIR members.

PART 4

NEWCOMERS

EXPERIENCES & FIRST IMPRESSIONS

NADINE ADAMS
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY

EAIR FORUM PORTO 2017 – A NEWCOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

My companion and I arrived in Porto-Gaia to the buzzing atmosphere of the Red Bull Air Show. This was my first EAIR forum and my first time in Portugal. It had taken us several days to travel here from home in rural Australia.

I first became aware of the EAIR forum through an email that was sent to me. The Forum theme "Under pressure? Higher education institutions coping with multiple challenges" immediately grabbed my attention. I work in the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and am responsible for assisting staff, especially with adapting to changing learning and teaching requirements. I also have an interest in the effect of corporatisation of universities on teaching. I attended the forum with an expectation to gain insight into the experiences and adaptations of academics around the world in their encounters with change.

The first event of the Forum was the Newcomers' Reception followed by the Welcome Reception held at the Rectorate of the University. At these events we made the acquaintance of many likeminded and friendly people; including Rosalind Pritchard, the EAIR secretary. After watching the Fado, traditional Portuguese music, performance we attended the welcoming address and the first of the Keynote addresses. These addresses very provocatively set the scene for the Forum theme.

The rest of the conference was held at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto. This was not as central as the Rectorate but the layout of the building enabled easy presentation attendance. The multitrack programme meant there was always a thought-provoking session to attend. I found it interesting to hear the differences in approaches to various aspects of university management. In particular, Yang Zhang from the University of Hawaii presented "Innovative ideas for sharing and using student survey data". When using this data they always focused on the good news, believing that if you present the good, you allow the individual to locate the bad for themselves. This thinking is in direct opposition to the use of student survey data at my own institution where staff that have received poor student survey results have been 'named and shamed'. As well as gaining an insight to the issues and solutions encountered at institutions across the globe, I was also able to share some of my own expertise with others embarking on similar journeys to those that have been travelled in Australia. Especially with relation to academic recognition for teaching due to my role as the Chair of my institution's Awards Panel and a national assessor for Australian Awards for University Teaching.

The Conference Social Dinner was held at Taylor's port wine cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. A spectacular view of the Douro River and the Luis I Bridge were available from the balcony of Taylor's Port. Vila Nova de Gaia is reported as having the highest concentration of alcohol per square metre in the world. Which we were able to unreservedly sample. The quality wine and food mixed with the stimulating company of the conference delegates led to an enjoyable evening filled with stories and discussion.

Meeting all of my expectations, the Forum and its delegates addressed current challenges in Higher Education and speculated on those that lay ahead. While, I look forward to attending future EAIR Forums I will forever remember the words of Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo "…it has not been the strongest, individual or institution that necessarily survived, but rather the one that proved to be most adaptable to changes…"

PIERRE MERCIER
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS: GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

I am pleased to take the opportunity to reflect on the importance of EAIR on the occasion of its 40th Forum. Although I am a relative newcomer to EAIR, this is the evolution of 14 years of institutional research (IR) work in Canada. I arrived at IR in a circuitous manner. I was first a professor of psychology who was very interested by this unusual feature of the academic career which allows us to contribute not only to disciplinary teaching and research but also take an active role in the administration and management of the institution. I participated in this role initially as Director of the School of Psychology and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and eventually as Associate Vice-President for Institutional Research and Planning at the University of Ottawa. Through this progression, I have been primarily struck by the following aspects of IR in general and EAIR in particular: the importance of evidence-based decisions and policy making, the hypothesis testing role of IR, and the globalization of IR.

The work done by EAIR members to support evidence-based decision-making is important not only because it helps to answer questions from senior institution administrators and policy makers who need information to guide their reasoning but also because it demonstrates the bases for their decisions and policies to the people who are affected by them. This provides a level of transparency which is open to critical rationalism in acceptance or rejection. This is not to say that political factors do not play a role but not everything is or should be solely political.

Contrary to some unfortunate perceptions, the work of EAIR members is much more than the simple compilation of descriptive statistics about the functioning of an educational institution. It is also more than the rational analysis and contextual interpretation of the meaning of these data. It extends to hypothesis testing in the same manner as any other area of scientific research simply because many of the questions asked require it. Effectiveness of teaching or social factors contributing to student success are good examples.

Finally, EAIR is global. When Canadian institutional researchers desire to reap the benefits of comparing their work and collaborating across jurisdictions, they first tend to turn to their closest neighbour, the USA, which is natural based on the many similarities of the two higher education environments. But benefits of cross-jurisdiction studies also arise from differences. Differences highlight and contrast assumptions that might otherwise remain implicit. The raised awareness leads to a deeper understanding of systems and better expertise. It is to maximize the knowledge gains afforded by globalization that EAIR defines itself as multinational in Europe and the rest of the world.

In other words, EAIR is and will continue to be a fertile meeting place because it delivers on its avowed intention to cross boundaries: content boundaries as in the "Linking Research, Policy and Practice" statement and national boundaries in the membership reach.

JENNY WIKLUND
KTH, THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

EAIR NEWCOMER'S CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES

My name is Jenny Wiklund and I am a PhD student at KTH, The Royal Institute of Technology, in Stockholm, Sweden, and the first scientific conference I attended to was the EAIR conference in Porto in September 2017. I chose the EAIR conference as the first place to present my research because it has a very broad audience. It was a good mix of researchers, practitioners and policy makers. I split my time between being a PhD student and working in the KTH Human Resources department. So, like the conference, my roles at KTH are a mix of different tasks and interests.

I thought it was important to get feedback from peers, which is why I wanted to go to a scientific conference during the first year of my PhD training. I felt a need to discuss my ideas with the research community to get inspired. The conference gave me also a deadline to work toward. The deadline forced me to structure my thoughts and for the first time, get my research in print.

For me, this conference was a big challenge for me. The challenge was twofold. Firstly, the challenge was to write an academic article and the other challenge was to hold an academic speech. Both things terrified me. It was the first time I wrote down my thoughts and ideas on paper and talked with other researchers about my research. I must admit that I was insecure and afraid. I didn't know if I was brave enough to stand up in front of the research community and say that this is my research and this is what I believe in.

The days before the conference, I was very nervous. I was like a trembling leaf when I entered the airplane that would take me to Porto. I felt that I just wanted to escape. But I didn´t follow the exit sign and escaped and I am glad that I didn´t do it. My experiences from the conference have been very valuable for me in my development as a researcher.

There were many people that came and listened to my talk. The atmosphere was friendly and the questions were curious and helpful. It felt like that these people were of course interested in my area but they were also interested in helping me further and develop my thoughts. So after my talk, I was filled with new ideas and by the feeling that I managed to stand in front a big audience and present my research. I was relieved, tired and happy when I left the conference. I think I grew a couple of centimetres. Now I am more confident when I present my research. I am also more confident in answering questions and I am thankful for the experience the conference gave me.

MATTI KAJASTE
FINNISH MINSTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

A NEWCOMER'S PERSPECTIVE TO EAIR

I took part in the EAIR conference for the first time in autumn 2017. I had gathered some data from some evaluations my organization had conducted and used this to produce an article towards my PhD. This was my first international conference presenting my work.

Normally, I'm content with an event if I have heard one or two interesting new ideas or met at least one person I would like to be in contact with in the future. In other words, most seminars, especially abroad are only barely worth the time and (tax payers') money spent travelling to them.

In EAIR, the most obvious immediate impression was the abundance of interesting presentations available. There were eight sessions going on in the same time. This meant that there was always at least one session per slot that I was really interested in. Often I wasn't alone in my thinking but was struggling to find seating if I was slow finding my way to the next classroom. The availability of choice was certainly a big advantage and I didn't find myself or others doing email etc. in this event.

The challenge with this wide arsenal of presentations with only short breaks in between soon proved to be one's absorptive capacity. After a couple of days of 3-4 hours of nearly non-stop discussions one's internal hard drive tends to get full. I have some experience with competitive sports and found myself taking care of my body as in long sessions of endurance sports. Make sure you take in enough fluids, maintain stable blood sugar levels and try to get some fresh air between sessions. Consider limiting the intake of caffeine to avoid fatigue down the road. It was demanding, in a good way.

EAIR is an interesting conference as it brings together people from higher education research, quality agencies and many other organizations in the field. Unfortunately, I didn't meet many other persons from ministries of education. Staying up-to-date and using higher education research in policy-making is a challenge in most countries. Therefore, I find it surprising that more ministry civil servants have not found this opportunity to update their knowledge. It would be difficult to find better annual opportunity to have a general look on what is happening in higher education research in such an efficient package.

MOSES KEBALEPILE
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM A NEWCOMER TO EAIR

At the time of the EAIR conference in August of 2016, I had had only 2 years appointment as an Institutional Researcher (IR), performing learner analytics and learning analytics. At that time, I was greatly out of my comfort zone, as I was really only learning the discipline of institutional researcher, particularly for the higher education sector. I have a strong background in Medical sciences, and I am currently completing a doctoral study in Public health, and so the gap between my academic training, my set of skills and the proficiency requirements for one to perform function of a researcher in Higher education was desperately apparent. The only good thing at the time was that I was and I still believe myself to be a very strong researcher with up to level 300 training in statistics. This has allowed me to find footing in any type of research, hence the ability to cope with a new discipline: research in Higher education.

In my first two years as an institutional researcher I was looking for any and every opportunity to participate in academic platforms that might have appeared useful for me to rapidly acquire the necessary skills, knowledge set and best practices in institutional research. I very quickly realized that it was very critical to presenting at such platforms and conferences, engaging thought leaders in the discipline, and really listening to debates and conversations around higher education research and how evidence based decisions can drive development. I was in my mind, very ambitious to make a full paper submission for the 38th EAIR conference, but to my pleasant surprise, I was invited to attend and make a presentation. This has since been the highlight of my journey as a young professional, with a newly discovered passion for education research, particularly with the aim of influencing policy development and university strategy.

At the conference, I thoroughly enjoyed the feedback I got as I slowly broke off the shyness that punctuated my presentation, to the confidence that allowed me to hold deep and insightful conversations with highly decorated professors, who encouraged me to take the baton and run with the mantel to grow in the discipline. I remember how I shared with one such professor, my intimidation and fear that paralyzed me whenever I received feedback from journal article editors, in response to my manuscript submissions. In a very warm voice, the professor said, “Oh well, you start, and work at it and really you will learn. In time, with the right choice of journal and good mentorship and support, you will be successful.” I remember these words as if this conversation was this morning.

I have greatly developed confidence and courage from those encounters at EAIR. I have realized that there is an opportunity and place for young researchers to join the discourse on higher education research. Most importantly, joining these conversations does not only offer an opportunity to grow, but it really promises to allow us to find a community of practice, where best practices can be shared. I am grateful to my university for the opportunity to have attended the EAIR forum, and for the delegates I interacted with and learnt from. It was a career changing experience, and to date I have nearly 10 conferences experiences. I gave full papers at all these conferences, and I have found my feet. Thank you to EAIR and all the associated stakeholders.

PART 5

SO FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE

JAN BOTHA
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON EVALUATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOUTH

It is an honour for the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR) to convey our warm congratulations to our sister association, the European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR), celebrating its 40th anniversary. Although the EAIR (established in 1979) is a few years younger than the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) in the United States of America (established in 1966), it is the European universities who are collectively the Alma Mater of all of us, going back to the University of Bologna (established 1088). While debate is still on whether institutions in North Africa, pre-dating the establishment of the Medieval European universities, rather deserves the title Alma Mater, it is not in debate that we all are originally from Africa, the birthplace of *Homo Sapiens*. However, this is not an argument for a hierarchy of prestige based on age. It is, rather, a reminder that we are all related and bound together in our humanity and in the pursuit of the ideals of higher education in its rich variety of institutions and associations across the world. It is also an expression of our respect and appreciation for the deep traditions of scholarship and learning in Europe from which we in Africa also continue to benefit.

Except for the older South African universities (established during the 18th and early decades of the 19th century), most universities in Africa were established after independence in the 1950s and 1960s. Today African universities, and institutional research conducted by practitioners in African universities, are also affected by the global forces impacting on higher education all over the world, such as the huge increase in student numbers, the role of universities in the knowledge economy, globalization, the impact of the "audit society" with its enhanced reporting and accountability requirements and the breathtaking developments in information and communication technology. How we respond to these global forces, is influenced by our local circumstances.

The SAAIR was established in 1994 in Pretoria, the year in which Nelson Mandela became the president of South Africa and it developed in the context of the fledging South African democracy. With its more than 200 members from a number of different countries in Southern Africa, the SAAIR has played an indispensable role during its history of almost 25 years. There has been continuous interaction of our members with the EAIR. In its founding years, SAAIR has looked up to the EAIR for examples of best practice in the establishment and operations of an association of this nature. Through the years leading EAIR members, such as Hans Acherman and Ulrich Teichler, delivered keynote addresses at annual forums of the SAAIR. SAAIR members participate annually in the events and annual forums of the EAIR. The 'European model' of higher education research with its strong policy focus (Scott), in particular on developments at the macro level (national and system-wide policies), continues to be highly influential in the work of the members of the SAAIR.

SAAIR wishes the EAIR well for its next forty years (or, seen in the context your history alluded to above) for its next four hundred years!

Jan Botha
SAAIR President (2009-2012)

ELLEN PETERS
UNIVERSITY OF PUDGET SOUND

AIR: A NEW VISION

In the past few years, the Association for Institutional Research has given deep thought to the role it plays in higher education, resulting in three publications that emphasize institutional research as more than reporters of data: *A Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research*, *Duties and Functions of Institutional Research,* and *A New Vision for Institutional Research.* Taken together, these documents cast institutional research as a function, not only for reporting of data, but for leveraging that data to make decisions and improve higher education.

Institutional researchers in the United States complete mandated reporting to the federal government, provide data to external agencies and guidebooks, and summarize institutional data for internal reports. That work has historically been the foundation of institutional research practitioners, with select scholars using that data to contribute to the body of knowledge about higher education. With advances in technology, however, data is becoming more ubiquitous, providing an opportunity to reduce the reporting burden and allow institutional research practitioners the opportunity to engage with data to the betterment of their institutions and higher education in general.

Presentations from our international colleagues at the Association for Institutional Research annual forum suggest that outside of the United States, institutional researchers are primarily engaging in research, and while some institutional research practitioners in the U.S. have engaged in scholarly research and other work beyond reporting, the Association for Institutional Research is recasting the concept of institutional research so that our foundational work is evidence based decision making, including research. This requires an expansion of the institutional research skill set writ large: educating, planning and evaluating, and analysis for decision making. These are three of the five described in *The Duties and Functions of Institutional Research*.

With the broader availability of data, it is becoming incumbent upon institutional researchers to work with our colleagues in other offices to understand that data, and to use it appropriately. This educating, or coaching role, is outlined in *A New Vision for Institutional Research.* In developing these skills, institutional researchers become teachers, empowering other staff to extract and write their own data reports with confidence. In some instances, institutional researchers identify subject matter experts across their institution, meet with them regularly to be sure that they understand the data, and work with them to present the data clearly. In other instances, institutional researchers are helping data consumers understand basic statistics so that they are able to interpret their own data. As a result, institutional researchers have more time to consider the relationship of data from different areas of the institution and participate in both planning and decision making that results from that data.

This evolved approach to institutional research is moving us away from report writing, to considering our role in student success, with institutional research playing a leadership role in the institution's data strategy and resources, as put forth in the *Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research.* In this model, much of the data reporting has been delegated to other areas of the institution, freeing up institutional research to connect data across the institution, for example, determining ways in which student affairs contributes to the educational goals of the institution, or how test-optional admission policies impact student success. Ideally, this research oriented role will become the foundation for institutional research, where institutional research is consulted as the institution embarks on significant decisions, and where institutional research discovers findings that had not been considered, leading to new initiatives.

In this updated thinking about institutional research, there is great opportunity to work with and learn from our international colleagues. As EAIR celebrates its fortieth year, the Association for Institutional Research looks forward to our continued exchange of ideas and techniques, as well as working toward greater knowledge of our institutions and higher education.

ERIC CORNUEL
EFMD – EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

EAIR – 40 YEARS

For the last 40 years, EAIR has successfully promoted values, developed activities and implemented policies, which are key in the sustainable growth and advancement of higher education institutions. Promoting high-quality and impactful research, strategic management and development of leadership potential within higher education institutions, facilitating international collaboration and projects, fostering corporate relevance and impact on the wider society through policy-setting, are all values that EFMD and its accreditation and development systems share with EAIR.

EAIR's peer-reviewed journal 'Tertiary Education and Management' is a well-recognised source of high-quality academic papers and EAIR impressive collection of book publications and monographies enrich research and insights on the challenges and opportunities tertiary education institutions face in the rapidly evolving global environment.

Demographic shifts around the world; the rising cost of universities on one side and financial pressure on higher education institution on the other; increasing competition for share of the global student market; the surge of alternative provides and online learning platforms; the fraying value of an academic degree as a seal of knowledge, skills and competences; and finally, the increasing need for agility of higher education institutions, are just some of the challenges higher education institutions must face nowadays.

That's why it is so important that organisations and networks such as EAIR bring together students, researchers, policymakers, leaders, administrators and practitioners to discuss and share best practices on the ongoing developments in the higher education sector. Since 1979, EAIR has successfully organised its annual Forum to promote the dialogue between higher education research, policy and practice in Europe and beyond.

On behalf of EFMD I wish all the best for the years to come and look forward to many further successful milestones in the future.

PART 6

WINNERS

LEE HARVEY
QUALITY RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL – UNITED KINGDOM

THIRD MOST CITED PAPER IN TEAM

I thoroughly enjoyed my two decades of involvement with EAIR, joining the Executive Committee in 1999 after six years of attending the Forum and being honoured to Chair the Committee between 2004 and 2010. EAIR was fundamentally about the annual Forum. The journal, TEAM, was an important spin off from the Forum, essentially publishing polished versions of presentations from the annual event. EAIR tried various ways to expand its impact beyond the Forum and provide members with another reason to be members apart from the Forum discount. For example, it produced guides, such as the 'Research, Policy and Practice in Higher Education' series, and arranged special smaller events, such as the seminars in Amsterdam, Athens and Miami. However, it was always the Forum that attracted the membership and that dominated Executive Committee meetings. The finances were dependent on the Forum.

As an international event, the Forum attracted participants not only from Europe but also further afield. The great thing about EAIR was its friendliness and lack of cliques. The openness was apparent right from the first Forum I attended in Turku in 1993. Rather than the pseudo-élitism of other smaller fora or the impenetrable vastness of some (mostly American) events, EAIR made huge efforts to make the Forum inclusive and welcoming. The Newcomers Welcome was indicative of this.

I attended all but one Forum between 1993 and 2010 as well as reappearing six years later at Birmingham for my final ever international conference presentation. The fora became the academic highlight of my year. I enjoyed meeting up with friends I had made through EAIR. There were plenty of chances to socialise; whether it be taking time out to go up in the ski-lift at Innsbruck, enjoying tapas on Las Ramblas in Barcelona or taking a sauna in the Finnish woods. Looking back the Fora were generally extremely well organised by the local organising committee; the notorious exception being the Berlin conference, whose woes have been well rehearsed but from which we learnt important lessons: not least to not foist ourselves on a city and for the Executive to keep a closer eye on local developments. I was fortunate as Chair to have a superb administrator in Ella Kruzinga, Director of the Secretariat, who worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the annual event.

If I was to choose a favourite Forum it would be a close call between, Innsbruck, Riga and Copenhagen. All these were superbly well done. The arrangements in Innsbruck were extremely precise and the event was compact and full of surprises, not least the singing keynote. Riga was also spot on, with a big surprise when the President of the country turned up at the opening ceremony. As Chair of EAIR I was informed about the inclusion of Her Excellency Professor Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga less than an hour before the start of the event (for security reasons) and had to change my welcome speech to an introduction to the President, nervously readjusting it and ensuring that I remembered the appropriate appellation.

One of the things I enjoyed about EAIR was the big stage it provided for me to perform to a responsive audience. I had several keynotes over the years but I think Copenhagen was the most exciting as we tried new things including social media messages scrolling on the screen behind me in response to what I was saying. However, I guess it will be Porto 2001 that will always stick in my memory, not for the Forum itself but because I flew on the 11th September from Porto via Paris to Bangkok and onto Vietnam oblivious, during the long haul section, to the carnage being wrought in New York and shocked by what I saw on screens in Bangkok airport, only to discover that my case had not travelled with me but was instead winging its way unattended back to Birmingham.

FIREWEINI G/EGZIABIHER BIRHANE
EDUCATION STRATEGY CENTER – ETHIOPIA

2017 – WINNER BEST POSTER AWARD

I am very much happy to share my experience on the 39th EAIR Porto forum in general and winner of “Best Poster Award” in particular. It was my first time to attend EAIR forums during my life time and I consider myself lucky for being winner of best post award of the 39th EAIR forum during my first time attendance. I have learned a lot of new things from the forum and the forum’s attendants. The forum arrangements, the warming welcoming session, the forum social dinner, the keynote speeches and the messages of opening speech are printed memories in my mind. The ample research topics presented by different scholars who come from different corners of the world with their different perspectives enables me to grasp a lot of new sights and perspectives which could enhance my further research carrier.

I have also shared a lot of experiences with the forum participants during the tea and coffee and lunch times. I was extremely happy when I heard I am the winner of the best poster award of the 39th EAIR forum. It were during night time when I see the message written from the EAIR secretariat to my e-mail and by then I could not able to control my happiness and it were unconsciously I forward that e-mail to all my friends and a lot of congratulations messages were written to my e-mail before I receive the award. I could not express in words the feelings I fell during the awarding session and I were surprised for the kind words and congratulations I get from the forum participants and I don’t want to miss to thank for all the 39th annual EAIR Forum participants. The award I got at the 2017, 39th EAIR forum creates me a feeling of strength which was a base for my better performance to my further academics and research endeavour.

The 39th annual EAIR forum 2017 put in my mind a nice memory of Porto which was the 2014 “best European destination” according to the European consumers’ choice. I am excited by the architectural beauty of the city, the long and huge bridges, the walks besides of the river, and the beauty of the light on the river during the late afternoon. Port is so exiting and I wish if I could get another chance to visit Porto again. Hopefully I could do that. Last but not lease, I want to express my gratitude for the 2018, EAIR 40th Forum organizers for seeking prior experience for their 40th EAIR anniversary and I wish your EAIR 40th anniversary would be successful and colourful.

CHRISTIAN HUBER
UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK – AUSTRIA

2008 – FIRST WINNER BEST PAPER AWARD

When I received the best paper award at the EAIR forum in Copenhagen in 2008, I was a second year PhD student and very pleased with the award but little aware of its importance for my career and me personally. Now, after ten years in academia and finally old enough to be ineligible for the award, I feel that the award has done three things for me, which I did not anticipate. First, the paper was, under the helpful guidance of now-EAIR-president Bjørn Stensaker, published in TEAM and was a cornerstone of my cumulative PhD-thesis. The thesis was supervised, or as I prefer to call it: guided, by Stephan Laske, himself a former EAIR-president. In this sense, the award helped my set up my PhD-thesis and put me on my way for my life in academia. Second, the award gave me impulses for my research and academic career long beyond the Copenhagen forum. The paper was about risk management in higher education institutions and I continued researching risk management in my habilitation thesis which I completed in 2015. I also continued to be interested in higher education institutions and somewhat returned to the subject in the past few years with third party funded projects on quality management in German universities and on the role of quantification in an international comparison. The award helped me give my research activities a sense of direction which it would have lacked otherwise. Third, and most importantly, the award gave me confidence. The award, the ceremony, the nice recommendation letter by EAIR's Rosalind Pritchard, all gave me the idea that what I was doing and how I was doing it was valuable. Academic vocabulary would suggest phrases like identity formation or professional career development but that does not quite fit what the award did for me. It helped me to find my way in the world of academia and develop an understanding of what I was trying to do as a researcher. In this sense, EAIR offered my more than other organizations could have: it helped my make sense of academia, the field which I research(ed) and the field I worked in. And it did so through incredibly nice and helpful people. The last bit was for the most important aspect. Because as Stephan Laske, my *Doktorvater*, would say: the people make the place.

JANE KNIGHT
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO - CANADA

2010 – RECIPIENT EAIR AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE

My heartfelt congratulations to EAIR as it celebrates its 40th year anniversary. Since its early beginnings EAIR has shaped, informed and guided the higher education sector. In particular, it has helped higher education institutions develop relevant policies, structures and strategies to respond to the changing European and global environment. The evolution of higher education in Europe has been marked by new opportunities and challenges stimulated by globalization and EAIR has been at the forefront in addressing the key issues in terms of policy development, seminars, research, information sharing and professional development.

There is no question that internationalization and Europeanization has had an enormous impact on European higher education in the last four decades. The EAIR award I received in 2010 was deeply appreciated and encouraged me to continue my research on the many dimensions of international higher education, especially regionalization. The rationales, approaches and programs used to enhance the regionalization/ Europeanization of higher education stimulated me to look at the higher education regionalization experiences in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Using my preferred comparative and policy oriented lens to study higher education, it was both fascinating and revealing to examine the similarities and differences in the regionalization process across the four regions and furthermore, to examine the influence of Europe. This lead to the development of the FOPA (Functional, Organizational and Political Approaches) Model used to analyse higher education regionalization in diverse historical, cultural, political and economic contexts. This research has raised many questions as to how the motives and means of higher education regionalization are impacted by academic, economic and geo-political rationales. My current focus on researching Pan Africa higher education regionalization clearly shows the influence, guidance and funding of European agencies and institutions, and offers new opportunities to investigate the potential benefits, risks, unintended consequences and sustainability of African higher education regionalization at both the continental and sub-regional levels.

My best wishes to EAIR as it celebrates its four decades of accomplishments and much success to you for the next forty years of leadership for higher education in Europe.

PART 7

LINKING RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE
"SERIOUS" REFLECTIONS

MICHAEL SHATTOCK
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON – UNITED KINGDOM

RESEARCH AND POLICIY IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION

Some 15 years ago I was invited by Ulrich Teichler to contribute a chapter to the EAIR 25th Anniversary volume. I was able to make a fairly good case for research on institutional issues having been an important component of management policy, at least at one university (Shattock 2003). It would be nice to be able to show that research has played an important role in the formation of national higher education policy. However, at least as far as the United Kingdom (UK) is concerned, that has not been the case for the last 30 years and, where in the last two years research has been cited in Government papers, the conclusions that seem likely to be drawn from it raise more questions than, hopefully, solutions. Other national higher education systems may have been more fortunate but for the purpose of this essay I shall concentrate on evidence from the UK.

Research and the Robbins Report

The UK, it must be said, started well with the Robbins Report, *Higher Education,* to which was attached six volumes of research evidence and statistical tables prepared by a team led by Professor Claus Moser of LSE (Committee of Higher Education 1963). The Robbins Committee (so named after its chair, Lord Robbins, an economics professor at LSE) had been established to advice on the pattern of UK higher education, then in a period of rapid and uncoordinated growth, over the next few years. Robbins responded with a forecast expansion of numbers year by year up until 1981 together with a distribution of numbers between sectors and 178 recommendations about the structure, staffing, governance and character of the higher education system including the famous 'Robbins principle' that university places "should be available to all those who were qualified for them by ability and attainment". Curiously what Robbins did not make recommendations about was how this expanded system was to be financed contenting itself with the assumption that "public money is spent on what people want; and if they want more higher education then, on the estimates we have made it should be possible to finance it without imposing intolerable strains on the budget or the economy" (para 636). This unresolved issue was to occupy UK governments for the next 50 years.

Research and subsequent reviews of higher education

There have been three significant Government attempts to emulate the Robbins review of the whole UK system of higher education each with a diminishing framework of research support. The first was the Dearing Committee, established in 1996 in a pact between the two Parliamentary front benches to prevent the vice-chancellors' committee's proposal to introduce the payment of tuition fees by students becoming an election issue. The Dearing Committee was given only a year to report (Robbins had three) and, unsurprisingly, undertook only a minimal amount of research but a great deal of consultation; the Report, when it emerged in 1997, contained a lot of bureaucratic hobby horses arising from the consultation process and a profusion of appendices but only two pieces of solid research neither of which bore on the main recommendations. It did, however, contain one original, and well worked out proposal, to introduce a £1000 tuition fee linked to income contingent student loans (NCIHE 1997).

This recommendation was implemented but while it responded to the vice-chancellors' proposals it did not match the loss of 45% of funding per student in government grant to higher education since the late 1970s. Evidence of international competition persuaded the Prime Minister to establish a working party under the responsible Minister to find a solution, using this device, rather than a high profile commission, in an effort to lower the political temperature and get a quicker result. The format prohibited research though the resulting White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education,* offered a wide ranging review including a recommendation for the increase of tuition fees up to a maximum of £3000 (DES 2003).

As a sop to opponents in the House of Commons, which approved the recommendation by only five votes, it was agreed that the decision should be reviewed in five years. This led to the setting up of the Browne Committee, the third review of higher education since 1996, which, with no semblance of research, recommended a completely marketised system dominated by student choice with fees rising to £14,000 financed through a student loan scheme (Browne 2010). This scheme was adopted by the Government (now a Tory led Coalition) though with significant modifications, bringing the maximum fee level down to £9000. It was followed by a decision to open up the sector to become a (an almost pure) market by the removal of any limits on the number of students an institution could accept. There is no evidence in Willetts' (the responsible Minister) account that any but purely fiscal research contributed to the decisions (Willetts 2017). The social and wider financial implications of the build-up of graduate debt were ignored and within three years the assumptions about how the fee market would operate were proved to be incorrect: all universities opted to charge the maximum fee rather than only a few, the estimate for non-repayment of loan climbed from 35% to 48% (and in some minds even higher), and the part time market for mature students, a key element of the Government's widening participation strategy, collapsed.

Structural changes in higher education

A similar situation applies if we look at structural decisions about the higher education system taken outside 'blue ribbon' inquiries. Thus the decision to create 30 polytechnics in 1965, against the Robbins recommendation to contain the expansion chiefly in the university sector, was taken as a political decision by the responsible Minister advised by a senior civil servant (Shattock 2012 pp 63-67) and was reversed in 1992 again advised by a civil servant (Shattock *ibid* p 81) without reference to any research as to the consequences. The decision to create the Russell Group, and which universities should form it, thereby restoring a segmentation of the sector but at a more elite level than the former binary line, was taken as a 'fix' behind closed doors by the universities themselves and ignored league table evidence that pointed to the decline of some members and the rising quality of some excluded institutions.

Why, one might ask, was research not commissioned to inform or discourage any of these decisions? One answer is that at a technical level this kind of research is costly, data intensive and takes time to complete. Robbins, after all had three years and no constraints on its budget. A second factor was that there were few sources for funding research in this kind of field, at least in the UK: the government's Department of Education and Science (DES) and later the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) occasionally commissioned research and the Leverhulme Foundation and more latterly the Sutton Trust could be approached for grants but the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) showed little interest in higher education as a field for research until 2015 so that a core group of policy researchers was never established. However, perhaps the most telling reason was that the UK Government was inclined to see the management of higher education as if it was a kind

of service industry which at the macro level could be run by civil servants and politicians on short pre-emptive timescales without the need for extended research which could confuse decision making and encourage political controversy. Higher education scholars who did policy based research were just not read by those who were engaged in policy making.

Big Data research and problems in its interpretation

However, the controversy about tuition fee policy and its impact on higher education, and the new era of Big Data, has brought the potential influence of research on policy into a new focus. It has also highlighted some downsides. The White Paper *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (BIS 2016) leans heavily for its emphasis on higher education as a market on a UK Competition and Markets Authority Report (CMA 2015) but it also draws on some important research on graduate earnings authored by an academic group under the auspices of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) (Britton *et al* 2016).

The originality of the IFS paper lies primarily in the methodology adopted to offer data on the earning levels of English graduates 10 years from graduation and the precision which it gives to analysing it against a given set of variables. Hitherto, economists had been able, using rate of return analysis, to calculate the value of degree study as against non-entry to higher education but the absence of national data, apart from the notoriously suspect, institutionally collected, employment data, has proved to be a severe limitation on any assessment of the employment outcomes of UK higher education. What the IFS paper did was to link income tax data on earnings with data on parental occupations, pre-university academic performance and individual institution and course attended. The authors were quick to point to limitations of their data but the advance over what was previously available is transformational. In sum, they were able to show earnings 10 years from graduation by gender, course studied and institution attended, parental socio-economic background, qualifications at entry and regional origins. This offered a whole new platform for an analysis of English higher education.

This is not the place to summarise all the paper's findings and the following are listed simply to give a flavour of the field which is now opened up:

1. Research on social inequality in higher education has tended to concentrate on the Robbins pool of ability argument and on how to widen access, the broad assumption being that higher education, once entered provides a level playing figure for further progress. What the paper demonstrated, however, was that inequalities persist: graduates from high income families earning median level incomes for their group earned 25% more than the median level for graduates from low income families; graduates from high income families whose earnings fell into a higher percentile earned up to 60% for men and 45% for women more than graduates from low income backgrounds.

2. The data showed considerable disparity between the earnings of graduates following different disciplines: medicine and economics stood out for high earnings with their high premiums also affected by the effect on salaries of attendance at high prestige institutions; Creative Arts graduates had very low earnings by comparison—the top 10% of economics earners in the 1999 intake earned in excess of £120k 10 years after graduation while the parallel group of Creative Arts graduates earned less than £40k.

3. Regional differences played a significant role: students domiciled in the South East and the East Midlands have a higher than average rate of attendance at top rated institutions while the rate was much lower from students domiciled in the North West; 75% of students domiciled in the North East attended an institution in the North East.

4. While there was a premium on future earnings from attending a top ranked (Russell Group) university the median salaries from 23 institutions (men) and nine institutions (women) were lower than the median salaries for non-graduates.

The aim of the Working Paper was stated to be to improve understanding of the diversity of the sector and its central focus was to expose the variability of graduates' earning power and what it meant for social mobility. The paper did not make judgements and where it presented data which could be interpreted detrimentally it offered contextual explanations which illustrated the complexity of the picture which the data presented and the dangers of drawing easy headline conclusions. Much of the data confirmed what common sense and a familiarity with the sector has recognised for some time, but not been able to prove, but herein lies the risk of a rush to judgement. It is not surprising that some universities' graduates are earning less than the national median earnings level for non-graduates because these universities attract a very high proportion of local students domiciled in low wage areas in which they continue to live and work after graduation. Equally if one knows anything about the erratic careers of actors, dancers, artists and sculptors one will not be surprised at the level of their earnings and this should not prejudice the funding of courses in the Creative Arts which, although perhaps in only a minority of individual cases, will produce graduates who will go on to make the highest levels of cultural contribution.

But there is no doubt that this research supplies the methodological tools for some very uncomfortable policy outcomes. The White Paper makes it clear that the Government intends to follow up the Working Paper's findings and to use the data derived from tax returns and the other sources drawn on by the paper to assist in the formulation of policy: universities where graduate earnings fall below national median earnings of non-graduates may be at risk, as may be disciplines which do not appear to be meeting an immediate economic need. The research findings add a new dimension to our understanding of the higher education scene but in the hands of a government which gives priority to economic efficiency and value for money unless read taking a full account of their social context they may inhibit effective policy making. We have thus moved from a situation where policy decisions have been taken in a research-free environment to a situation where simplistic or political interpretations of research may seriously distort policy outcomes.

References

Britton, J, Dearden, L, Shephard, N and Vignoles, A (2016) 'How English domiciled graduate earnings vary with gender, institution attended, subject and socio-economic background' Institute of Fiscal Studies Working Paper W16/06

Browne, Lord (2010) *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education* London: BIS

Committee on Higher Education (the Robbins Report) (1963) *Higher Education: a Report* Cmnd 2154 London: HMSO

Competition and Market Authority (CMA) (2015) *Competition and Regulation in Higher Education in England* London: CMA

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2016) *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* Cm 9258 HMSO

Department for Education and Skills (DES) (2003) *The Future of Higher Education* Cm 5735 London: HMSO

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report) (1997) *Higher Education in the Learning Society* London: HMSO

Shattock, M L (2003) 'Research, Administration and University Management: what can Research Contribute to Policy' in Begg, R *The Dialogue between Higher Education Research and Practice* Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp 55-68

Shattock, M L (2012) *Making Policy in British Higher Education 1945-2011* Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/ Open University Press

Willetts, D (2017) *A University Education* Oxford: OUP

TRUDY W. BANTA AND CYNTHIA A. COGSWELL
INDIANA UNIVERSITY / DARTHMORE COLLEGE – USA

HAS RESEARCH INFLUENCED PRACTICE AND/OR POLICY IN OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IN THE US?

In the 1950s W. Edwards Deming travelled from the United States to Japan to help that nation repair its image as a producer of products of inferior quality. He and his adherents were so successful that by the 1980s, manufacturers in the United States (US) had received the message that to be competitive, they too must use statistical process control (SPC) techniques to reduce errors and improve quality. Even US hospitals had learned that if you give patients a survey, and 85% say they are satisfied with the care they have received, 15% may be lying in their hospital beds planning to sue you. In contrast, critics of higher education in the early 1980s were saying that the attitude of most college and university administrators was: "Leave the money on the stump, and trust us".

In 1980 it became clear to state college administrators in the state of Tennessee that they would experience the first serious attempt to assess and improve quality in higher education in the form of a performance funding policy: College seniors would be tested on generic skills like writing and critical thinking and in their major fields, graduates would be surveyed, and results—including improvements in scores and ratings over the years—would be tallied annually to determine a percentage of each institution's state funding. Then-chancellor, and professor of English, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville said: "This looks like an abridgement of academic freedom to me!" The senior author of this paper, then an administrative intern in that chancellor's office, drawing on her own experience, said: "It looks like program evaluation to me". "Then you take charge of the university's response to the state", said the chancellor. And so she did.

With the high premium placed on individuality in US higher education, SPC did not seem immediately applicable as a tool for assessing and improving quality. Basic research on teaching effectiveness, measurement of college student learning, program evaluation, and organizational change and development helped little in the rush to address the requirements of performance funding (PF) policy. Scholars in those fields were not eager to turn their attention to applications in higher education. So early practice in what soon became known in the US as outcomes assessment—evaluating and improving the quality of student learning, as well as every other aspect of higher education operations—was shaped largely by state mandates, academic traditions, practitioners' intuition, and leaders' personalities at individual institutions.

In the absence of research to guide practice and even a reluctance by the academy to recognize the increasing pressure to demonstrate its accountability, the inclination of state and federal governments to set relevant policy flourished. In 1985 the states of Virginia, Colorado, and New Jersey enacted their own PF policies. In 1986 the federal Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education began to shape institutions' assessment behaviour with its annual grant competitions. In 1988 then-Secretary of Education William Bennet issued an executive order decreeing that to be approved by the Department of Education, US accrediting agencies would henceforth have to include assessment standards in their own requirements

for institutions and for disciplines within institutions. This decree was perpetuated in statute in the Congressional amendments to the federal Higher Education Act in 1992.

In 1989 the National Governors Association issued education goals for the nation to achieve by 2000. The only goal for higher education was stated: The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially (Corrallo, 1991). Clearly, the only way to tell if learning has *improved* is to measure it—pre and post. Suddenly the press to assess with a test previously confined to K-12 education confronted higher education as well. The Department of Education announced plans to develop a national test for college seniors, but these were scuttled when in 1994 the substantial cost was determined. Nevertheless, a few measurement scholars labouring in the K-12 vineyards, seeing new markets, turned their attention to higher education.

The natural tendency to avoid being evaluated, strengthened by appeals to academic freedom, have long restrained faculty and university administrators in their enthusiasm for outcomes assessment (understatement intended). But the threat of having standardized test scores used as they are in the K-12 sector to judge the quality of student learning and thus, by extension, of institutions, turned reluctant acceptance of outcomes assessment as a necessary evil to outright resistance on some campuses.

Sensing the widespread reluctance of higher education to embrace its need to demonstrate accountability, then-Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings appointed a Committee on the Future of Higher Education, and its report issued in 2007 spurred the national HE lobbying organizations based in the nation's capital to develop the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). The VSA was intended to head off Congressional action by providing evidence that at least an important segment of large, state-funded institutions was willing to *volunteer* to put on a common website information about costs and enrolments that would permit inter-institutional comparisons. Standardized test scores were to be a component of this common dataset, but after a 5-year trial, fewer than half of the institutions participating were willing to share their test scores. In fact, many administrators met such widespread faculty disapproval that they did not even offer a standardized test after the first year or two of doing so.

For the first 38 years (1980-2018) of the history of the new field of outcomes assessment in US higher education, public policy officials have attempted to nudge US colleges and universities to accept responsibility for assessing and improving quality just as manufacturers and healthcare providers had done 30 years previously. With the assistance of accreditors' requirements, a burgeoning literature, several national conferences, many state and local meetings that attract multi-state audiences, and myriad active local and national listservs on the topic, virtually every US campus now has an active institution-wide system for evaluating student learning and the effectiveness of academic programs and student services. But the influence of research on policy and practice is still in its infancy.

In the last decade, two US national organizations have led efforts to bring research findings to bear on assessment practice: The National Institute on Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU). NILOA principals (Kuh, O'Donnell, & Schneider, 2017) have used multiple measures of the effects of so-called High Impact Practices, or HIPs, such as study abroad, internships, and undergraduate research experience, on student behaviour and learning and have found significant positive effects. Intensified professional development has helped to increase use of these methods in college teaching and outside-class activities.

Since 2007, AACU staff have attempted to establish the reliability and validity of *rubrics* to assess student learning—a method that appeals more naturally to academic staff than do standardized tests. AACU and the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University are collaborating to establish the VALUE Institute to support institutions in documenting, reporting, and using learning outcomes evidence collected with Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics. Participating institutions will submit samples of student work and receive reports from the nation-wide VALUE database that provide benchmarking data on student learning.

Over the years since 1990, accreditation standards have supplemented, and in some instances actually supplanted, state performance funding mandates as the policies most influential in shaping assessment practice on campuses. Now Ralph Wolff, a former regional accreditation agency CEO, and colleagues are attempting to influence accreditation through the application of research-based practices. Lumina Foundation funding is enabling Wolff and colleagues to co-design and pilot-test with a consortium of institutions a process called the Essential Employability Qualities Certification (EEQ CERT), for guaranteeing that graduates of baccalaureate programs possess the "essential qualities for 21st Century employability" (see https://theqacommons.org).

Perhaps Wolff's national stature and accreditation connections can enable his new work to have some effect in bringing research to bear on policy. Meanwhile, 35 of the 50 US states currently implement some form of performance funding for higher education. There is no common set of standards for these policies, though most states have acknowledged the folly of using standardized tests to make institutional comparisons. This widespread recognition is one of very few research-based effects on state performance funding policy. The fact that just the most recent analysis (Hillman, Fryar, & Crespin-Trujillo, 2017) confirms what so many other studies have shown over the years—that performance funding has no consistent (i.e., across institutions) significant positive impact on higher education — demonstrates the distance we have to go to convince policy-makers that research can be helpful in assessing and improving the quality of education policy.

References

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). The VALUE Institute: Learning outcomes assessment at its best. Retrieved from: https://www.aacu.org/VALUEInstitute

Corrallo, S. (1991). Critical concerns in assessing selected higher-order thinking and communication skills of college graduates. *Assessment Update*, 3 (6), pp. 5-6.

Hillman, N.W., Fryar, A.H., & Crespin-Trujillo, V. (2018). Evaluating the impact of performance funding in Ohio and Tennessee. *American Educational Research Journal,* 55(1), 144-170.

Kuh, G.D., O'Donnell, K., & Schneider, C.G. (2017). HIPs at ten. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning,* 49 (5), pp.8-16.

MALCOLM TIGHT
UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER – UNITED KINGDOM

THE ROLE OF *TERTIARY EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT* (TEAM)

Introduction

Like the society which owns it – the European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR) – *Tertiary Education and Management* (TEAM) sees itself as having a role in linking policy, research and practice. Thus, the journal's statement of its aims and scope starts by declaring that it 'is an international peer-reviewed journal intended to create a better linkage of research, policy and practice in teaching and learning as well as in higher education management'. In placing research at the head of the trio, the key focus is emphasized.

The question then arises as to how, and how well, the journal has fulfilled this aim. As the current editor of the journal, I might not seem to be detached enough to be able to answer this question, but, nevertheless, switching my role to that of researcher, I shall have a go.

While EAIR is now in its 40th year, TEAM only started life in 1995, so is now just 23 years old. Its original intention was simply to publish the best of the presentations given at the annual EAIR Forum, or at other EAIR events. This remained the practice for more than a decade, but, more recently, the linkage between the journal and the conference has become less close. Forum participants are still encouraged to submit their papers to TEAM for consideration if they wish, but the great majority of submissions now have no direct connection with the conference. In other words, TEAM is now much like most other academic journals, receiving articles from around the world, reviewing them and publishing those that meet its quality threshold.

Aside from losing the close link with the Forum, there is one other, somewhat related, way in which TEAM has changed significantly during its lifetime; articles have got longer. However, this change happened in the first few years of the journal's existence. So, while in 1995, the first year of publication, the average article was less than seven pages long, and one came in at just two pages, by 1999 the average length had grown to 14-18 pages, where it has stayed ever since (see also Tight 2014).

Achievement

So what has TEAM achieved? Examination of its output over its lifetime, 1995-2017 inclusive, indicates that:

- A total of 521 articles have been published.
- Contributions have been published from 50 countries from all continents, though most (27 countries, 329 (63%) contributions) have been from authors based in Europe. Please note: this analysis is based on first authors only; in all the 521 articles had 901 authors, or an average of 1.7 per article.
- While most contributions have come from English-speaking countries – UK 94 (18%), USA 67 (13%), Australia 54 (10%), Canada 23 (4%), Ireland 7 (1%), New Zealand 5 (1%) – together these do not (quite) make up the majority of contributions: 250 articles out of 521, or 48%. Significant numbers of contributions have come from other, particularly European, countries, notably Finland (32 articles, 6%), Germany (21, 4%), Portugal

(20, 4%), Sweden (26, 5%) and The Netherlands (24, 5%).

- While the majority of first authors (316, 61%) have been men, this dominance has been decreasing over time.
- The majority of articles have focused on institutional management (217, 42%), system policy (89, 17%) or quality (64, 12%). Interestingly, despite their specific mention in TEAM's statement of aims and scope, hardly any articles have focused on teaching and learning. Please note: these categorisations, and those made below, should be fairly self-evident, but, for a fuller discussion and justification, see Tight (2012, Chapter 1).
- The vast majority of articles focused on the level of the nation (230, 44%), the institution (107, 21%) or internationally (128, 25%). The proportion of international, comparative articles is particularly gratifying.
- The majority of articles were based on forms of documentary analysis (298, 57%). The classic social science methodologies of interviews (80, 15%), multivariate analysis (62, 12%) and questionnaire surveys (61, 12%) accounted for much of the remainder.

Despite being open in principle to articles on almost any aspect of higher education, therefore, it is clear that TEAM has developed – consciously or otherwise - a particular slant or niche, which helps to differentiate it from other higher education journals.

Linking Policy, Research and Practice

To focus in on TEAM's role in linking policy, research and practice, we may start by looking in more detail at those articles employing the dominant methodology, documentary analysis. Three main kinds of documentary analysis may be recognised: those examining the research literature (i.e. what has been written on this topic, and what has been found?), those examining policy (i.e. how has national/international policy on higher education changed, and what have been its impacts?) and those examining practice (i.e. how do we do what we do in my institution or department?).

Each of these genres of documentary analysis may then be split into two: those which can be said to constitute a critical analysis and those which are more of a discussion. Clearly, as with all such distinctions, there are grey areas and overlaps, but, to qualify as an analysis rather than a discussion, an article had to have a clear methodology and some engagement with theory. While this may surprise some, it is the case that many articles published in higher education journals are not explicit about their methodology or theoretical framework, or both. This is particularly so with those based on documentary analysis, where it is possible to simply present an argument, without discussing data selection, method of analysis or theoretical framing.

On this basis, the breakdown of the 298 articles using documentary analysis was as follows:

- literature analysis (20 articles, 4% of the total)
- literature discussion (8, 2%)
- policy analysis (83, 16%)
- policy discussion (71, 14%)
- practice analysis (57, 11%)
- practice discussion (59, 11%)

The majority of these articles were focusing, therefore, on either policy or practice (the latter might, of course, be a response to a policy), and in each case were split fairly evenly

between articles which simply discussed the policy or practice in question – usually negatively if it was a policy and positively if it was a practice, as the latter were typically 'owned' by the author - and those which offered a more critical and academic analysis of it.

If we extend this typology to the other 223 articles that were not based on documentary analysis (though all of them incorporated some analysis of documents, even if only through a brief literature review), all of the studies based on interviews, multivariate analyses or surveys (203 articles, or 39% of the total) would be classed as analyses, as they had clear methodologies and usually some theoretical engagement. That leaves a relative handful of articles (20, 4%), based on autobiography, conceptual analysis or observation, most of which would be categorised as discussions rather than analyses.

Conclusions

We may draw a number of conclusions from this analysis that are relevant to our discussion of the linkages between policy, research and practice.

First, a slight majority of the articles published in TEAM to date – i.e. all those I have classified as policy or practice analyses or discussions (270 articles, 52%) – focus on policies or practices in higher education, with those classified as analyses (140, 27%) making clear links between the policies or practices in question and relevant research. While the focus of each of these articles is on policy or practice, it is virtually impossible to discuss one without having implications for the other.

Second, the bulk of the remainder of the articles published (203, 39%), based directly or ultimately (in the case of many multivariate analyses which make use of secondary data) on data collected through interviews or surveys, focus on research into a particular topic. This research will invariably relate to and/or have implications for policy and/or practice, though these linkages may not be drawn out in the articles.

To summarise, while only a minority of the articles published explicitly link policy *and* research *and* practice, many will link either policy *and* research (e.g. Ahola 2012, Zeeman and Benneworth 2017) or practice *and* research (e.g. Belanger, Bali and Longden 2014, White 2004), and the majority report on research which has implications for policy and practice.

We might argue, of course, about whether all articles in TEAM should explicitly address and link policy, research and practice, but – as an academic journal focusing on an applied field – it seems fair to conclude that TEAM is doing a pretty good job of this without making it explicit. Anyone seeking lessons for higher education policy and practice will find much that is useful from the research reported in TEAM.

References

Ahola, S (2012) National Evaluation of Bologna Implementation in Finland: procedures and outcomes. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 18, 3, pp. 237-252.

Belanger, C, Bali, S, and Longden, B (2014) How Canadian Universities use Social Media to Brand Themselves. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20, 1, pp. 14-29.

Tight, M (2012) *Researching Higher Education*. Maidenhead, Open University Press, second edition.

Tight, M (2014) Twenty Years of *TEAM*. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20, 4, pp. 275-279.

White, K (2004) The Leaking Pipeline: women postgraduate and early career researchers in Australia. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10, 3, pp. 227-241.

Zeeman, N, and Benneworth, P (2017) Globalisation, Mergers and 'Inadvertent Multi-Campus Universities': reflections from Wales. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 23, 1, pp. 41-52.

INGVILD MARHEIM LARSEN
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RESEARCH – NORWAY

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Research for better policy and practice in the higher education sector

In recent years, there has been an increased expectation that policy as well as practice should be knowledge-based, and in general, there is a broad agreement about the need for linking research, policy and practice in higher education. The idea of knowledge-based policy and evidence-based professional practice is not new, but is perhaps more important than ever, due to the increasing complexity and specialization of modern society and technological developments (Christensen et al. 2017). Inter alia. we see that research and new knowledge are regarded as a key to solve the grand and complex challenges the world is facing, such as climate change and immigration. This is mirrored by great optimism that experts and researchers can give answers and solutions to these complex questions and provide guidance at challenging crossroads. However, this rather positive perspective hides some problematic aspects with respect to using research in policy and practice.

It is obvious that it is better to ground policy on research and knowledge, than policy without such a foundation, but it is not obvious how this should be done. EAIR is an example of how this could be done as it aims to cross boundaries between research, policy and practice. Taking EAIR's purpose as a starting point, it is interesting to reflect upon how these different spheres can be linked together, and how research and knowledge can inform policy and practice in a good way, especially since research, policy and practice have characteristics that suggest that the relationship between them would not always be straightforward.

Organizing research into policy and practice

Using research and experts in policy making, governance and professional practice, means organizing knowledge to inform decision making processes. This is parallel to how other interests and considerations are included in decision making. This can take place in different forms, and the key questions are who and what shall be included, and at which stages of the policy processes.

Research could set the agenda, and there could be instances where a new policy is a direct consequence of research. However, such a straightforward relationship is perhaps more often the exception than the rule. In many instances, research is most important in defining a problem or describing status in a given field. Expert knowledge and research will often be used to build a common understanding of a given situation or problem, and can therefore be of vital importance to prepare for change and new policy, and as such contribute to the implementation of new measures. Furthermore, research and expert knowledge can be used as inspiration, as a kind of guideline and hence also be central in problem solving.

When research is used to describe a problem, it will primarily be regarded as relevant in the early stages of the decision making process, that means before the government proposes a new policy or the institutional leadership carry out a new strategy. This implies that decision making consists of different phases with a description of the problem first, and then values and policy are added in the next phase. However, this is not always the case as policy processes and decision making at all levels could be anything but streamlined. Accordingly, research results and expert knowledge can be involved in other phases as well. Furthermore, researchers and experts are also often part of the implementation of new policy and measures as participants in experiments, evaluations and accompanying research. In sum, experts and researchers are holding different roles in policy making, both in delivering facts, setting premises, and as discussion partners and evaluators.

In the same way as research and involvement of expertise is taken for granted as part of decision-making in a knowledge society at both the governmental and institutional level, the same applies for professional practice. Higher education is expected to provide research-based education aimed to develop and secure the quality of the study programmes and professional practice. Research-based education is a precondition to make sure that future employees acquire education and training in how to utilize research in practice to keep themselves professionally updated. Consequently, utilizing research and expert knowledge must be organized into both education and professional practice in curricula and in the approach to practical problem-solving. That means that study programmes must be designed according to research-based principles.

EAIR could serve as a good example of how research, policy and practice could be linked as research is reported upon reflecting both problem identification and policy implementation – addressing the different phases of the decision making processes at both international, national and institutional level.

Not always a straightforward relationship

Knowledge-based policy is grounded on a premise that research and expert knowledge will improve the quality in political decision making and make practice better. To quote Christensen et al. (2017, p. 239): "…having a sound knowledge basis is a prerequisite for ensuring policy quality…" Such an instrumental role of knowledge utilization means to ensure that decisions are based on evidence and empirical knowledge (Boswell 2008).

However, research could serve other purposes in decision making than a primarily instrumental function. As Boswell (2008) has described, the symbolic role of knowledge utilization is highly relevant. That means that research holds a legitimizing role in order to give credibility to policy and practice and also serves the purpose as decoration and window-dressing. Users will select and draw on research according to their interests in justifying particular claims as all organizations are striving to enhance their legitimacy.

Politicians and decision-makers in higher education institutions use knowledge to enhance specific goals and outputs, and it could be tempting to look for knowledge that confirms a specific opinion or solution and ignore others. That means that both the selection of studies and selective use of research results, so-called cherry picking, is highly relevant when decision makers govern through knowledge. Such biased use of research and expert knowledge can be a way to justify a certain policy and solutions (Holst 2015). To avoid this, the knowledge base must be broad and include different perspectives. In this respect, EAIR could play an important role in promoting more and new research on higher education. However, since it will always be a risk regarding the biased use of research, decision makers should make the use of research explicit to ensure transparent processes. Another obstacle to knowledge-based decision making could relate to the weaknesses of research; either the

experts make mistakes or there may actually be little research available on the topic. Unclear or ambiguous research results could also make it difficult to use knowledge in policy and practice. Hence, there is a growing recognition that links between research, policy and practice are dependent on some sort of translation mechanism.

The roles in between; emerging mechanisms of translation

Research and expertise knowledge have to be interpreted and put into context when utilized in decision making. This require capacity, expertise and competence. In this respect, developments of relevance in both public administration and in higher education institutions can be observed.

First, a changing role of support staff in the university sector could be witnessed as there has been a transformation of administration towards professional staff (Gornitzka & Larsen 2004; Whitchurch 2007; Ryttberg & Geschwind 2017). This transformation of administrative staff has taken place in many higher education systems during the last decades, and means that contemporary administrators have (and need) competencies, skills and tasks different from their predecessors. They also hold other roles within the institution to fulfil new demands and handle complex tasks. Whitchurch (2006) has labelled this as the emergence of new hybrid or "multi-professional" positions and identities in higher education. Consequently, higher education institutions have more capacity to use data and research on higher education and the leadership and management are able to take decisions on a more solid knowledge base than before. Whether all institutions have the capacity to do this, may be questioned as there are differences in analytical capacity between the higher education institutions due to size and resources available.

Second, the capacity to retrieve and use research in decision making and carry out analyses has also increased in ministers and other public agencies. Special positions and units have been established in public administration, and many large organizations have dedicated analysis departments or positions with a function to pay attention to (new) relevant research, to use research in decision making and bring actors from research, policy and practice together. Such units and positions could build bridges between the different spheres and actors and be a kind of broker between research and expertise on the one hand and politics and professional practice on the other.

Third, knowledge centres for specific areas have been established in many sectors, also in education. Such centres produce, gather, synthesize and disseminate knowledge from research on issues of relevance for higher education. Research syntheses could be useful for decision makers and practitioners to avoid the biased use of research and to identify knowledge gaps.

The new translation roles and mechanisms emerging imply that the conditions for staying up to date and using research and expert knowledge in a relevant way in decision making are better than before, and there is reason to believe that we have moved from a situation where knowledge is used ad hoc to a more systematic way of including knowledge in decision making. The parallel tendencies described above mean that the capacity and competence to disseminate and "translate" knowledge from one arena to another has increased as knowledge- based policy making means that research has to be interpreted and put into context. This is strengthened by the fact that the share of the population with a university degree has increased and a well-educated civil service provides politicians with professional advice and knowledge in the formulation and implementation of policy (Christensen et al. 2017).

Accordingly, researchers meet administrators and decision makers with both knowledge on how the political system works and research competence. This means that the capacity to use research in both policy and practice has increased. The new professional staff could also contribute to overcome the traditional barriers between research, policy and practice.

When it comes to utilizing research in policy making and strategic decision making, relevance is just as important as quality. However, it could be argued that there is more agreement on scientific quality than relevance, as there are shared norms that quality of research should be judged by peers, while assessments of relevance are much more dependent of context and cannot be evaluated with fixed norms. Consequently, actors will judge the relevance of research differently and in such situations the professional brokers described above could play a vital role.

Furthermore, pragmatism in policy and practice could be a disturbing element when linking research, policy and practice. That means that the political leeway must be taken into consideration in policy-making with consequences for what kind of knowledge is potentially relevant. While pragmatism is essential in policy and practice, this is not necessary the case in research. Often decision making means to find the next best solution, while the optimal solution (recommended by researchers and experts) is not possible to realize.

Concluding remarks – a never ending dialogue

The relationship between research, policy and practice can be illustrated in the following figure (Figure 1) where the triangle shows that the arrows point in both directions. In this essay the arrows from research to policy and practice have been focused on, but the arrows in the opposite direction have also been touched upon.

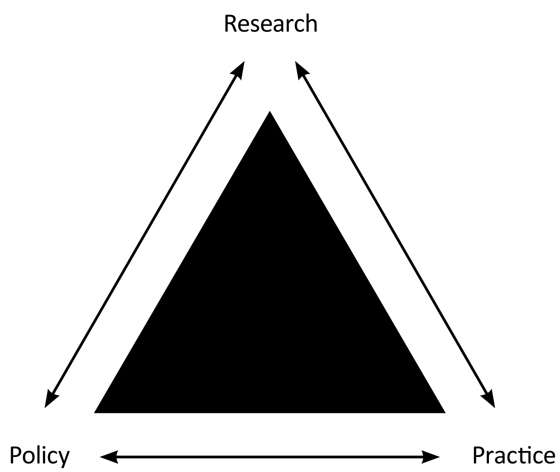

Figure 1: The relationships between research, policy and practice

It could be argued that the gap between research, policy and practice steadily has been reduced. Due to more research on higher education and the new professional roles, the precondition for good communication between the actors in the triangle is better than ever before. However, there is still (and will always be) a necessity to bridge the different spheres. In this context EAIR plays a valuable role and can continue to do so. As a network

organization EAIR contributes to clearing the obstacles and strengthening collaboration between research, policy and practice, an effort that offers synergies for all actors. Probably the importance of research for policy and practice in higher education will be even more significant in the years to come.

EAIR could also serve as an important knowledge base for professional staff in higher education to improve their interpretive role between different actors in the research-policy-practice processes. It is also possible that EAIR could work as an association for professional staff in higher education that develops and shares standards and values.

Nevertheless, there is a continued need for connecting even more strongly all three sides of the triangle so that researchers and other knowledge producers get a better understanding of the logic and room for manoeuvre in both politics and practice. In this respect, organizations as EAIR can play a vital role in the years to come, not least by providing more opportunities for policy-makers to reflect about how the links between research, policy and practice could be further strengthened.

References

Boswell, C. (2008) *The Political Uses of Expert Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Christensen, J., Gornitzka Å. and C. Holst (2017). Knowledge regimes in the Nordic countries, In O. Knutsen (ed.), *The Nordic Models in Political Science: Challenged, but Still Viable?* Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, pp. 239-254

Gornitzka, Å. and I.M. Larsen (2004). Towards professionalisation? Restructuring of administrative work force in universities. *Higher Education*, 47(4), 455-471.

Holst, C. (2015). Hva er galt med ekspertstyre? *Norsk Statsvitenskapelig Tidsskrift*, 31(4), 357-368.

Ryttberg, M. and L. Geschwind (2017). Professional support staff at higher education institutions in Sweden: roles and success factors for the job. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 23(4), 334-346.

Whitchurch, C. (2006) Who do they think they are? The changing identities of professional administrators and managers in UK higher education, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management,* 28(2), 159-171.

Whitchurch, C. (2007). The changing roles and identities of professional managers in UK higher education. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 11(2), 53-60.

JOSÉ-GINÉS MORA
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD – UNITED KINGDOM

HIGHER EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS IN EAIR

The role of EAIR on higher education

Higher education is one of the most fascinating fields of study for a simple reason: it is multidisciplinary. Individuals from various disciplinary backgrounds are working on higher education: sociologists, economists, psychologists, educationalists, historians, managers, and so on. This enables problems to be addressed from multiple points of view, which greatly enriches the analyses. Working in higher education is an intellectual pleasure that the fortunate ones dedicated to this field enjoy in their professional life.

In most fields, there are normally researchers with a theoretical profile and others more interested in application. The same happens in higher education: there are those who analyse conceptual problems and those who propose solutions to problems. There are even those who are dedicated to putting these solutions into practice. Theoretical and applied researchers, policy makers and those that apply often join forces. The mix of approaches is one of great traits of higher education as a field of study.

Paul Krugman, a Nobel laureate in Economics, said that increasing the happiness of human beings, not increasing GDP, is the true goal of the economy. We could apply this idea to higher education and ask ourselves: what is the objective of research and the analysis of higher education?

For some people, higher education is a field of study which aims to analyse the past and present of higher education, and try to develop brilliant conceptual frameworks that allow a conceptual understanding of higher education, institutions and systems. Certainly, such efforts produce many important books and scholarly articles, with the potential downside that in many cases it only reaches the community of researchers themselves and – consequently – may have little impact, at least in the short term, on the development of higher education.

For others, research in higher education has other objectives. The objective of higher education studies is, above all, to better serve the community of students, the companies that use knowledge generated by universities and the society at large. In other words, for these people the study of higher education should do the same as in Krugman's ideal goal of the economy (although it hardly ever does): increase the happiness of its users and society in general.

Research on higher education does not make much sense if it does not go hand-in-hand with continuous improvement in the management and governance of institutions, in the processes of teaching and learning and in the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. Research on higher education, without practices and policies, is an intellectual exercise that does little for the collective wellbeing and happiness.

This idea was embodied by EAIR colleagues who had the brilliant idea of designing the current logo "Linking research, policy and practice". This logo perfectly represents the goal of EAIR, but in my opinion this logo represents something more: the ultimate goal of higher

education as a field of study. EAIR is the higher education association with an active mixture of theory and practice, conceptualization and application. This makes EAIR very special and this is why many people, like me, love EAIR.

The role of Economics within the EAIR community

EAIR has played a role in many areas of interest. One of these is related to the economic aspects of higher education. Let me offer a couple of short reflections on these.

A few years ago at the beginning of the Great Crisis, a former Portuguese Minister of Education gave a speech at the closing banquet of a seminar on higher education. In a humorous tone he said: "The economists were unable to foresee the crisis and are unable to find solutions. Now they recommend austerity, also in universities. A good way to save money would be to close all the faculties of Economics in Europe". Of course it was a joke, but it had a serious undertone. Economics had and still has a very influential role on public policy and it is doubtful that it is helping to "increase happiness".

In higher education, and more specifically in EAIR, economics has played an important role in aspects such as the financing of higher education, the improvement of quality, efficiency and transparency, the demand for education, the labour market of graduates and the management of institutions. In all of them, researchers and practitioners, have played a role with important consequences, some positive and others not so positive.

One of the most often analysed topics by economists in the field of higher education has been the financing of higher education systems, institutions and students. This was a dominant theme in the late 1980s and early 1990s, coinciding with a period of great expansion of higher education. Banta (1986), Williams (1990), Kaiser et al. (1992), Eicher and Chevalier (1993) and Altbach and Johnston (1993) are some of the first and most influential studies on the financing of higher education. In general, all economists agreed on the need to better finance higher education, to establish systematic financing systems (through formulas or contracts), to better balance public and private participation (increasing private participation), to develop better student aid systems (especially developing loan systems) and increase the efficiency of systems (introducing performance indicators and other mechanisms).

The outcome of all those studies has been, generally speaking, positive but there are also several negative outcomes. Virtually all higher education systems have developed financing mechanisms based on formulas and most use performance indicators for improving efficiency. Funding higher education is now more rational and transparent. But there are at least two aspects in which the initial recommendations of the economists have generated negative effects.

The first is related to the private share of higher education costs. Free higher education is financially unfair and most economists recommended a moderate increase in tuition fees, but what has happened in some countries is that policy makers have increased the costs of higher education (for students) so much that an opposite unfair situation has been reached. The burden on students and their families, without sufficient support systems, is making it hard for many young people to access higher education.

The second problematic aspect is the use of performance indicators. Policy makers had a tendency, understandable but mistaken, to use the simplest indicators instead of using the most relevant ones. This provokes, in practice, undesirable behaviours that modify the main objectives of the institutions. A good example of perverse affects is the use of many indicators related to research and few related to learning. Obviously this has negative effects on institutions whose main objective should be training graduates, its most important mission from any point of view, including the economic one.

Another aspect that has been extensively analysed by economists regarding higher education has been the improvement of quality, efficiency and transparency of higher education systems and institutions. Also the first relevant contributions on these aspects come from the 1980s and 1990s: Kells (1988), Neave (1988), EC (1991), Neave and van Vught (1991). This movement, in which EAIR played a very important role in Europe, has been a success despite some perverse consequence. The positive side is that in all countries there are systems of quality evaluation, everywhere efficiency is an important value as well as transparency. The perverse effect has been the excessive relevance of rankings, considered by many as equivalent to performance and transparency. The problem is that these rankings, apart from their methodological errors, only focus on the academic research production of universities, something that has not too much value for students and the business sector. The important objective of improving the quality of universities, especially teaching and learning is changing towards the search for research "excellence" that has become the objective of many institution for climbing some steps in the rankings.

The role of economists and EAIR on the future of higher education

In summary, despite of the remarkable successes of economists working on higher education, there are flaws in their works. Perhaps these flaws are not a direct responsibility of researchers but they should react soon and firmly to the mistakes in the implementation of wrong policies. This is something that is greatly missed in the current debates on higher education.

Economists, other social scientists and researchers on higher education should play a more critical role in analysing social problems and would do well to become agents of change and not mere spectators. The happiness of human beings will increase. This is the most important role that EAIR can play nowadays and in the next 40 years.

References

ALTBACH, Philip and JOHNSTONE, D.B. (Eds.) (1993), The Funding of Higher Education. International Perspectives. New York: Garland.

BANTA, Trudy W. (1986): Performance Funding in Higher Education: A Critical Analysis of Tennessee's Experience. Boulder, Colorado: NCHEMS.

EC (1991): Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community, Brussels: European Communities Commission.

EICHER, Jean-Claude; CHEVALIER, Thierry (1993): Rethinking the finance of post-compulsory education. International Journal of Educational Research, 19, 445-519.

KAISER, Frans; KOELMAN, Jos B.J.; FLORAX, Raymond J.G.M.; VAN VUGHT, Frans. (1992): Public expenditure on higher education. London: Jessica Kingsley.

KELLS, H. R. (1988): Self-Study Processes. A Guide for Postsecondary and Similar Service-Oriented Institutions and Programs. 3ª Edición. New York: American Council of Education.

NEAVE, G.(1988): "On the Cultivation of Quality, Efficiency and Enterprise: an overview of recent trends in higher education in Western Europe, 1986-1988". European Journal of Education, 23, 1/2, 7-23.

NEAVE, G.; VAN VUGHT, F. A. (1991): Prometheus Bound, Oxford: Pergamon.

WILLIAMS, Gareth (1990): Financing Higher Education: Current Patterns. Paris, OECD.