Inclusive Universities in a Globalized World

Editors

Liudvika Leišytė, Rosemary Deem and Charikleia Tzanakou

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Editorial

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Abstract
This thematic issue of *Social Inclusion* focuses on universities as inclusive organisations in a variety of different countries and higher education (HE) systems. It explores how these institutions aim, succeed or fail to become inclusive organisations, what policies and processes help achieve these goals and how academics and students can become agents of change through inclusive teaching and research cultures. The contributions in this thematic issue point to the multi-level as well as multi-faceted challenges and characteristics of inclusion in HE in general and in universities in particular, based on both student and academic points of view. They offer innovative conceptual ways of thinking as well as measuring inclusion. Further, they point out the importance of context in understanding the challenges of achieving equality and inclusion in universities through country-specific as well as cross-country comparisons of various aspects of diversity and inclusivity. We hope this thematic issue will inspire theoretical thinking, support practitioners and encourage policy-making about more responsible ways of defining and fostering inclusive universities in a globalised world.

1. Introduction and Context

This thematic issue of *Social Inclusion* focuses on universities as inclusive organisations in a variety of different countries and higher education (HE) systems. Why did we choose this theme? In the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, growing inequalities in the world (Lamont et al., 2016), as well as the increasing digitalisation of our societies, the idea of an inclusive university becomes more pertinent. However, we know comparatively little about what an inclusive university means, what characteristics it has and what role it plays in a globalised society (Powell & Pfahl, 2018; Stewart & Valian, 2018).

Models of universities such as the world-class university and entrepreneurial university have permeated HE discourses and practices (Clark, 1998; Deem et al., 2008;

Etzkowitz & Zhou, 2008; Marginson, 2017). Other studies have explored diversity management approaches in universities (Plummer, 2003). However, there has been little in-depth investigation of what is meant and what role is played by an inclusive university where various types of diversity are celebrated and supported without discrimination or stigmatisation, enabling opportunities for all. Who is included makes a difference too, as recent studies of black and ethnic minority students in countries like South Africa reveal, with high student fees and colonial curricula causing many problems (Ashwin & Case, 2018). Furthermore, studying inclusion in HE should refer to both students *and* staff.

There is an atomisation of studies dealing with various aspects of diversity and discrimination in HE. Studies exploring various aspects of diversity usually focus on one aspect, like gender or race (Bhopal, 2016;

Leišytė & Hosch-Dayican, 2014; Morley & Crossouard, 2016; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014; Winchester & Browning, 2015), although intersectionality is increasingly discussed in gender studies (Deem, 2018a). There has also been little research in relation to why funded comparative project outcomes aimed at reducing forms of inequality in HE are not sustained in the longer term (Deem, 2018b) and why policies and efforts to promote gender equality do not always lead to the intended effects (Leišytė, 2019; Tzanakou, 2019; Tzanakou & Pearce, 2019).

Another focus is about migrant and refugee students' access to HE and their degree outcomes (Jungblut & Pietliewicz, 2017). Such research has also drawn more attention to ethnicity and race (Arday & Mirza, 2018). Increasingly, intersectionality literature has pointed out the complexity of which combination of groups are included or excluded from HE. Disability studies have also emphasised approaches such as Universal Design of Education at universities (Powell & Pfahl, 2018).

The focus of some studies has included both HE students and staff. Nonetheless, they are limited to undergraduate students (rather than masters or doctoral candidates) or academic staff (rather than administrative staff). Studies about migrant students, disabled staff, students and staff from different religious groups, LGBTQ staff and students and students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds have been slower to emerge.

What does it mean to be an inclusive university? There is no widely accepted definition of inclusion in HE (Krischler et al., 2019). The university has traditionally been an institution for the elites—an 'ivory tower.' In the context of massification and universal HE, universities have been redefined as needing to be more inclusive. At the same time, the pressures for institutional positioning and competition via rankings have reproduced elitism in the form of flagship research universities versus universities of applied sciences or community colleges (Mergner et al., 2019). Nevertheless, technological developments, like digitalisation, big data, and artificial intelligence, potentially enable us to consider overcoming some types of exclusion in a university environment, even if simultaneously creating ethical issues and schisms among students and staff (Rubel & Jones, 2016).

This thematic issue focuses especially on universities as organisations and how they aim, succeed or fail to become inclusive organisations, what policies and processes help achieve these goals and how academics and students can become agents of change through inclusive teaching and research cultures.

2. Overview of Contributions

The thematic issue offers interesting conceptual lenses for studying inclusion in HE. McArthur (2021) drawing on a critical theory approach and using a plural notion of recognition, argues that change towards an inclusive university should go beyond individual activities and focus on groups and identities and embrace holistic and transformative change. Based on empirical evidence from the UK, Wren Butler (2021) proposes the framework of legibility zones, highlighting the complex dynamics of unbelonging in HE to better understand the challenges that universities face in their inclusion projects. In his commentary, Thompson (2021) argues that universities need to be proactive in ensuring that they become fully and meaningfully inclusive to play their part in addressing the challenges posed by the need for global sustainable development.

Two contributions in this thematic issue discuss inclusion in HE at the macro level from a comparative perspective, drawing on the workings of policies as well as indicators that are helpful to understand inclusion in HE in a holistic way. Kamanzi et al. (2021) analyse the role of public policies in supporting or failing to support more inclusive access to and experience of university in different massified HE systems. Policy areas explored include guidance systems and educational pathways, status-driven stratification of institutions, hierarchies of disciplinary fields and the financing of HE, including tuition fees where these exist. Meanwhile, Veidemane et al. (2021) examine how the progress of inclusive HE can be measured and assessed across different universities and HE systems. They consider which indicators are the most relevant and helpful in a comparative context.

Articles drawing on comparative research designs and country-specific contexts report not only student and academic staff perspectives on inclusivity, but also reveal to what extent academic career systems can be more or less inclusive. Resch and Amorim (2021) explore different formats of intercultural student encounters among international and local students across six European countries. Their study shows that formats embedded in the curriculum are most suited to facilitating social network formation, whereas extracurricular formats tend to be single occasion activities, without follow-up. Pietilä et al. (2021), drawing on national statistical data about Nordic universities' academic and research staff, show national differences across Sweden, Norway and Finland with a focus on gender and country of origin, contributing to discussions about gendered patterns of global academia and social stratification in Nordic universities.

In specific country contexts, we draw attention to studies based in Spain, Germany and the Czech Republic. From the students' point of view, Gallego-Noche et al. (2021) show that Spanish university students experience discrimination particularly based on religion, age, sex and political ideology, with linguistic minorities, ideology and migration background standing out as the strongest predictors. Spanish academics seem to hold rather homogeneous views regarding diversity and inclusion in HE as shown by Pérez-Carbonell et al. (2021). In another study, Mora et al. (2021) point out that the academic staff studied drew on wide definitions of inclusivity beyond cognition, using Universal Design of Learning principles, and

were supportive of working with heterogeneous groups, using cooperative methodologies to promote solidarity and group cohesion and having systematic policies at institutional level.

In the German HE context, Wilkens et al. (2021) explore the contribution that digitalisation can make to the accessibility of HE programmes, particularly for those who have a disability or experience mental health problems. The study showed that accessible digital tools and inclusion-sensitive pedagogy were both vital for equal participation in HE at a case study university in Germany. Grüttner et al. (2021) draw on a survey of students and interviews with staff in German HE institutions, pointing out the challenges experienced by the refugee students in transition to HE in preparatory programmes.

Unangst and Martínez Alemán (2021) study the extent to which the German HE system is tackling its colonial past in the curriculum, teaching programmes and organisational features of HE institutions. Yet another contribution from the German HE context, by Bartz and Kleina (2021), shows the importance of diversity training in promoting inclusive learning environments.

Finally, Vohlídalová (2021) examines the casualisation of staff working conditions in the Czech academic labour market, exploring gender, sectoral, and institutional inequalities, using labour market segmentation theory. This article points to the importance of taking into account disciplinary variations when discussing inequalities and inclusion in HE.

3. Conclusions

The contributions in this thematic issue point to the multi-level as well as multi-faceted challenges and characteristics of developing and sustaining inclusion in HE in general and in universities in particular. They offer innovative and conceptual ways of thinking as well as measuring inclusion. Further, they point out the importance of context in understanding the challenges of achieving equality and inclusion in universities. Finally, this thematic issue draws on the views of both students and staff to understand the complexities associated with making universities more inclusive—from admissions policy through curriculum change at programme level to broader organisational development—which helps to get a more holistic picture of what it means to be an inclusive university. We hope this thematic issue will inspire theoretical thinking, practitioner engagement and more sophisticated policy making, in search of more responsible ways of defining and fostering inclusive universities.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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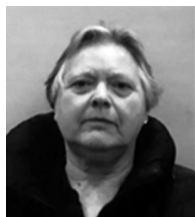
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Article

The Inclusive University: A Critical Theory Perspective Using a Recognition-Based Approach

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Abstract
This article offers a conceptual exploration of the inclusive university from a Frankfurt School critical theory perspective. It does not seek to define the inclusive university, but to explore aspects of its nature, possibilities and challenges. Critical theory eschews fixed definitions in favour of broader understandings that reflect the complexities of human life. I propose that we consider questions of inclusion in terms of mutual recognition and use the debate between critical theorists Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth to explain the implications of this approach. Central to Frankfurt School critical theory is the idea that we achieve our individuality through our interactions with others. Anything which prevents an individual leading a fully realised social life, within or outwith the university, undermines inclusion. Thus, I offer a broader, more complex and holistic understanding of inclusion than traditional approaches within the university such as widening participation. While such approaches can be helpful, they are insufficient to address the full challenge of an inclusive university, understood in these terms of critical theory and mutual recognition.

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1. Introduction

This article takes the opportunity of this exploration of the inclusive university to consider a holistic understanding of inclusion, based in Frankfurt School critical theory. The Frankfurt School gave name to 'critical theory' in the 1930s, and has since then pursued a particular project of immanent critique of late capitalism, along with an emancipatory commitment to social change. A particular concern of the Frankfurt School is the growth in instrumental forms of rationality that degrade human creativity and worth. They look not only at obvious expressions of power, but equally at obscure, hidden and everyday forms of oppression. In this article I bring this same lens to the question of what might constitute an inclusive university. Identifying as a critical theorist in the Frankfurt School tradition I have used Adorno, Horkheimer, Honneth and Fraser to explore issues of

social justice within higher education, finding their work enables me to go beyond the obvious, every day, procedural or mainstream which can tend to dominate educational discourse.

The foundation for this holistic understanding of inclusion is the critical theory paradox of valuing both autonomy and co-operation, best summarised by Honneth as intersubjective self-realisation:

> What is just, is that which allows the individual member of our society to realize his or her own life objectives in cooperation with others, and with the greatest possible autonomy. (Honneth, 2010, p. 13)

For Honneth this builds on the Hegelian notion of mutual recognition which Honneth extends to critique modern society as being formed by a number of forms of misrecognition. Thus, for Honneth, recognition is the

fundamental issue for critical theory, and any other aspects such as economic deprivation follow on from this. Recognition, I suggest, is a helpful way to understand inclusion in a holistic way because it is necessarily about both the whole person, and about their place in society. Inclusion within the university shifts from being about *categories* of people to become about the full realisation of everyone within the university as both an individual and a social being.

But the issue of recognition has also framed one of the most crucial debates in third generation critical theory, with Honneth's position being challenged by Nancy Fraser who argues that both recognition and redistribution are foundational aspects of social justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In this article I find strength in different parts of Fraser and Honneth's arguments. But it is important to focus also on the debate itself in order to underline that recognition, and inclusion, are contested ideas—and likely always will be. In keeping with critical theory, we move the debate on the inclusive university forward by not seeking to simplify it through definition, but by embracing its complexity through contested ideas. Fraser and Honneth struggle with the normative and empirical foundations of how we understand who is prevented from living a fulfilled social life, and why: their common aim is a society inclusive of everyone as both flourishing individuals and members of that society. I suggest that the same theoretical rigour needs to be applied to our understanding of the inclusive university, and that it is not based on procedural approaches alone—such as widening access policies—but in a broad and ongoing re-examination of what it means to take part in, and contribute to, university life and the role of the university in broader social life.

Moreover, the university, like any social institution, is not benign. Critical theory asks us to rethink the very nature of marginalisation and inclusion/exclusion and to focus on forms of oppression that may not be easily seen, and the solutions to which involve change in us all as social beings, and not just change to university institutions, policies and practices or the situation of easily identifiable groups. Let us not forget that the term inclusion was once associated with the idea of 'mainstreaming' (Bacon, 2019) and was thus not so much inclusion as forced identity readjustment to fit some mythical norm.

The inclusive university I refer to in this article is a construct, a thought-experiment, rather than any particular university. The issues of holistic inclusion that I raise apply to any university, regardless of elite, teaching-led, research-led, civic or community college. The realisation of this inclusion, however, may differ and the paths taken be diverse. A community college, for example, may see itself as closer to the realisation of holistic inclusion than a university which has based its identity on being elite, although again, hidden and less understood forms of oppression must be considered. Who, for example, decides the core values of a community college? For some other universities to embrace a genuinely inclu-

sive character may well mean rethinking other aspects of their identity, particularly those grounded in notions of elitism and prestige.

It is also important to acknowledge that globalisation significantly influences the nature of a recognition-based idea of inclusion because it so greatly expands the range of identities under consideration and thus vulnerable to misrecognition. Without a robust, critical and recognition-based understanding of inclusion, the changes brought by globalisation can perpetuate a superficial idea of diversity, and of inclusion. Rather than transformative change, we perpetuate the cycle whereby we bring one group in and this further marginalises another. While our universities become more internationally and ethnically diverse, they are not necessarily becoming more socially and economically diverse if fee and entry structures privilege mainly wealthy overseas students. This article can only be one contribution to a larger conversation.

The article builds its argument in seven sections. After this introduction, the next section provides a brief overview of the general nature of Frankfurt School critical theory and how it broadly shapes my approach to understanding the inclusive university. The third section then considers the concept of inclusion itself, and how some more common understandings of it are challenged by this critical theory perspective. Having established these foundations I turn to the main part of the article in which I use the debate between Fraser and Honneth about the nature of recognition within critical theory to consider how a critical theory/recognition-based idea of inclusion might work. Here I favour Honneth's approach using a plural notion of recognition, and do not accept Fraser's concern that this necessarily neglects economic factors. On this basis I can then move into the next section which discusses the nature of change towards this inclusive university, and here I favour Fraser's arguments which contend that change must involve transformative and holistic change and not simply individual initiatives or a focus on particular groups. The penultimate section then brings together this idea of a recognition-based approach to the inclusive university and the transformative change required to realise it. This includes an example of inclusive and transformative change as well as a discussion about the boundaries or legitimate exclusions within our inclusive university. I conclude with a brief summary looking towards ongoing debate about the inclusive university.

2. A Critical Theory Perspective

Over three generations of the Frankfurt School the approaches to its core beliefs have had different emphases. The first generation of Horkheimer and Adorno focus on the role of culture. The second generation, featuring Habermas, takes a linguistic turn, focusing on the ideal conditions for democratic participation. The current third generation could be said to have been part of a general recognition turn among social theorists,

to which they bring a particular critical theory perspective. But there are key commonalities that help us understand what distinguishes critical theory in the Frankfurt School tradition:

- It rejects the organisation of late capitalist society as either inevitable, necessary or benign;
- Human society can only be understood through an interplay of economic, cultural, social and historical lenses;
- Individual and social wellbeing are dialectically inter-related: one does not exist without the other;
- It rejects both absolutist and relative epistemologies: we can know what is just, but such knowledge is complex and provisional;
- Its focus is on hidden distortions and pathologies that prevent people living just and fulfilling lives.

Taken together these elements help us to transcend the dichotomy of inclusion versus exclusion and to think holistically of inclusion being about the whole person as an individual, and the inclusive university as a social entity, framed and formed both within its precincts and in wider society. The inclusive university is therefore as much about looking out to society as looking in on its own community and practices.

As I have outlined, this article uses the debate between Fraser and Honneth about the nature of recognition to lay the foundation for a recognition-based approach to inclusion. But there is clearly a paradox here: how can we use recognition as a basis for the inclusive university if, as the debate between Fraser and Honneth demonstrates, we cannot agree a definition? To answer this is to understand the particular nature of Frankfurt School critical theory: which is not to define, but to understand (McArthur, 2012). It means we reject audit driven imperatives to tie down definitions and measure everything. Adorno's critical theory is particularly important in demonstrating how efforts to fix meaning often distort: and he uses examples from the prosaic about how we know what is meant by the colour red (Adorno, 2001) to the profound as in how we understand freedom when the Gestapo come banging on our door at 6 am (Adorno, 2006). Adorno is not arguing that all knowledge is relative, but rather than we can have a shared understanding without a fixed definition (McArthur, 2013). Adorno encourages us to focus on the processes and experiences of knowing rather than a fixed point captured in a single term or definition. Thus Adorno said: "Whoever tries to reduce the world to either the factual or the essence comes in some way or other into the position of Münchhausen, who tried to drag himself out of the swamp by his own pigtails" (as cited in Jay, 1996, p. 69). Which is why it is the debate between Fraser and Honneth that helps give meaning, not simply the final conclusions either draw.

Hopefully this reference to contestation and disagreement allays any fears that this is a utopian exercise. Instead, a critical theory approach frames the inclusive university as an ongoing project that is shaped by its own attempts at realisation, including vigorous debate and critique. This reflects the critical theory commitment to both the immanent and the transcendent (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

3. The Challenges of Inclusion

The problem with any concept like inclusion is that it risks being a 'feel good' idea that lacks conceptual robustness and thus serves very little purpose. It can cause confusion or well-meaning acts in the name of inclusion that might do more harm than good. But as I have explained, the solution, from a critical theory perspective, is not to seek remedy in ever more precise definitions, but rather through a broad and dynamic analysis.

The conceptualisation of inclusion which I offer goes beyond existing governmental understandings of social inclusion (Saunders, 2011) often driven by a desire to define inclusion (or exclusion) in some clear set of characteristics so that we can then measure the effectiveness of policies. Inclusion, from a critical theory perspective, is—like most other concepts of note—difficult to pin down, inherently messy and likely to become more meaningless the more we seek to simplify (McArthur, 2012). My understanding also goes beyond literature on educational inclusion which tends to equate inclusion largely with disability (e.g., Koller, 2017) which can assume a mainstream, able norm (Nguyen, 2019). Similarly, the university sector often equates inclusion with widening access (e.g., O'Sullivan et al., 2019) which can again assume a benign process of bringing those excluded into the socially-acceptable mainstream. In fact, considerable damage can occur to cultural groups' identities if they are forced to separate their home identity and their university identity in order to fit in to each place (Brayboy, 2005).

Furthermore, critical theory is committed to looking beyond the surface. An initiative or policy with key words of inclusion, social justice, equality, equity may in practice contribute to none of these endeavours. The modern university has become skilled at writing wonderful mission statements while simultaneously pursuing a neoliberal agenda of commodification and marketisation (McArthur, 2011).

The clearest and most important example of this empty rhetoric can be found in the neoliberal commitment to individual autonomy. One might assume that neoliberalism takes the commitment to individualism in classic liberalism and adds value—boosts it and nurtures it even further. But Honneth (2004) argues, neoliberalism brings with it a 'paradox of individualisation' that leads to enhanced conformity. While the language and dogma of neoliberalism suggests it is liberalism-plus, with an enhanced emphasis on the individual, the truth is rather different, particularly once we take account of the relentless pressure of popular and celebrity culture:

The boundary between reality and fiction may well become blurred in particular instances… we might perhaps speak of a certain tendency where *individuals follow standardized patterns of searching for an identity* precisely in order, however, to discover the core of their own personalities. (Honneth, 2004, p. 472, emphasis added)

This provides a chimera of inclusivity based on enforced sameness rather than celebrating difference. And the university as a social institution is not immune from this pressure. Not only are many of our students the product of this popular/celebrity culture, but the university itself has often sought to standardise its pedagogy and processes, while doing so in the name of the 'student experience.' Many universities have become 'brands' that compete for popularity and prestige, and yet so many seem to do so by offering strikingly similar rhetoric about excellence, student experience and, indeed, inclusion and diversity.

It does not matter how many groups we encourage 'in' to the university if we are not prepared to fundamentally rethink 'what' the university is. Otherwise, the pressures to conform to standardised identities—such as where working-class students feel they need to act like middle class students—remain strong and unchallenged. The term 'the inclusive university' does not imply only one model or route, but rather a coalescence of core values and practices, that may necessarily manifest differently depending on context and time. It is also an ongoing project.

4. The Debate: Recognition or Redistribution

I therefore want to use the debate between Fraser and Honneth to work towards a more holistic, engaging and enabling alternative understanding of the inclusive university, in contrast to that which focuses on under-represented groups in the university, whereby the inclusive university focuses on ensuring equal access, and equivalent treatment. Such groups may identify or be identified with certain identity labels such as black, BAME, disabled, working class or non-traditional. In broad terms this might be described as a recognition-based approach to inclusion and social justice because it recognises the specific nature, history and circumstances of these groups. It does not, however, accord with either Fraser or Honneth's critical theory approach to recognition, which involves a more complex sense of recognition and moves inclusion to consider a person as a whole being in a social context, and not an identity category. To understand why we need to go beyond simply defining some groups as included or excluded from the university, we need to go deeper into the Fraser–Honneth debate.

The Hegelian concept of recognition, has, in the words of Fraser and Honneth (2003, p. 1) "become a keyword of our time." Their debate rests on whether the fundamental focus of critical theory should be a dualistic approach of recognition and redistribution or whether we must begin with recognition as a primary category. Honneth argues that recognition is the foundational concept from which other aspects of social life, justice and ethical being emerge. Fraser, in contrast, argues that both redistribution and recognition are foundational, and neither can be given priority over the other: They reflect different social phenomena and thus cannot be reduced in any way, one to the other.

As critical theorists, Fraser and Honneth (2003, p. 202) share the "distinctive dialectic of immanence and transcendence." Fraser states "both of us seek a foothold in the social world that simultaneously points beyond it" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 202). This requires that there be some empirical reference point—some immanent grounding—to which critical theory makes reference and gains validity. The nature of such empirical grounding is key to their debate. For this article, it is important to understand how an inclusive university would make decisions based on a holistic sense of inclusion: what counts as inclusion and where, if at all, can we justly draw the boundaries of participation or belonging? I suggest that inclusion is about minimising experiences of social injustice which arise from misrecognition and associated maldistribution. We need a robust understanding of inclusion to do the conceptual heavy-work towards change and greater social justice. Without this, we may continue to tinker at the edges or make things worse, despite the best intentions.

4.1. Points of Disagreement

There are two inter-related aspects in the debate between Fraser and Honneth, which I tease apart here for clarity, but which are intertwined in their discussion. The first is about the nature of recognition and how we decide or discern who suffers misrecognition. The second is about the relationship between recognition and redistribution. This discussion is important, I argue, in order to understand what the inclusive university seeks to achieve.

On the key question of what counts as misrecognition, Fraser and Honneth accuse each other of insufficiently inclusive understandings arising from the different empirical reference points that each use to ground their analysis, remembering that this empirical grounding is an essential feature of Frankfurt School critical theory. The key point of difference is the visibility of suffering or misrecognition in each theorists' approach. This link between visibility and inclusion is an important part of a critical theory critique of traditional approaches to inclusion due to critical theory's commitment to hidden or obscure forms of oppression. Traditional forms of inclusion have already gone a little way down this path, recognising for example that unseen forms of disability, such as mental health issues, can be harder to resolve. But critical theory takes this notion of visibility much further because the university itself is seen as both

a solution to, and a product of, an oppressive society with multiple, entrenched forms of misrecognition.

While Fraser acknowledges this issue of hidden suffering, she is also unsure how we can claim any empirical reference point other than through that which is known and visible. She, therefore, grounds her approach in existing social movements such as feminist movements, labour organisations or cultural groups. Fraser position appears to be that we know of hidden and obscured forms of oppression when they are able to coalesce into this form of political (as in public) social movement. This position, on one level at least, is closer to the traditional university approach to inclusion where specifically recognisable groups are identified as needing particular opportunities or support.

Honneth, however, disagrees. Honneth argues that Fraser's reliance on already public social movements leaves too much potential to miss other forms of injustice: In other words, it is insufficiently inclusive. He argues that we may miss that which is invisible, or which has not coalesced into a movement: Fraser's approach "neglects the everyday, still unthematized, but no less pressing embryonic form of social misery and moral injustice" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 114). This leads to Honneth's argument that even distributional forms of injustice must be firstly understood as the product of institutionalised social disrespect. The problem, he argues, "is an unintended reduction of social suffering and moral discontent to just that part of it that has already been made visible in the political public sphere by publicity-savvy organizations" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 115). This, I suggest, is also the problem with a purely widening access approach to inclusion within the university: We look to obvious failures of inclusion but there may also be other subtle, hidden or marginalised forms of experience that limit individual flourishing.

Fraser characterises Honneth's empirical reference point as grounded "in a moral psychology of pre-political suffering" and questions whether it is possible to locate pre-political forms of suffering that are "really untainted by publicly circulated vocabularies of normative judgement" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, pp. 202, 204). As a consequence, according to Fraser, Honneth risks confusing his own normative position with an actual empirical reference point. Fraser sees no way in which these pre-political forms of suffering provide a stronger reference point for critical theory than the social movements on which she focuses. She argues that there should be no single reference point for any claims within critical theory and she instead looks to multiple social movements in order to empirically ground her view of social justice as recognition and redistribution.

Fraser positions Honneth's argument as a dangerous psychologization of critical theory, where all focus is on individual self-realisation, and thus we risk blaming individuals for their situation rather than focusing on social structures. This misunderstands the ways in which Honneth is using language (McArthur, 2018)

and thus while terms such as self-respect may chime with psychological or even self-help literature, they are being used within a "specifically philosophical vocabulary" by Honneth (Alexander & Lara, 1996, p. 1) and in a particular critical theory context of intertwined individual and social wellbeing. Fraser's failure to look collectively at all three aspects of Honneth's theory of recognition leads to misunderstanding.

Honneth's plural theory of justice is firmly based on mutual recognition and is thus never about the individual in isolation. Honneth's three realms of recognition are: love (or care) recognition, respect (or rights) recognition and esteem (or merit) recognition. Understanding these realms of recognition enables us to see how Honneth's approach can be helpful in ensuring any approach to inclusion goes beyond perceived problems that are easily visible. We may indeed find that there is far more misrecognition, and far less inclusion, than previously assumed.

Love recognition refers to the basic recognition of our human existence, often most powerfully associated with the love of a parent: We exist, we matter, because we are recognised by others to do so. This is the essential Hegelian point. But while Honneth says that love recognition is the basis for the other two forms, it does not mean that any exist in isolation or are more or less important. Respect recognition is universal in character because it refers to equal treatment under the law. Important here is not just that everyone has the same legal rights, but that they are understood and actively used. We need universal rights, even for those we abhor, because without this we are all at the mercy of the goodwill of others (Zurn, 2015). Finally, esteem recognition refers to the traits, abilities or dispositions through which an individual can make a positive contribution to society and be recognised for doing so. Fraser is wrong to argue Honneth's concept of esteem becomes meaningless because it encompasses everyone. Honneth does not claim that everyone is equally good at everything, but rather that everyone needs something which they are good at and which is recognised as socially useful. To be clear, socially-useful should not be conflated with purely economically useful or the concept of employability (although critical theory clearly does recognise the link between the economic realm and wellbeing, it does contest the disarticulation of the economic and social). This is a broader and more inclusive sense of social usefulness which includes, for example, the joy brought by creative arts or the solidarity of supporting one's fellow citizens.

This issue of the economic nature of both justice and injustice is the second main thread in Fraser and Honneth's debate. As already stated, it should be clear that Frankfurt School critical theory, emerging from Marxism, does regard the economic realm as vitally important, but not in isolation. And the nature of this importance can be contested, as it is between Fraser and Honneth.

As discussed above, for Honneth we must begin any discussion of oppression at the point of misrecognition

because to do otherwise risks only focusing on already public and acknowledged forms of social injustice. This leads Fraser to assert that his approach risks a lack of emphasis on economic forms of injustice by relegating them to a secondary position. This matters to our inclusive university if, for example, it meant we focused only on issues of identity leading to apparent 'exclusion' and did not see the actual economic cause. In practice, Fraser argues most forms of injustice feature both maldistribution and misrecognition in some way. It matters in theory, however, to distinguish them because understanding the different root causes is necessary in order to find solutions that alleviate injustice, or in our university, to enable greater inclusion. Something caused by misrecognition is likely to need a different solution to something caused by maldistribution. Fraser calls her approach a two-dimensional form of social justice, where neither element can simply be reduced to the other. For example, gender is a hybrid category that is based in both economic organisation and the status order which underlies her view of recognition. Any movement towards greater gender justice requires both distributive and recognition solutions.

There is a danger that Fraser and Honneth are talking past one another and amplifying differences that conceal how much they actually agree with each other—which is that both recognition and redistribution issues will impact on experiences of inclusion. On balance I lean towards Honneth's plural theory of justice and believe it does offer an inclusive approach to understanding the rich mix of human differences and commonalities. His critique that Fraser relies too much on disadvantage that can be easily seen holds some truth. And it is particularly important for how we rethink the inclusive university beyond quotas or metrics for this or that recognised group. Taking account of all three of Honneth's realms of recognition/misrecognition provides a framework for expanding the nature of inclusion, and the challenges for a genuinely inclusive university.

I am thus proposing that we base our holistic understanding of inclusion in understandings of a tripartite sense of mutual recognition. The university fails to be inclusive when it allows or enables misrecognition to occur, in terms of relationships, universal rights and opportunities for achievement. But we acknowledge that these forms of misrecognition often intersect with economic issues. For example, Honneth is clear that legal recognition is not just to have rights, but to use and understand them (Honneth, 1996) which may be very difficult if one does not have recourse to paying for legal advice or indeed basic education opportunities.

5. Affirmative or Transformative: The Nature of Inclusive Change

In the previous section I outlined how the debate between Fraser and Honneth can help us to understand the intricate and holistic nature of inclusion, when understood through the lens of Frankfurt School critical theory. Now I draw particularly on Fraser to consider how change towards an inclusive university could happen.

Fraser distinguishes between approaches that seek to affirm justice and those which seek to transform. Importantly this is not a distinction between gradual and rapid change or between reform and revolution. Rather its focus is on the level at which the injustice has occurred. It also realises critical theory's commitment to get to the roots of a problem, and not just the aspects easily seen. This is a distinction our university community must understand to fully realise the nature of a recognition-based approach to inclusion.

An affirmative approach focuses on the end targets and can often be fairly easily measured. A transformative approach focuses on the causes of injustice and works from that point up. Fraser gives the welfare state as an example of an affirmative approach to poverty, where society seeks to rectify some of the problems caused by its own workings, but does not fundamentally change that society. A transformative approach would not focus on the symptoms alone, but on changing the root causes and the underlying social and economic structures. She terms a transformative approach as "deconstruction" because it "would redress status subordination by deconstructing the symbolic oppositions that underlie currently institutionalized patters of cultural value. Far from simply raising the self-esteem of the misrecognised, it would destabilize existing status differentiations and change *everyone's* self-identity" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 75).

The inclusive university cannot simply have policies to attract, enable or support BAME students, for example. This is the traditional view of bringing a group into the mainstream, where the mainstream remains supreme. It is therefore affirmative change and not transformative. The issue of BAME students, or indeed racial injustice in any forms, cannot be simply focused on 'those' students. It requires a more fundamental transformation and this is much harder to achieve. Consider the vicious treatment of a UK academic, Priyamvada Gopal, who tweeted: "White lives don't matter, as white lives." The clear point of this tweet, for those who read it in context, is that to redress racial inequality is not a 'black' problem but requires a rethinking of white identity too—such that the mythical norm or virtue of whiteness is challenged. Some people chose to deliberately misinterpret the tweet—and particularly to give a truncated version: "White lives don't matter" (Waterson, 2020). Clearly, some among the white mainstream did not take kindly to the seemingly presumptuous—and yet wholly reasonable—suggestion that they too may have to change in order for greater social and racial justice. But to return to Gopal's intention in her original quote, the challenge for an inclusive university therefore, is not simply to increase black student recruitment or retention. What about the white students and staff? If they see racial justice as simply extending the hand of friendship

to black or non-white peers, and not about reflecting on their own socially-created white identity and privilege, then change will be limited. Paradoxically they become victims of misrecognition in Honneth's terms because this lack of racial awareness will always truncate their capacity for esteem recognition because it necessarily limits the social value of what they do—where society is understood as racially diverse and inclusive.

An affirmative approach to the inclusive university might be to add resources and extra mentoring or tuition to help disadvantaged or non-traditional students bridge the gap between what they can do and what the so-called traditional students can do. A transformative inclusive university would challenge its own assumptions about norms, traditional/non-traditional and actively address the structural forms of misrecognition. This means that transformative change involves not just those who are welcomed into the university or who move from marginalised to inclusive spaces/positions, but a change in the identity and material reality of everyone involved, and in many cases of the university itself as an organisation. Decolonisation is an excellent example of change that can be superficial—add black names to reading lists—*or* transformative at a much deeper, structural and personal level, connecting too with the whole issue of white racial awareness previously mentioned.

6. Transformative Recognition: Towards the Inclusive University

Bringing the ideas from the two previous sections together—recognition-based inclusion and transformative change—what can we expect to see if we begin to realise this inclusive university? As I have argued, the measure of achievement is not simply how many students of a particular ethnic group are studying or what marks they gain, which are the typical metrics of a widening participation approach. In contrast, our focus moves to the fundamental idea of whether everyone within the university can realise themselves as a recognised and valued individual member of society. I am not suggesting that we no longer monitor figures as to the number of BAME students, for example, or their assessment outcomes compared with other students. Such information is important if viewed through a questioning and critical lens. I am saying that it is insufficient for a transformative approach. It is the full lived experience of the student within the university that matters, and this means more than grades. From a critical theory perspective, the student achieves self-realisation when they develop skills, understandings and dispositions that are socially useful and recognised as such. Such an approach does not make invisible cultural and identity distinctions of which groups are justifiably proud, such as black, BAME, disabled or working class. But it does ensure we avoid essentialism whereby an identity group becomes a cage imposed rather than a home owned.

But how could we know we are that moving towards this inclusive university? What would we see or experience differently? Going back to the mutuality at the heart of a critical theory approach to recognition, we would know change because we too would be caught up in that change. Inclusion is not something we as a university 'do' to others. Inclusion is an act of self-realisation in a social context. Students and staff include themselves into the university when given the genuine opportunities to flourish and achieve. All of our identities have to change if transformational change is to occur and we move that bit closer to the inclusive university. For some—those not previously thought of as 'excluded'—such changes can be painful and difficult, as highlighted in the response to Gopal's comment about white lives needing to change.

Next, I share two illustrative examples of this transformative approach to inclusion within higher education. I hope they prove helpful in suggesting how we need to rethink the issue of inclusion, ask different questions, and go beyond solutions suggested by policy or regulations alone. In my first example I have chosen assessment because recent work suggests that assessment is has been overlooked in terms of its role in working towards broad and inclusive social justice within and through higher education (McArthur, 2016, 2018). It is also an issue common to most universities regardless of type or place.

6.1. Anonymous Assessment

Many universities have moved to anonymous assessment, often in response to student lobbying, as a way to minimise conscious and unconscious bias (Pitt & Winstone, 2018). In critical theory terms, such an aim may appear inclusive because it suggests better recognition of the student as a person (not denigrated due to race, ethnicity or gender) and better recognition of their achievement if given a more accurate grade. Unfortunately, such a procedural approach to a problem within pedagogical relationships is likely to be ineffective and may even push the problem further underground (McArthur, 2018). Nothing has changed to stop the misrecognition inherent in a marker who values academic work in terms of the ethnicity or gender of the student, whether consciously or not. Nothing has changed in how that academic may interact in the classroom or other educational activities and relationships, or indeed their assumptions when setting assessment tasks. Indeed, evidence suggests that even when work is anonymised, people infer an identity onto the student and still make judgements based on perceived gender or ethnicity (Earl-Novell, 2001). A rule or procedure on its own, cannot change a flawed relationship based on misrecognition. But real efforts to challenge unconscious bias are more difficult than a new procedure, thus we must accept our inclusive university is never going to be a place of easy change.

The second problem with anonymised marking is that to be genuine it must add a barrier between student and academic. How can a student ask advice without giving away what they are writing on? How does the academic provide formative feedback? While this may not apply in all assessment situations, it does apply in many and particularly as students engage with more complex knowledge and thus are more likely to be doing work worthy of esteem recognition. If the price of anonymous marking is a poorer pedagogical relationship between student and teacher, and a reduction in what that student can achieve, then we have more misrecognition, not less. In this small illustrative example we can see that a recognition-based approach to holistic inclusion can never be achieved by a policy initiative or directive but rather by a cultural change in who we are and in how we treat each other.

6.2. Free Speech and Questions of Boundaries and Legitimate Exclusions

For my second example I turn to a broader issue that is regularly a topic of debate within higher education, and this relates to whether we should exclude certain views and people from the inclusive university? This is a far from hypothetical problem as many universities today still struggle with the balance between free speech and potential harm (Morgan, 2020). Should universities be inclusive of all ideas, however abhorrent some of us find them? To answer this, I believe takes us to the final point of breaking down the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy to rethink what inclusion really means from a critical theory perspective. While the previous example focused mainly on the distinction between affirmative and transformational change, this example shows how we can apply Honneth's plural theory of mutual recognition to work through an issue of inclusion within the university.

How should we decide, for example, whether to allow a proponent of white supremacy speak at our university? To return to Fraser's critique of Honneth, she argues that his focus on self-realisation means that claims of white supremacists who define their self-worth in terms of those they believe are inferior, are as legitimate as those of, say, women, disabled or ethnic minorities. There is, in other words, no filter according to Fraser in Honneth's approach. Again, this argument misunderstands the plural nature of Honneth's theory and particularly ignores the importance of respect and esteem recognition. A belief in superiority over others based on perceived race or ethnicity runs counter to the universal nature of respect/rights recognition. There is also fundamental misrecognition in the idea that race or ethnicity are the basis for esteem recognition rather than genuine achievement and social contribution. Honneth's concept of recognition does not extend inclusion to white supremacists because the nature of their ideology is the misrecognition of others. Honneth's theory is never only about self-recognition but always mutual recogni-

tion. If we bring in individuals or groups with systematic and entrenched beliefs grounded in misrecognition, then our whole concept of inclusion cracks, dissipates and fades into mist.

Fraser comes to a similar stance with her powerful concept of parity of participation. A white supremacist would need to demonstrate that it is their misrecognition that lies at the heart of their inability to participate on a par with others in the social realm. The test then lies in whether the changes promoted by such groups will clearly result in greater parity of participation—which clearly is not the case in terms of white supremacists because their whole identity is based on an entrenched sense of disparity: of their superiority—not equalness—to others.

There are other arguments about inviting white supremacists into the university. Some feel that banning means their abhorrent views don't see sunlight and critical examination. This is an interesting view and from Honneth's perspective we could argue that forcing abhorrent views underground does not minimise misrecognition but pushes it to a more dangerous and furtive place. In this way, a recognition-based approach does not provide an easy yes/no answer to allowing white supremacists on campus, but it does help frame a more complex debate. This dilemma highlights my argument that a critical theory idea of the inclusive university goes beyond the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy. This is why theory matters in practice. It provides moral structure to our decisions, while avoiding both moral certainty and moral relativism. Such decisions must engage with the possibilities for misrecognition of different paths taken such that even when a perfect decision cannot be made, we at least do so consciously and in order to minimise harm.

7. Conclusion

Critical theory does not provide a route map or recipe for the inclusive university, but it does provide one theoretical framework, which can be brought into dialogue with others, through which the inclusive university may begin to emerge through that very process of imagining what it might be. Honneth's plural theory of justice is useful as a framework to navigate complex and nuanced areas of human life. It does so, firstly, because the aspect of *particularity* in love recognition reflects the most basic way in which every person needs to have care and acknowledgement for themselves in order to be part of the social world. Secondly the aspect of *universality* in respect recognition brings in the things which we all must share to participate fully in a life as a responsible social being. Lastly, esteem recognition reflects *individuality* and the ways in which we can all contribute to the social good, but do so in our own individual ways based on our own traits, skills, dispositions and knowledge (for further explanation see Honneth, 1996). It is this web of different aspects and lenses, zooming in to the intensely personal and out to the shared universal, that enables a

framework for inclusion that is genuinely inclusive and not based on disparate features then disarticulated from the person as a whole or their place in the world. Fraser adds a vital element of how we might move towards this version of an inclusive university through her clear delineation of affirmative and transformative change.

If we focus on the inclusive university in terms of bringing one or other under-represented group into the mainstream, we risk ending up in an endless cycle of constantly reacting to the needs of individual identity groups, rather than the fundamental and diverse forms of injustice and exclusion. After many societies have rightly promoted the educational needs of women or ethnic minorities, newspapers now often report that the educational needs of poor or white men are suffering (Coughlan, 2021). But such reports reinforce the illusion that there is only so much justice to go around and to include one group means to marginalise another. This is a myth, and it is a dangerous myth that fails to recognise the interconnections at the heart of both inclusion and justice. Mutuality of recognition means, in the long run, it is always about all of us.

The inclusive university in a globalised world is not enacted simply by individual policies or practices. It is a connected tapestry of inclusive relationships and an ongoing project of seeking to minimise misrecognition and disrespect because they harm both individual and social wellbeing. The aim of this article is to contribute to a discussion of its complex nature, that in itself, is hopefully part of the realisation of that inclusive university. It is possible, however, to indicate some ways in which this work can be taken forward. Inclusion must cease to be about only who comes into university but what everyone within the university does. Again, drawing parallels with affective or transformative decolonialisation, the pursuit of the inclusive university cannot be constrained to only some parts of university life. The way student societies are run, the sports opportunities students have, the food outlets we allow on campus, the research we do, the books we ask students to read, the promotion opportunities for non-academic staff and the way we assess students are all aspects of the inclusive university. And these examples are but a small sample of the whole list. We must ensure everything from physical spaces to online documents are accessible, not because of legislative requirements alone, but because of a profound sense how the failure to do so makes real the injustices of misrecognition. While recognising legitimate boundaries between different forms of support for students, we also acknowledge that it is their interconnections—where pastoral, academic, physical, health and wellbeing meet—that determine whether a student or staff member is actually included in the inclusive university.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Legibility Zones: An Empirically-Informed Framework for Considering Unbelonging and Exclusion in Contemporary English Academia

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Abstract
This article introduces a new, empirically-derived conceptual framework for considering exclusion in English higher education (HE): legibility zones. Drawing on interviews with academic employees in England, it suggests that participants orientate themselves to a powerful imaginary termed the hegemonic academic. Failing to align with this ideal can engender a sense of dislocation conceptualised as unbelonging. The mechanisms through which hegemonic academic identity is constituted and unbelonging is experienced are mapped onto three domains: the institutional, the ideological, and the embodied. The framework reveals the mutable and intersecting nature of these zones, highlighting the complex dynamics of unbelonging and the attendant challenge presented to inclusion projects when many apparatuses of exclusion are perceived as fundamental to what HE is for, what an academic is, and how academia functions.

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1. Introduction

English higher education (HE) in the early 21st century is theoretically the most inclusive it has ever been. Student numbers are at a peak and compared to its origins as an institution for privileged white men (Pressland & Thwaites, 2017) academia is increasingly diverse (Bathmaker et al., 2013; Deem, 2003; Office for Students, 2020). This is a logical consequence of widened participation in the face of neoliberal expansion (Radice, 2013) and perhaps too a reflection of investment in university- or sector-level initiatives coming under the umbrella of "diversity and inclusion," or "D&I" (Ahmed, 2007, 2012).

This article is more concerned with issues of exclusion, but I alight briefly on the institutional language of "D&I" as I believe it frames how exclusion is thought of and who is considered excluded (and thus what the

remedies may be). That exclusion happens at all can only be inferred from the fact inclusion initiatives are required in the first place, and I suggest that to those who engage only casually (or reluctantly) with these imperatives, the discursive grouping of diversity with inclusion risks conflating the two. In this coupling, only those with marginalised protected characteristics are at risk of exclusion, and there is perhaps a tendency to assume too that one inevitably follows from the other—that diverse identities being present equates to their inclusion. We might also question, as Sara Ahmed (2007, 2012) does, what these words really mean, who they adhere to, and what they hide, especially as they circulate beyond D&I units and into common parlance. That these buzzwords become part of the institutional lexicon does not necessarily mean they are paid more than lip-service, and as Ahmed (2007) points out, the fatigue with their repetition is emblematic of the failure to make such

vocabulary redundant. As a final note, diversity and inclusion as enacted is substantially one-way: It is incumbent on the "diverse" to adapt in order to be more includable (Anthias, 2018) rather than on the institution to reflect the heterogeneity of its constituents by doing things in more diverse ways (Parker, 2007).

Visible presence is important. Being in the room is an imperative step on the path to being fully included—and can in itself be highly disruptive to established norms (Arday, 2018). But as simple as the language may make it sound, this article is predicated on the understanding that inclusion is not the neat opposite of exclusion: that it is more complex than simply "being there" or not. Inclusivity is a spectrum, not a binary; a feeling, not a fact. Therefore I introduce instead a concept—"unbelonging"—with which to consider the dynamics of simultaneous presence and exclusion, and unpack the many areas in which experiences of unbelonging manifest into a three-part framework with the aim of developing conceptual tools to think through these complexities. The theoretical architecture the article offers responds to questions around how to enrich and nuance understandings of exclusion in HE in ways that account for both individual and collective experiences: the powerful effects of the systemic hegemonic imaginary, to which everyone contributes and from which no-one is immune, and the deeply personalised consequences of working under this ideal, which are unequally distributed. The article draws on interview data representing the experience of academic staff in England, but its findings are relevant also to students, and to some extent other (international) professional, institutional, and group contexts. It is also worth noting that whilst empirical analysis forms the bedrock of the article in that the concepts outlined here emerge from interview data, its offer is primarily theoretical and the qualitative material performs an illustrative function.

I begin with a brief overview of the article's underpinning research project and methods (Section 2) before moving to outline two central concepts derived from its data: the imagined ideal of the "hegemonic academic" (Section 3) and the experience of not matching up to it, or "unbelonging" (Section 4). I then introduce the framework of "legibility zones"; these reveal the features of the hegemonic academic by mapping the areas of academic life in which unbelonging can be evoked onto three layers: the institutional (Section 5.1), the ideological (5.2), and the embodied (5.3). Through this the dynamics of exclusion are shown to be complex and contingent, and the experience of unbelonging collective. I therefore conclude that the possibility of inclusion is to some extent an illusion.

2. Methods

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the research project from which this article's framework derives traces the dominant norms and values of English HE at its time of transition from the exclusive "ivory tower" to what several participants branded a "sausage factory" (for an overview of the structure of UK HE and policy context of this transition please see Radice, 2013; Tight, 2010). The underlying data was generated through in-person semi-structured interviews of 60 to 200 minutes with 29 current or recent academic staff in 2018. English HE was selected to ensure consistency of policy environment, though experience of devolved UK and international nations was considered in composing the participant sample. Interviewees were not directly asked about the project's central themes (competition and masculinity, at that time) or given detail about the focus in advance to allow these topics to arise spontaneously. Questions instead invited reflection on the experience of being an academic, changes to this over time and place, career trajectories, conceptions of success and failure, and the relationship between self and work. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their potential to enable individual rapport and rich but flexible discussion. The breadth of participants (Section 2.1.1) meant some scheduled questions were more relevant and generative for particular interviewees, and speaking to participants one-to-one enabled full anonymity to be retained, which in some cases was necessary for legal as well as professional reasons. Largely because of this anxiety around identifiability (English HE, especially in some disciplines, is a small world), I refer to participants by number (P*X*, according to the order of interview) and provide biographical details only when it seems relevant to the point of discussion (for a similar approach see Ahmed, 2012). This also foregrounds the data itself, demonstrating the universality of certain experiences and avoiding any associations that pseudonyms can carry.

As a background to both the gestation and conduct of this research there is also an inevitable element of quasi-(auto-)ethnographic observation. I have worked in higher education institutions (HEIs) since 2007 in a variety of professional services and "blended" positions not dissimilar to Manathunga's (2007) 'unhomely' academic developers, who operate in tandem with academic colleagues whilst remaining close to institutional operations. This intimate knowledge of English HEIs of different types is invaluable to understanding the implications of the interview data. However, it also makes it impossible to differentiate which aspects of my interpretation and analysis arise purely from the data and which from my cumulative experiences and conversations as an insider (Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010). For ethical reasons, as well as to ensure this muddying does not result in misinterpretation, all participants are sent project outputs to vet how their words have been represented and analysed (no issues have been raised so far).

2.1. Sampling

An initial set of volunteer interviewees was recruited mostly via social media, yielding 105 potentials with

enough diversity to constitute the full sample. Inclusion criteria required participants to be based at a public HEI in England and to hold (or have held within two years) an academic contract of any fraction or duration, which could be research- or teaching-only or a traditional lectureship (but not hourly-paid or doctoral). I purposively selected 29 individuals with the intention of garnering a broad combination of intersections across gender, race/ethnicity, career stage, subject area, geographic location, and type of HEI (including league table position) current and previous on the assumption that from this would naturally follow diversity in other aspects of identity not polled in advance. It should be noted, however, that this is not research into "diversity" as commonly equated with marginalised identities. Participants were selected to have different biographies from each other so as to ensure a kaleidoscope of perspectives, but the final sample intentionally resembles the landscape of English HE (and England more widely) in being comprised of around 70% white academics, most of whom are also native Anglophones.

Whilst the breadth of participants and small sample precludes making generalisations about the experiences of any particular group or position, it does enable commonalities across difference to become more visible as well as meaningful disparities in the impact of universal experiences. This approach is relatively unique compared to similar HE research, which usually centres on students or particular populations/sites of inequality (e.g., for women see Hoskins, 2010; Rogers, 2016; for fixed-term staff see Loveday, 2017, 2018; for gender and women's studies see Pereira, 2017; for early-career academics see Pressland & Thwaites, 2017; for manager-academics see Deem, 2003; for disability see Brown & Leigh, 2020; for race see Bhopal, 2016) or considers academic culture theoretically rather than empirically (e.g., Ball, 2012; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2013; Radice, 2013).

2.2. Data Analysis

Analysis was a multi-stage process. I should also be clear that "data" in this context refers to the 400,000 words of interview transcripts rather than formal ethnography, and those words are inseparable from the circumstances in which they were spoken. I travelled to the majority of interviews so as to experience the institutional atmosphere, and accordingly have vivid embodied memories of not just the meetings but the sense of place. This is not data in any quantifiable way and yet it informs both interview and analysis: There is a difference between the few interviews that took place in meeting rooms at King's College London, intercalated with my working day, and those that were an "event." So, although "analysis" began when transcripts started coming in, inevitably reflection had already occurred. It bears noting, too, that both this early analysis and the more systematic process later were (and continue to be) inflected by my position as an insider and the understandings this generates

(Ryan-Flood & Gill, 2010). While the project is still being written up, this is ongoing; for example, the data from interviews with the three participants who worked at small specialist institutions has new significance for me after recently working in a conservatoire myself.

Transcript analysis was aided by Atlas.ti. Data was first manually tagged for subject matter and themes relevant to the research questions (e.g., "gender," "promotion," "bullying," "success," "the ideal") then autocoded to assess the frequency of key words, for example, "anxiety" (156), "brutal" (30), "competition" (31). I then reviewed all transcripts in hard copy, highlighting and annotating sections that did not lend themselves to a short keyword. From this process I derived a picture of the kinds of activities and areas of academic life that engendered a sense of competition or inequality, and from that built an image of the type of academic who represented the yardstick based on what participants perceived to be success and failure (later conceptualised as the "hegemonic academic"; see Section 3). At this point I began a chapter for a collection about impostor syndrome (Wren Butler, in press) as the term had arisen in interviews a few times, which led to theorising unbelonging (see Section 4). Initial drafting revealed this to be a highly generative way of understanding the unequal relationships between individuals and the hegemonic cultural ideal, thus the focus of the project was reorientated, and the data was scoured again for any further content that revealed feelings or examples of exclusion, outsiderhood, marginality, difference, discomfort, being out of place (or their opposites). This was mapped onto what encounters engendered these feelings, from activities as significant and structural as applying for promotion to subtle and personal microaggressions like being consistently addressed by first name in an email where everyone else is "Dr" (P16). These constitute the "legibility zones" that comprise the trunk of this article (see Section 5).

3. The Hegemonic Academic

The concept of "hegemonic masculinity" was first introduced by Raewyn Connell and has become one of the major understandings of the perpetuation of masculine dominance. Representing the version of malehood that is ascendant in any given time and place, it does not necessarily entail a "normal" way of being a man in that it may only be exhibited by a minority, but is the archetype against which masculinity is defined and through which it maintains its power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Similarly, the hegemonic academic is a theoretical construct describing the most valorised way of being an academic; like hegemonic masculinity it can refer to physical characteristics and/or behaviours, practices, and values. I would also argue there is some overlap between the toxic excesses of hegemonic masculinity and the hegemonic academic (Nunn, 2016) and that ideal academic identity is correlated with maleness (Danvers,

2018). However, whereas gender identity is constituted by modes of being that have no original template and thus shift significantly over time and context, academic ideals are rendered more concretely and universally by international (or at least Global North) discourses of "excellence" (Pressland & Thwaites, 2017).

The hegemonic academic is an archetype that cannot be entirely fulfilled. That said, those who carry the most privilege receive dividends for having automatic rights to participation in HE, and therefore have a more secure position from which to withstand any feeling of exteriority. Whilst the sense of not 'measuring up' (P5) may be common ground, participants were acutely aware that some academics objectively stand taller than others and to greater or lesser extents indulged the fantasy that they would feel safer if they hit or exceeded more metric targets. It is on account of these nuances that I move away from binary concepts such as inclusion/exclusion or static theories such as impostor syndrome.

4. Unbelonging

Although some participants did refer to impostor syndrome or fears that 'they're going to find me out' (P8, P11) most indicators of feeling out of place were less conscious. The problem with attributing these sensations to a syndrome is that it pathologises an experience that in context is quite rational (Churchill, 2018). Audit culture; managerialism; institutional and sectoral assessments of quality, performance, and productivity: these things create an environment where participation is reliant on earning a place and where the necessary achievements could always be more or better, either objectively or in comparison to others. Furthermore, it locates the issue in the individual, whereas I would argue that any space dominated by competitiveness is fundamentally hostile—especially one where failures are more frequent than successes, losses more than wins, and rejections more than acceptances. Finally, impostor syndrome is essentialised into an affliction one "has" or does not (much like diversity), whereas participants perambulated through degrees of impostorhood depending on situation, company, career stage, and so on (Anthias, 2018).

I characterise this vacillating relationship as unbelonging in the hope it captures, to a greater or lesser extent, everyone. The most frequent alternatives such as "outsider" or "marginal" not only suggest a location that is always anterior to a perceived centre, linguistically reinscribing the very notion of a consistent "inside" (as opposed to a site of continual contestation), but evoke certain populations and identities (those most readily labelled "diverse" or "other"). Whilst this research suggests that the most under-represented in HE are most severely disadvantaged by the often systemic layering and linking of sites of unbelonging, it also illuminates some of the tensions and contradictions that often get lost in discussions of objective marginalisation. Not all marginalities are visible or attributable

to systemic axes of oppression, and focusing only on these exclusions can overlook the effects of *feelings* of outsiderhood—not just in terms of the individual but how this feeling informs their actions. This also obscures the commonality of human vulnerability (Rogers, 2016), greater attention to which could arguably offset the very neoliberal individualism that opens the door to feelings of unbelonging.

Given the increasing collective awareness and rightful fury around historical and institutional hoardings of power, as evidenced by recent headline-grabbing activism such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, Black Lives Matter, etc., one could be forgiven for wondering why we should care about the feelings of "everyone" in a context still dominated by white middle-class men. This is a reasonable concern, but I propose there are several reasons to attend to even the most structurally privileged. First, if an environment is uncomfortable even for those it is built around, it can only be worse for those it is not. Second, feelings motivate behaviour and the sense of being under threat can be used to rationalise instrumental and individualistic practices that further disenfranchise minorities. Third, without privileging the comfort of dominant groups above marginal ones, we may nonetheless wish for an environment that is not uncomfortable for anyone. Fourth, as evidenced perhaps by defences such as #NotAllMen, people often do not self-identify as personally powerful even when they are in cultural ascendancy and wield systemic power; furthermore, anyone in a position of authority (including minority identities; see Rogers, 2016) can act in concert with or as an agent of hegemony. Therefore, fifth, it is important to understand how the structural apparatus of HE affects all of its constituents in order to shift responsibility away from individuals and groups and look instead at the framework that allows them to perpetuate hegemonic inequalities. If the system continues to be built on the same values and reward the same kinds of work, it will not be possible to create a more meaningfully inclusive HE because there are too many for whom the demands are unreachable. We must go further than simply enabling a more diverse set of people to exploit themselves (and others) in the service of an academic career, and that means looking at the ways the current operation makes an outsider of everyone.

Unbelonging, in my definition, is not antithetical to belonging or a position of inherent deficit but the experience of disconnection, dislocation, disjunction between the self and one or more aspects of the immediate or wider environment: it can be transient and contextual. "Alienation" would perhaps be a suitable synonym, but there are already a variety of conceptualisations for this term, not least Marx's definition, which I also employ to refer to a disconnection from the self-arising from over-complicity with the environment, similar to Ball's (2012) 'ontological insecurity.' Conversely, unbelonging is a term I have not seen substantially theorised in relation to academia; there is a significant body of work

on topics related to belonging and its opposites, especially for minority communities, but I propose here that unbelonging is a concept worth considering in its own right (i.e., not as the negative of belonging). Beyond HE research (mostly in the study of migrant, marginalised, and diaspora communities) there is limited reference to unbelonging; however, it is not given its own definition and used in relation primarily to place, race, and nation (e.g., Christensen, 2009; Lidola, 2011; Pettersson, 2013). Interestingly, other frameworks for (un)belonging are also tripart (Christensen, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and to some degree overlap with the legibility zones described here; however, much of the scholarship that orientates to belonging first and unbelonging as the absence of it focuses on "us and them" narratives that I do not find readily applicable to this project. The individualistic nature of HE experienced by participants makes the dynamic more "me and them" in this context: there is no "us," and the "them" is almost entirely mythical.

By way of example, unbelonging consists in achieving the markers of inclusion (e.g., making Professor) yet feeling out of place (e.g., the only woman in the room); feeling at home in one context (member of a supportive research group) but insecure in the wider environment (serial article rejections); having all the accolades on paper (shortlisted for every permanent job) yet not being granted admittance (stuck on short-term contracts). That it is a feeling is important: the same stimulus will not engender identical sensations in everyone, and it is not necessarily observable externally—indeed, unbelonging can be produced by the disparity between others' judgements and our inner sense. Crucially, despite being uncomfortable unbelonging does not have to be negative and is not an aberration of a default state (i.e., there is no inner circle from which we have been "cast out" or denied entrance, only positions of varying proximity we occupy in relation to each other and the imagined centre). One function of this article is to demonstrate, by organising sites of unbelonging identified through the interview data into three layers, that despite the illusory nature of inclusion the intersections and overlaps of circumstances and social identities for some compound this to degrees that take exclusion from being a feeling to a fact.

5. Legibility Zones

Whether consciously or not, most participants made comparisons—between themselves and their colleagues, and against their idea of the hegemonic academic. Building a composite of this ideal suggested that the array of things both macro and micro that can engender or represent unbelonging are divisible into three layered categories: institutional, ideological, and embodied.

I call these layers "legibility zones" because to be perceived as harmonising with the ideal, participants in HE must be intelligible in relation to the hegemonic aca-

demic. The act of comparison, as with any process of interpretation, is underpinned by the "reader's" assumptions and prejudices and based on the partial information available to them. This creates the possibility of mismatch between how study participants saw themselves and how they were regarded by others, and partially explains why the experience of unbelonging is so mutable and pervasive. Often unconsciously, participants had an image of what a "real" academic looked like, endowed through the wider academic environment and the increasingly narrow criteria for success, and read others (and themselves) through that lens. But with these spectacles only certain characteristics are legible and others become blurry or invisible, so the more aligned an identity (of a person or a methodology, discipline, institution, etc.) appears to be to these ways of being, the more intelligible they are as "legitimate" (Gagnon, 2018). It should also be noted that whilst the legibility zones are not arranged hierarchically and overlay each other, they are not always visible simultaneously in that intelligibility in one zone can occlude visibility in another—e.g., the 'very quiet' precarity (P15) experienced by many senior and thus "secure" academics—and struggles may cluster in particular areas.

5.1. Legibility Zone 1: The Institutional (LZ1)

'Everyone hates admin.' This was certainly a view shared by participants in this project, who almost universally declared 'pointless' administrative and bureaucratic tasks their least favourite aspect of the job. However, as well as being a necessary part of getting things done, administrative processes are the method by which human beings become institutionally legible. What for one is a mindless and unnecessary bureaucratisation of a previously undocumented activity is for another the means through which their relationship to an institution is formalised. Even if only as a line on a spreadsheet, to be translated into an audit trail is to be inscribed within the institutional machinery, to appear within record systems and on lists: as far as the apparatus of the organisation is concerned, to exist.

Perhaps the most fundamental way inclusion is endowed is through institutional affiliation. Being a member of an organisation provides a certain level of resource, infrastructure, and security. It also conveys endorsement that renders academics more intelligible to subsequent employers (analogous to the validation from white colleagues Arday (2018) observes is required by academics of colour). P11 muses: 'I wonder if it's a sort of self-perpetuating cycle, like you go to an interview and you've already got an affiliation, you're more likely to get the job.' However, being recognisable as an employee is not only a signifier of successfully achieving the academic competencies required to be deemed "employable" but a legitimisation of the identity "academic" both internally and externally (as Cribb & Gewirtz, 2013, highlight, the merits of academics are

often spoken of in terms deriving from institutional reputational drivers). The particular prestige associated with traditional Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, or Professor titles is a powerful ideal to which most participants who had not achieved it aspired. This is not helped by the idea that this type of contract is the norm; as P13 told me: 'My role before I left, it was teaching, research, and admin as everybody's is.' But this so-called "standard" academic contract is not the only way of doing an academic job, and not the deal 'everybody' gets, even if it is frequently seen as the only way of *being* an academic. For example, P2 held a hallowed indefinite post, but as a Teaching Fellow and on a fractional basis, describing it as 'not the holy grail of, you know, 100% full-time etcetera….It's something that I'm happy with, a compromise, now but….I had to let go of all kinds of ideas about academia and my place in it.'

These fundamental means of recognisability as an academic are underpinned by a raft of subtler indicators that are often related to contractual matters. P6 reported that 'if you were part-time there was a slight culture of blame for not really being there….It was always criticised in meetings and things like that,' whilst another fractional academic, P7, noted the importance of physical space: 'Once I got there more and was permanently at the university, obviously I became more of an integrated member of staff….And I did have my own office and my own desk, and that made a huge difference.' Likewise, having a role that makes sense in the local context is significant; P16 was a researcher in their first post-doctoral position at a teaching-focused university without a substantial research culture, who said:

> I still don't feel like I get treated as a member of staff, because people don't really know what my job is….It's like [the institution] wasn't geared up to have people like me working on these projects, so nobody really knows what to do with me.

For those already on the fringes of academic culture by virtue of not holding a 'holy grail' position or through being new, lack of integration is only compounded by unsupportive institutional processes that prevent staff becoming intelligible in institutional systems and languages, identifiable in a physical location (or through affiliative digital credentials), or understood as someone people 'know what to do with'.

Sub-roles are also important for more established academic staff, where the administrative responsibilities assigned indicate what "type" people are and what future opportunities are available to them. P13 observes:

> you can see it happening that some people are being tailored toward promotion and so they get the good roles, they get the things that will count. And things that don't count, like programme leadership or year guidance tutor or whatever…people that get given

those or are asked to do those, you know where you fit already.

Successfully applying for promotion or passing probation are also sites of bureaucratic belonging, as are numerous other exercises that rubber-stamp success and often create in-groups as a by-product. A significant driver of this is the Research Excellence Framework (REF, a nationwide audit of research quality occurring every 7–8 years, most recently in 2021), which deserves its own article for the multifarious negative effects it catalyses, just one of which is in determining who is considered "research-active" (a categorisation that I have witnessed result in contract massaging—e.g., moving staff onto teaching-only contracts—to ensure "activity" matches up with perceived quality). These processes are highly emotive: 'I wasn't included in the REF last time—I was furious! I really felt excluded from the group' (P28). Other markers of institutionally-defined excellence include winning competitive research grants or internal resources (space, time, money), working at an institution performing well in the university league tables, publishing in "top" journals, positive module evaluations, and so on. There are virtually endless methods by which an identity allied to the hegemonic academic is conferred or denied by bureaucratic processes that render individuals readable on paper, all surrounded by 'rigidly policed rituals' (Nunn, 2016, p. 10), many of which, like peer review, entail colleagues acting as gatekeepers for each other (a topic for another article given its central function in academic life and clear significance in relation to unbelonging).

So, administrative apparatuses can confer validation, but they can also hinder it. Not being recognised as an insider, by people or by systems, can communicate a sense of 'I don't deserve to be here' (P11), and precarity is a creeping issue throughout the academy regardless of employment status. P15, a Professor-level academic who had already been made redundant once and was facing down a second scare, was blunt on this matter: 'a permanent job is not a permanent job.' Anxiety around security was prevalent across the spectrum, often manifesting in a perceived necessity to hyperproduce to meet institutional targets, beef up on-paper achievements, and outstrip peers (Ball, 2012). However, this willingness to work excessive hours and exhibit dedication to the doing (research in particular) was also seen as constitutive of the hegemonic academic in a more ephemeral sense: as an indicator of *being*.

5.2. Legibility Zone 2: The Ideological (LZ2)

As outlined in LZ1, legitimacy is partly about concrete indicators of validation and administrative legibility. In LZ3 I will show how embodied modes of being also affect recognisability, and to what degree unbelonging is based simply on being physically anomalous (see also Ahmed, 2012, on 'becoming a stranger'). However, I would argue that it is not raw physicality that causes

misrecognition but the assumptions about what that identity represents and how far it resembles hegemonic conceptions of what an academic "is" and who HE is therefore "for."

The "isness" of academic identity is not bound to the body, although it derives from it. Lived experience affects both how a particular version of academicness came to be hegemonic and how possible it is to resemble it (i.e., because white middle-class men established the academy white middle-class men are arguably most adapted to and accepted by its demands; see Leonard, 2001), but isness lies in the nuance between doing and being. All participants were academically employed, but the nebulous anxiety about being a 'proper academic' (P6) was almost universal, highlighting how manifest indicators of authenticity operate as proxies to quell a deeper unsettlement. The fantasy that achieving the validations of LZ1 would engender a sense of arrival was debunked by securely-employed senior staff who continued to carry a sense of not 'measuring up' (P5) (contrasting with Keefer's findings on doctoral transitions; see Keefer, 2015).

The most notable belief apparent throughout participants' testimony, even if they did not frame it in such terms, was that a true academic is someone for whom it is involuntary. It is a vocation, an integral aspect of self-identity, a matter not just of what they do but who they are. This was demonstrated most powerfully by P8, who volunteered for the project precisely because 'although I'm a white heterosexual male, I actually think I represent the kind of academic who's always under-represented.' He continues:

> Academia to me is a job. So to me I do it as a profession. It's not a vocation, it's not my passion. None of those things ring any bells with me. I work 9 to 5, Monday to Friday and…I often think those kind of academics are invisible.

It is important to note here that working hours are part of what identifies this participant as an outlier, showing an intrinsic link between the concept of vocation and the active demonstration of it through overwork. As P18 says, 'when I sit down and write a paper on a Saturday, I don't really feel like I'm at work. Because it's more of a vocation for me than anything else.' However, P16 observes how self-perpetuating and toxic this expectation can be (Mountz et al., 2015), and how early in the academic training it is enculturated:

> [On Twitter] there's all these memes about being a PhD student and about how you have no life….When people talk about how they don't take days off even if they're ill and they don't take weekends off and they work all evening even if they don't necessarily have to I think that just normalises some really damaging ways of working. But sometimes you feel like you're a failure if you're not meeting those standards.

Furthermore, not everyone is equally able to meet these standards even if they want to. Working evenings and weekends, or even working 9 to 5 in a lab (Deem, 2003), is not an option for those with multiple demands on their time and energy (cf. Bathmaker et al. (2013) for parallel findings with differently privileged students). This is perhaps the biggest barrier to true inclusivity as it is also the grounds on which inclusion can be resisted (the claim to inclusion is undermined by the perceived insufficient commitment). Declining to demonstrate the required vocational zeal through hyperproductivity is also an impediment to collecting the career-building tokens described in LZ1. Thus, those who continue to perform hegemonic academic identity in this way inevitably accrue more denotations of success, perpetuating the ideal.

Outwith working practices, there are many other ideological positions that were revealed to underpin ideal academic identity, a couple of which I shall briefly touch on, as well as epistemological and ontological norms peculiar to local cultures (e.g., disciplines, departments, etc.). HE, especially in the social sciences, has been criticised for its (perceived) left-wing bias (Carl, 2017). This perspective was shared by P18, a proud Conservative who nonetheless elided public mention of this when job-seeking for fear of not being seen as 'part of the club,' and it is in these realms that significant tensions become apparent. The hegemonic academic is ideologically liberal *but* many of the behaviours participants saw as reflective of the ideal (individualism, instrumentalism, ambition) are underpinned by neoliberal conservatively-aligned values. This produces an unresolvable conflict where meeting one set of demands requires moving away from a second; shoring up one identity (the "proper academic") necessitates betrayal of another (the "leftie"). A similar dichotomy is evident in the fact that many participants experienced their personal nadir precisely when they were most outwardly successful, undergoing the kind of alienation (or estrangement) theorised by Marx, where workers' sense of humanity is eroded by their lack of autonomy under capitalism. This was articulated most strikingly by P5, who after winning multiple grants was granted a promotion they consequently felt 'conflicted' about and 'got really, really sick…kind of suicidal….I didn't feel like a human being. I didn't feel like a person any more, I felt like a task list.' The sense of uncomfortable complicity (Rogers, 2016) and 'unhomeliness' (Manathunga, 2007) engendered by being professionally rewarded for acts that were physically damaging and philosophically discordant is something I do not have space to elaborate here but was a significant point of inner conflict for most participants, especially senior academics who had to enact neoliberal processes on others.

One of the strongest beliefs among participants was in the virtue of education for its own sake, lamenting the intrusion of 'grubby' (P8) neoliberal fiscal concerns. Interestingly, even P18's conservative commitment to the free market was cowed by this: 'That kind of mindset doesn't really suit higher education….[Universities]

should be seen as a place of just learning and knowing as opposed to just how you make your money.' However, as P22 notes, there is a false dichotomy here and its roots are beholden to traditional conceptions of what and who HE is for:

> There's all sorts of weird class stuff. So I have no problem with someone coming to university to get their paper to get a job and earn money and have nice holidays. That's absolutely fine. But there is a sense like, 'oh that's not what it's for, it's for the enrichment of the mind.' But, like, it can be for the mind and someone's life as well.

Perhaps more pertinently, academics themselves struggle to balance their base needs with their academic endeavours too: 'It's true isn't it, that academics are worried about their pensions and…we're worried about our pay, we're worried about our terms and conditions? So it's not just, you know, pure intellectual ether for us either' (P22). There is a sense, though, that to be concerned about material circumstances is a betrayal of true academic pursuit, emblematic of a lack of vocationality. Displaying this zeal is such a powerful ideal that some consider it borderline immoral to occupy an academic post without it: 'I once had an anonymous email off someone who said I was a cockroach and that I should quit so that somebody with passion could take my job' (P8). This illustrates how some ideas about what being an academic is intersect with assumptions about who academia is for, and as P22 highlights these notions are deeply rooted in historical biases. Much like the capacity to overwork, the freedom to travail regardless of recompense, or even to be single-minded about one's job, does not require the same level of sacrifice from everyone. This conception also plays into the fantasy of academia as a 'community of scholars' rather than 'a site of exclusion, elitism and power' (Harris, 2005, p. 424).

5.3. Legibility Zone 3: The Embodied (LZ3)

The greater representation of white, socioeconomically stable men in HE was spontaneously acknowledged by most participants, including those who fell into this group, but was felt more acutely by those who did not. At the most basic level, LZ3 encompasses this type of unbelonging (see also Wren Butler, in press), extending to all the ways corporeal existence has bearing not only on gaining the status markers of LZ1 and sharing the ideological perspectives of LZ2, but on the extent to which people are assumed to (even if they do not), or to which these positions are legible when inhabited.

I use the term embodied here relatively loosely, to denote characteristics that (are perceived to) connect individuals to a wider group (e.g., race, gender, class), those that relate to physical circumstances (e.g., location, parent or carer status, condition of health), or aspects of corporeality that may be malleable and take on signifi-

cance as indicators of covert identity features (e.g., clothing, voice, attractiveness). Thus, some aspects of identity considered here are either invisible or to a degree optional. These attributes may be inferred (correctly or not) from proxy indicators or known only to the individual, and it is important to consider the complexities of this. Whilst being misrecognised can potentially pay dividends in terms of receiving the privilege associated with a higher status identity, the converse can also be true, and either way the internal experience of being illegible creates an intractable sense of unbelonging (Gagnon, 2018). Passing as a member of a group with which one does not identify can facilitate feelings of fraudulence and impostorhood, and accusations of misrepresentation can equally be levelled when attempting to align with an identity that perhaps feels more authentic but is not validated externally. There are not only competitions for success, but competitions for hardship; in an environment where totems of achievement are in such short supply there is an incentive to have one's struggles legitimised (Friedman et al., 2021). Misrecognition cuts both ways: someone with a hidden disability or illness, for example, may not receive the upfront discrimination that a more visibly impeded individual might, but may therefore have to work harder to gain the necessary accommodations. As well as placing an undue burden this also reduces the time and energy available to achieve other markers of success. As P3 points out: 'I could do so much. Except I can't because I'm not well enough. And I have an ill daughter.' In this way, embodied experience gives rise to unbelonging even for those who are not read as "diverse" or seen as having/being a "problem" (Leonard, 2001).

Whilst career breaks from maternity or sick leave and part-time work can be accounted for, hiring, promotion, probation, and funding panels are largely interested in concrete achievements: How many papers, how much grant income, how many positive teaching evaluations (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2013)? This can work in the favour of some, outweighing other factors, as P22 acknowledges:

> [My book is] what got me the job, really, because I had a definite REF entry, whereas the other people who were much cleverer and, you know, from better universities than me, didn't have that.…The REF is a sort of actual marker of what you've actually done.

However, some people are more equipped to make themselves competitive in this way. Those without caring responsibilities, financial difficulties, health issues, job insecurity, and so on, who have more time and energy to devote to academic work (whether paid or not) are more likely to have a full CV. This was noted by P18, who admitted 'I wouldn't have got the lectureship after, you know, PhD plus three [years as a postdoctoral researcher] if I hadn't written the amount of papers I did, because I was working sort of six or seven days.' Similarly, P10 observes that 'the females that I do see at the higher levels in academia are ones who either

don't have families or…they have a very supportive husband…who actually does the care-giving' (cf. the concept of 'care-commanders' in HE in Clegg & Rowland, 2010; see also Burford et al. (2020) on gendered care at conferences). Thus, these types of liberties are distributed unequally, with some demographics disproportionately negatively impacted by physical circumstance.

However, without wishing to downplay the very real significance of systemic inequalities, this article is concerned primarily with the ways the impetus to emulate the hegemonic academic is exclusive on a micro level. Most participants cited resilience as one of the main qualities required of a successful academic, attributing this to the high level of rejection academic life entails. However, my analysis would suggest these rejections hold power because they are felt to corroborate subtler insecurities that underpin the endemic sense of unbelonging engendered by small daily interactions. Embodied identity is important because it to a large extent dictates the built-in resilience an individual has: The stakes are simply much higher for those in unstable and precarious positions, and psychological resilience cannot be untethered from material circumstances. Nonetheless, for those whose situation in life endows them with an automatic advantage, the sense of insecurity and threat, which was experienced by all participants at times, is equally subjectively "real." This becomes increasingly important when considering how academics behave to each other and communicate their ideal identity to others, how the necessary performance of the hegemonic academic is conducted, and how the three legibility zones are drawn on in different contexts.

The matter of self-promotion and performance culture (Ahmed, 2012) in relation to these zones is outside the scope of this article, as is a detailed discussion of the individual and collective consequences of academia being organised in this competitive way, but these are central concerns of the wider project. The framework offered here provides a way of thinking about the complexities of inclusion and exclusion, and the reason I address embodied characteristics last is precisely because it is here that complexities most readily vanish. It is easy to look at identity-based statistics and decide the solution to low participation or disparities in attainment is to target particular demographics and balance the numbers. But the problems are further back: instead of socialising under-represented groups into HE culture and attempting to level the playing field by endowing them with the capital required to compete, perhaps we need to change the rules of the game. Rather than moulding individuals to fit academia, perhaps academia should morph to fit its people (Parker, 2007).

6. Conclusions

In this article I have proposed that there are several problems with popular discourses and lay understandings of diversity and inclusion in HE. Namely, that they suggest (1) that exclusion is an issue only for the "diverse," (2) that increased diversity leads to greater inclusion, (3) that inclusion is achieved by "being there," and (4) that there is something stable in which to be included that only some are excluded from. I have instead offered the concept of unbelonging, drawing on empirical data to posit that (even if only transiently) experiences of exclusion and alienation are universal in English academia. This, I have argued, is both because the environment is inherently exclusionary due to its hierarchical competitive basis and because the ideal that participants in academia are required to emulate—the hegemonic academic—is unachievable.

To demonstrate the variety, complexity, and interaction of modes through which unbelonging is engendered I have introduced a framework that categorises the features of the hegemonic academic into three legibility zones. This has shown through illustrative examples that exclusion operates intersectionally and in layers at administrative, ideological, and embodied levels. The conclusion drawn from this is that without attention to all the ways unbelonging is invoked and the multifarious means by which people are shut out the myth that academia is an environment in which it is possible to belong perpetuates, as does the belief that experiencing unbelonging in itself confirms impostor status. Consequently, energy is wasted by individuals chasing a feeling of security that will never arrive and by institutions focusing efforts on enculturating a wider set of identities into its toxic machinery (Leonard, 2001). I follow Wibben's (2012, p. 593) thinking (albeit applied to a different field) that instead of futile bids for safety we must embrace that 'we are always already insecure, that there is no escape from our fundamental condition of vulnerability.'

Perhaps HE is kinder to some people, or perhaps they are merely more protected from the consequences of academic competitiveness, and this inequality of course should be addressed. But not at the expense of recognising that providing more armour to the most vulnerable does nothing to change the brutality of the environment and continues to exclude those who do not wish to enter into battle (de Groot, 1997). Furthermore, as Arday (2018, p. 3) notes, the presence of marginalised identities in academia 'powerfully threatens and disrupts normativity by challenging elitist binaries' so until those binaries are dismantled there is no way for these subjectivities to participate without being treated as disruptive simply for existing. The rub is, academia's 'hierarchical, martial, and patriarchal values' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1254) also reflect and structure culture more broadly, and 'because higher education is such a core component in the reproduction of élite power in contemporary capitalism, a truly democratic alternative can only be imagined starting from an alternative conception of society as a whole' (Radice, 2013, p. 416). If this is the case, assuming the overthrow of patriarchal capitalism is not imminent, what can we hope to achieve that amounts to more than rearranging the deckchairs

on the sinking Titanic? Firstly, it is important to recognise that even superficial (and well-intentioned) changes can have unforeseen negative consequences if not carefully considered. So whilst issues of inequality do require urgent attention, "quick wins" are worthy of suspicion; correcting an imbalance in one legibility zone can easily disrupt balance in another and a central takeaway of this framework should be to think holistically about sites and modes of unbelonging. A second recommendation would be to ensure there is meaningful consultation on any proposed change and that concerns raised are properly engaged with, including attention to the emotional impact of change (especially for those, like academics, whose work is (ideally) strongly aligned with their wider identity). Being included in decision-making processes is in itself a powerful counter to feelings of unbelonging and allows "invisible" illegibilities to surface; indeed, study participants were particularly critical of 'lip service' consultations that wasted their time by ignoring their input, experiencing also a gradual but corrosive repeal of significance, autonomy, and agency as a consequence of being "done to." If there is one set of academic practices I could deal a death blow to, based on the joint data of participant interviews, the theoretical framework offered here, and my own experience in this particular area, the Hydra that is research funding would be first on the chopping block. The many tentacles of the REF, which inveigle their way into every legibility zone and area of academic life, are in my view the biggest single accelerators of inequalities in UK HE and, along with the excessive machinery around competitive funding bids, use vast amounts of human and institutional resource, creating fervent anxiety in academic and professional services personnel alike. Full discussion of this is for another article, but if we cannot entirely remove the competitive basis of HE as a whole, eliminating it as far as possible from research funding—so that research-responsible academics do not have to fight for the resources required to fulfil their roles—would be an excellent start.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

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Commentary

The Need and Desire for Inclusive Universities: A Perspective from Development Studies

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Abstract

In recent times there has been sustained momentum to address inequalities within university faculties and improve the diversity of students. Also, in response to historical and current social injustices, universities have sought to decolonize curricula. These progressive movements have had particular significance for departments focused on development studies and related subjects because the need to be inclusive is not only the right thing to do from a moral position, but also because to be exclusive is fundamentally challenging to the conceptualization and philosophy of the discipline. Development is a contested term but addressing inequality and working towards social justice are common themes found across most definitions. This commentary provides a critical insight into the importance of inclusive universities as gatekeepers to equitable knowledge production and the development of future professionals. To play their part in addressing the challenges posed by a globalized world, universities need to be proactive in ensuring that they become fully and meaningfully inclusive. While all university departments would benefit from becoming more inclusive, departments focused on development must be the pioneers leading the way, as inclusivity is relevant to the delivery of development studies, as well as emerging as an important discourse within the discipline that continues to evolve. This commentary will explore how and why in an increasingly interconnected global society, the need for universities to leave no one behind, and challenge hegemonic and unequal structures has never been greater.

1. Introduction

The drive towards making universities inclusive has received much attention in recent years. Decolonising curricula and making the recruitment of staff and students fairer are two emerging themes related to inclusion for higher education. The need to decolonize curricula is framed by the ambition to overcome power and take back control of the knowledge that is taught and produced at universities. It is not so much about isolating formally disempowered people and places, but rather it is about reframing knowledge in terms of what is relevant (Katundu, 2019). To achieve decolonization,

ways of generating evidence that were previously surprised or ignored must be reappraised and re-socialized. These formally overlooked approaches must be integrated with new approaches relevant to contemporary challenges and aspirations (Nyamnjoh, 2019). Drawing on the ideas of Allen Luke, Janks (2019) argues that decolonizing curricula is about working towards effecting recognitive, redistributive and representative social justice in education.

Universities are often keen to point out how inclusive they have become for branding purposes, yet inequalities in higher education with regards to class, disability, gender, race, and other dimensions continue to persist.

In many contexts there has been significant advancement in broadening the social base of students in higher education. Despite this, some groups remain marginalized. For example, globally, the enrolment of students with disabilities remains low (Thompson, 2020). Data from 35 low- and middle-income countries indicates that the average university completion rate for students with disabilities is only 4.5 percent, compared to 7.9 percent for those without a disability (Leonard Cheshire, 2018). Research over time has consistently shown that students with low socioeconomic status have fewer opportunities to succeed in higher education compared to their counterparts who have high socioeconomic status (Jury et al., 2017). Discrimination based on race is still rife in higher education (Museus et al., 2015). Law (2017) argues that to begin to address racism in universities and achieve de-racialization and de-colonization, the historic role of universities as producers of racialized knowledge must be acknowledged.

While student bodies are in general becoming more diverse, the teaching workforce, is failing to reform and become inclusive at the same pace (Poloma, 2014). This is despite evidence suggesting that a diverse university faculty can have a positive impact on both educational outcomes (particularly so for students from underrepresented minority backgrounds) and employee performance (Setati et al., 2019; Stout et al., 2018). Carey et al. (2020, p. 535) suggest that "the primary reason for the lack of diversity among faculty is not a lack of desire to hire them, but the accumulation of implicit and institutionalized biases." Gender inequality persists in academia, with patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity continuing to dominate (David, 2015). A disproportionate number of academic staff are still men (Eddy & Ward, 2017). Identities can intersect leading to some people experiencing multiple inequalities. For example, in some contexts, a combination of systemic and entrenched racism and sexism may present barriers to the professional development of academics (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Setati et al., 2019).

Museus et al. (2015) argue that the university sector acts as a microcosm of society—pervasive inequalities in society will also be pervasive in the tertiary education sector. However, it is also true that if the university labour force is unrepresentative, then the whole knowledge economy will also be unrepresentative (Connell, 2019). For all university departments this is a challenge. For departments that focus on development studies, it is a challenge that threatens to undermine the main philosophical pillars of the discipline.

2. A Perspective from Development Studies

There is no universally accepted definition of development. Broadly, development can be used to mean 'good change,' although it is accepted that this is subjective and will depend on what each individual considers as 'good' (Chambers, 1997). Remenyi (2004) regards development

as processes that aim to improve standards of living and greater capacity for self-reliance. Sen (1999) argues that development is fundamentally about increasing freedom. This includes removing sources of unfreedom, such as tyranny, oppression, and inequality. Kingsbury (2004, p. 1) describes development as "being concerned with how 'developed countries' can improve their living standards and eliminate absolute poverty." However, the UK-based Development Studies Association (2021) clarifies that the historic focus on economically poorer countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America is outdated and that the focus now extends to development issues worldwide, including addressing the global challenge of combatting poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation.

Sachs (2020) described development as the rallying cry of the postcolonial era, which facilitated the West to wield power over the world in the name of progress. More recently, development has become about survival rather than progress. This new era was ushered in with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are designed to guarantee the minimum level of human rights and environmental conditions (Sachs, 2020). The SDGs were introduced by the United Nations as a developmental blueprint for achieving a sustainable future for all. The SDG agenda is built on the notion of universality, where universal principles, values and standards, are applicable in all contexts and circumstances and at all times. By moving beyond outmoded understandings of development and by adopting a universal approach to development, the SDGs promised to leave no one behind (UN, 2015).

While development is a contested and dynamic term, prominent themes across definitions include addressing inequality and working towards social justice. It therefore would be paradoxical for a university department that specializes in development not to pursue the highest possible standards of inclusivity. If an institution of development studies is not working to improve its inclusivity, it will be not only failing to do the right thing to do from a moral position but diminishing understandings of the discipline itself. Excluding anyone from study or research, but in particular groups or individuals who are regularly 'left behind' by society, is fundamentally challenging to the philosophy of development.

The main roles of a university are research and teaching. As institutions, universities are therefore important gatekeepers to both knowledge production and the education of future professionals. Universities have historically been exclusive by design, with entry linked to a particular type of academic achievement, which is heavily influenced by deep structural, social inequities and inequalities. Such unequal power relations must be challenged if inclusive universities are to be nurtured. If a student or faculty member manages to overcome unfair barriers to entry, the next stumbling block may be the university environment. Invisible barriers may keep people with certain characteristics or identities on

the outside. The UK Development Studies Association (2021) argues that decolonizing curricula alone is not enough. Institutions, procedures, practices, as well as default ways of thinking and acting must be reformed.

Teachers are important role models for students. If faculties are not inclusive, then this may impact on how students with particular identities and characteristics experience higher education. If a student cannot find a teacher who looks, talks or thinks like them, they may start to question if they belong in that space. To ensure no one feels unwelcome or unwanted, key university gatekeepers and students must collaborate. Inclusivity can bolster academic success but can also facilitate students to feel heard and supported (Bessaha et al., 2020). A degree is an essential specification for most teaching jobs, so if students with certain identities or characteristics are excluded from tertiary education, then they will never be able to become academic staff, continuing the cycle of exclusion. After graduating, many development students go on to work in the development industry for governments, non-government organizations, and funders, among others. If development degree programs are not inclusive, a bottleneck is created, restricting the whole industry from diversity and a plurality of experience and background. Such barriers can act to propagate elitism, reinforce hegemony, and maintain structural inequalities.

In terms of knowledge production, development-focused research undertaken by universities is essential if the pressing challenges posed by a globalized world are to be addressed. Undertaking this research in an ethical way is well understood and considered essential as part of any standard evidence generation process. However, undertaking research in an inclusive way often requires specific positive action to ensure marginalization is neither created nor perpetuated. Researchers must question who is being left behind, whose viewpoint has been excluded, whose reality is being counted (Chambers, 1995). If the university is not inclusive in hiring staff, it is unrealistic to expect the research that is conducted to be fully inclusive. A diverse faculty are more likely to conceptualize research in a more inclusive way.

Connell (2019) argues that a 'good university' is one that aims to deliver social good and actively contributes to building a fairer society. Social justice should therefore underpin both teaching and research, with the least advantaged in society being prioritised. This is of course relevant to all university departments, but particularly relevant to institutes of development studies, as it resonates so strongly with the underpinning philosophies of the discipline.

Nearly 30 years ago in the first edition of *The Development Dictionary*, Sachs (1992) described the idea of development as being like a ruin in the intellectual landscape due to the persistent delusion, disappointment, failures and crimes associated with it as a concept. However, in the preface to a more recent edition, Sachs (2010) admits that the extent to which development

is charged with hopes for redress and self-affirmation was not fully appreciated—and that "the South has emerged as the staunchest defender of development" (Sachs, 2010, p. viii). The desire for dignity, equality and redress can therefore be seen to be entangled with the desire for development. When considering decolonization of development, the complexity of people's desire for development must be considered (Matthews, 2017). Development is subject to a tension between the desire to do good, and the knowledge required to achieve that desire, and Makuwira (2018) argues that if development is to avoid reproductions of power that can result in marginalization, those involved in the discipline must recognise their own ignorance and open themselves up to new realities and understandings. A similar sentiment is displayed by Chambers (2017), who argues that to do better in development, we have to know better.

By taking action to gain a better understanding of how we can improve inclusivity, development focused departments can stabilize the ruin of development as a concept and start working towards returning it to a functioning structure. However, caution is needed as any intervention that is undertaken in a disingenuous way to signal a façade of inclusivity without addressing fundamental challenges, will only be papering over the cracks. Departments that fail to be meaningfully inclusive would further contribute to that conceptual decay and the very philosophy of development starts to crumble again. Unless the way that higher education (and development studies) is conceived, designed, delivered, and evaluated is fundamentally revisited, interventions undertaken in the name of inclusion may just lead to greater disillusionment and exclusion for those who are already oppressed.

3. Conclusion

Much progress has been made to make universities more inclusive, but there is still work to be done. Advancement towards inclusivity has not been uniform across disciplines and varies depending on context and culture. Addressing intersecting marginality continues to be a challenge for those left furthest behind.

While all university departments should be aiming to be fully inclusive, this ambition is particularly pertinent for those that focus on development studies. If development is regarded as good change, then the nuance of what this means is likely to vary according to each individual (Chambers, 1997). Chambers (1997, p. 1751) suggests that "what we should seek, then, is not consensus but pluralism, not a conclusion but a process, and not permanence but change in evolving concepts." In a similar way to how development can be regarded as a dynamic, and changeable concept, so too must inclusivity in universities evolve and adapt. The extent and speed to which inclusivity can be achieved will depend on the circumstances in any country, institute or discipline. In some contexts, the most effective interventions to

improve inclusivity may involve diversifying the student body. In others, universities may pursue inclusive faculty recruitment, decolonizing the curriculum, or developing inclusive pedagogy and evaluation approaches. As well as teaching, evidence generation must become fully inclusive. The success of these initiatives will be informed and depend on the commitment, vision, and resources available to make it happen.

To progress we must actively seek to be more inclusive through self-criticism, reflection, and both learning from others and sharing. Reflecting on positionality, it is recognized that this commentary was written from a position of privilege. To develop inclusive universities for a globalized world we must learn from those who have previously been marginalized and engage with those who have been left behind. As Freire (1970, p. 84) wrote regarding the education of those who had formally been oppressed: "Looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future."

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Mass University and Social Inclusion: The Paradoxical Effect of Public Policies

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Abstract
The objective of this article is to revisit the role of public policies in the social production and reproduction of university access inequalities that have been made evident more than ever in the current intensified mass higher education context. Although the situation is complex and varies from one societal context to another, a systematic review of the existing literature highlights the undeniable responsibility of public policies in this reproduction through three main channels: guidance systems and educational pathways, institutions' stratification and hierarchization of fields of study and, finally, the financing of studies and tuition fees.

1. Introduction

Following the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, most states have recognized the right to education and their moral duty to implement it. In this context, the promotion of equality in higher education has also been considered as an essential instrument of justice and social cohesion (Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Goastellec, 2008). Beginning in the 1970s, mass higher education has gradually been established in various countries (Huberman, 1970), but it intensified between the 1980s and 1990s (Dubet, 1994; Trow, 2005). The acceleration of this massification is attributable to the affirmation of public and educational policies, and to the evolution of the connections between education and the economy, which have become increasingly close, especially in the tertiary sector (Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007).

On the one hand, a higher education diploma has become a necessary condition for accessing quality employment over the decades (Bol, 2015; J. West, 2000). Jobs requiring a secondary education or less are becoming scarce while new jobs that are created, especially in the tertiary sector, require a postsecondary education (P. Brown et al., 2008; Powell & Snellman, 2004). Also, salaries stagnate in jobs for secondary education holders: all else being equal (field of study and employment sector), higher education graduates hold higher-paying positions than high school graduates (Budria & Telhado Pereira, 2005). Consequently, an increasing number of students are pursuing higher education: Between 1900 and 2000, the number of students enrolled worldwide increased from 500,000 to 100,000,000, a population 200 times larger (Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

On the other hand, this massification results from policies linked to the democratization of education as

a whole. Upstream, it is a continuation of generalized free and compulsory secondary education adopted by several countries after the Second World War (Meyer et al., 1992), which increased the number of secondary school graduates potentially eligible for postsecondary studies. Downstream, it is the result of the adoption of political measures aiming to expand access to post-secondary studies (Machin & McNally, 2007; Schofer & Meyer, 2005), such as increasing the number of institutions and resources, diversifying training fields, and making admission conditions more flexible. However, have university and, more broadly, higher education become equitable? In other words, has this massification contributed to reducing inequalities according to students' social and ethnic origin and other social affiliations, such as gender and place of residence (rural/urban)? Is the student body representative of the social diversity at the higher education system level as well as at the various institutions, disciplines and degrees levels?

Recent studies show that despite the increase in accessibility and heterogeneity of school populations, the expansion of higher education has brought along an increase in inequalities according to social origin (Shavit et al., 2007; Triventi, 2013). From a classic sociological perspective, this increase in inequalities can be interpreted as a combination of the effects of social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), student and family self-selective behaviors (Duru-Bellat, 2003), as well as student rational choices during their academic careers (Boudon, 1974). Although the explanatory contribution of these classic theories to social inequalities in educational pathways is undoubted, they do not provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Indeed, supporters of these theories tend to place little importance on the influence of public policies.

Based on a meta-analysis of recent studies carried out in industrialized countries, this article aims to delve into the role of educational systems and public policies in the social production and reproduction of university access inequalities. This influence has been highlighted in several studies; however, there is still a need for research to address the complexity of the processes through which 'black box' educational systems participate concretely in the production, reproduction, or reduction of social inequalities, especially at the university level. While the effect of public policies on educational inequalities has a structural character due to the organization of school curricula and the degree of selectivity at various levels of education (Reichelt et al., 2019; Verdier, 2010), factors that perpetuate it are renewed over time and according to countries' fluctuating socioeconomic and political circumstances. Whatever the context, certain factors disappear, and others appear or are transformed according to the dynamics of social relations (social class, gender, and ethnicity) and public policies that are in place (Kromydas, 2017). It is therefore important that research regularly re-examines the association between public policies and social inequalities.

The objective of this article is to identify political factors specific to the contemporary period characterized both by the intensification of mass higher education through university, and by the perpetuation of social inequalities.

Our analysis of recent studies enabled us to highlight three main factors: (1) the guidance counseling systems at the secondary level, (2) the stratification of higher education, and (3) the financing of studies and tuition fees. The three factors are discussed in a general manner and on an international scale, showing that their effects should not be reduced to the national or local levels; rather, we view them as analytical avenues for any education system aiming to be equitable. We illustrate that public policies tend to have a rather paradoxical effect in relation to social inclusion in university education: Although governmental measures formally aim to democratize access to university and more broadly to education, our meta-analysis emphasizes that the opposite is observed in several cases. The analysis is divided into four sections. The first describes and contextualizes the social (re)production of educational inequalities in contemporary societies, while the subsequent sections respectively address three dimensions that the meta-analysis reveals as constitutive of these policies: the effects of guidance counseling systems and secondary school pathways, the stratified structure of higher education, and finally, the financing of studies and tuition fees. Before presenting the analysis, we describe in the next section the methodology mobilized to select our corpus of analyzed works.

2. Methodology

This article is based on a literature review of studies about the effect of public policies on the social (re)production of educational inequalities in higher education. These studies were identified using Google Scholar, Sociological Abstracts, Atrium, Érudit, ERIC and Cairn search engines and selected using the following descriptors and their French equivalents: *educational inequality*, *education*, *higher education*, *university*, *postsecondary education*, *welfare state*, *educational policies*, *public policies*. The two inclusion criteria consisted of the year of publication (from 2000) and language (English and French). However, a few studies (7) published before 2000 were selected because of their relevance, and because they concerned aspects that have not been addressed by recent studies (after 2000).

Subsequently, the selected texts were sorted. To be included, the articles had to research the effects of policies on educational pathways, and the relationship between these two variables had to be at the core of the analysis. At the end of the selection process, the corpus contained 101 articles and books. We then conducted a thematic analysis which yielded four main, but not exclusive, categories: (1) studies concerning the effects of public and educational policies on educational inequalities in general, (2) studies dealing with educational

and professional guidance counseling inequalities in high schools, (3) studies emphasizing inequalities within education itself, and (4) studies focusing on obstacles linked to financial issues. These studies were carried out, for the most part, in European countries, in North America (USA and Canada), in a few Asian countries that are members of the OECD (Japan, South Korea) and in Australia. Some concern national contexts, while others are comparative studies between two or more countries. This relatively limited choice of countries finds support in the fact that those countries have effectively established mass university education. Although the goal of democratizing university access is affirmed in several other countries, they still face various obstacles. The comparative strategy adopted is mainly universalizing—aimed at establishing "that every instance of a phenomenon follows essentially the same rule" (Tilly, 1984, p. 82)—and, to some extent, "variation finding, i.e., seeking to establish a principle of variation in the character or intensity of a phenomenon by examining systematic differences between its instances" (Tilly, 1984).

3. Contemporary Societies and the (Re)production of Inequalities in Education

Research on the effects of public policies on educational inequalities and exclusion has particular relevance in the current context marked by the reconfiguration of the state's social role on a global scale (Alon, 2009; Ertul et al., 2012; Herr, 2003; Watts, 2008), notably in its disengagement in favor of greater empowerment of individuals (Brückner & Mayer, 2005). In the name of meritocracy (performativity, efficiency and individual enterprising) promoted by neoliberal ideology (Apple, 2001), this dynamic of state disengagement materializes through the privatization (especially in Liberal welfare states) and commodification of public services such as education and legitimizes exclusion through competition and selection practices at the institutional level (Hill & Kumar, 2009).

In a neoliberal context, educational development strategies are based on a system of accountability and on the promotion of students' and parents' freedom of choice:

> In education, neoliberal strategies focus on high-stakes accountability, increased assessment, and school choice. Under neoliberal reform, schools are mandated to increase the number of assessments they administer and are penalized or rewarded according to student performance. Schools are then classified by this performance, and this classification serves as a measure of school quality for parents when selecting schools. (Brathwaite, 2017, p. 430)

Although equity and social justice are promoted in the name of democracy, they actually give rise to inequalities. Hence, while prescribed pathways are currently less restrictive, not all individuals have equal opportu-

nities and capacities to use the resources made available to them, nor to negotiate an educational pathway that allows them to access social and economic success (Ertul et al., 2012). From the perspective of Sen's (2000) capability approach, the existence of resources (goods and services) and of the formal right to access them is certainly a prerequisite to ensuring social justice, but it is not sufficient. It is also important that all concerned individuals are equipped with the capabilities to use them to achieve their goals. In this light, educational and vocational guidance counseling systems are not neutral (Dhume & Dukic, 2012). They can contribute to reducing or increasing inequalities depending on the resources they make available to individuals, in conjunction with their ability to mobilize them (Wang, 2011).

Comparative international studies show that the persistence of social inequalities in education across generations is strongly rooted in the way educational institutions operate and is reinforced through public policies (A. West & Nikolai, 2013). Societies differ from one another regarding the level of public influence and intervention within the management of educational institutions, and the financial aid available to individuals at risk of poverty. Depending on whether this intervention favors the freedom and autonomy of institutions or, on the contrary, supervision and support, the tendency is either towards segmentation and social disparities, or towards the harmonization of the system and social cohesion (Dubet et al., 2010). Such studies also bear witness to the fact that social inequalities in education vary according to societal contexts. Thus, they appear to be more moderate in societies where economic inequalities between individuals are low, or where diplomas have a moderate influence on the socioeconomic future of individuals (Goastellec, 2020). School policies operate via a set of social policies with which they interact. Namely, inequalities are reduced when measures to fight social injustice are adopted by governments and implemented by educational institutions at all levels (primary, secondary and university).

In sum, the link between social origin and higher education inequalities has a structural character based on the culture, history, and economic organization of societies (Altbach et al., 2009), as well as the organization of school trajectories, and the degree of selectivity at different levels of education (Dubet et al., 2010; Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Felouzis, 2009). The latter are themselves part of an ideological orientation (neoliberal, conservative, social-democratic) of public policies and the specific relationship between the labor market and each level of education (Pechar & Andres, 2011; Willemse & De Beer, 2013).

4. Guidance Counseling and Secondary School Pathways

Regardless of the education system, access to university is largely conditional on obtaining a secondary

school diploma, even if alternative access avenues exist. However, depending on the organization of the education system, not all secondary school diplomas provide access to higher education and university especially. Education systems are comprised of secondary education pathways and programs, some of which are preparatory for higher education, while others are inclined to vocational training geared towards the labor market. The reproduction of social inequalities remains consistently pronounced across sectors since they are based on early selection and inter-compartmentalized (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2006).

Several comparative international studies demonstrate the correlation between the extent of selectivity within sectors and the reproduction of inequalities. They highlight two trends (Dubet et al., 2010; Dupriez & Dumay, 2006; Felouzis, 2009): differentiated and comprehensive educational systems. Differentiated systems are characterized by a separation of students and early orientation into hierarchical streams which generally operate on the basis of academic performance, often using selection tests. In Europe, differentiated systems are found in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Germany (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006). Differentiation is based on various arguments depending on the education system, but three of them seem to be the most often evoked, as underscored by Felouzis (2014). Firstly, student selection and guidance through hierarchical streams are based on the principle of meritocracy: More deserving and talented students must be offered training that matches their skills and meets their ambitions. In contrast, a less rigorous or ambitious pathway should be offered to weak or less gifted students; one that realistically allows them to succeed based on their abilities. The second argument is pedagogical and maintains that to increase the chances of success for all, students must be grouped into homogeneous classes; in doing so, it enables the adjustment of content and pedagogical approaches to their learning pace. Finally, the third argument asserts that this differentiation contributes to valuing weak or less gifted students: Assigning them to vocational training programs of short duration according to their interest allows avoiding or reducing the risk of failure and negative effects on self-esteem that may be encountered over the course of long-term schooling. Contrary to these arguments, selection mechanisms at the core of these groupings do not prevent social segregation or even exclusion, since the treatment (curricula and teaching resources) that students receive is often unequal and varies in subtle ways according to their social and ethnic origins (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Dhume & Dukic, 2012; Meyers & Gornick, 2003).

Conversely, comprehensive education systems are distinguishable by their common training structure over a long-term period (Dubet et al., 2010; Dupriez & Dumay, 2006). Selection and orientation in hierarchical streams happen later in educational pathways or not at all. The number of enriched optional courses is also lim-

ited. Ultimately, the goal of this common long-term training is to retain students for as long as possible so they may develop equal educational assets, while reducing the effects of family resources (or lack thereof) on school performance, access to graduate studies and professional integration. The principle of these systems is that the educational and professional orientation that follow depend more on student choices and their accumulated skills than the cultural, social, and economic capital of their parents. According to the same studies, most Anglo-Saxon and South-East Asian countries as well as Northern-European countries fall in this category.

The comparison of differentiated and comprehensive systems shows a strong positive correlation between the degree of educational differentiation and the extent of performance gaps between students from different social backgrounds. The gap between weak students (usually of modest origins) and strong students (usually from wealthy families) increases as the system becomes more differentiated and vice versa. In differentiated systems, weak students do not have enough time to improve their performance to close the gap between themselves and stronger students because the two groups are separated from the first years to follow different and hierarchized programs (Dupriez & Dumay, 2006). These systems are more likely to maintain a strong relationship between social origin and educational inequalities through earlier and successive guidance at the different levels of primary and secondary education. As Le Donné's (2014) study shows, this is the case in several countries of Continental Europe where secondary education is divided into two or three levels of educational and vocational guidance and students are subject to successive selection processes. Early orientation, which in some countries (e.g., Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) begins at age 10 in primary school, contributes to perpetuating social homogenization. The case of Germany offers a good illustration as evidenced by Neugebauer et al. (2013). After primary education, students are selected and sorted based on their academic performance, then oriented in three hierarchical streams: The first, the *Hauptschule*, is meant for those with poor academic results; it lasts five years, offers vocational training, and its diploma does not provide access to higher education. The second (*Reaschule*) includes intermediate level students; it lasts six years and prepares students for white-collar jobs, middle management positions in business or skilled trade occupations. Graduates of this stream are not university-eligible but may be admitted to other types of higher education institutions, provided they successfully complete an additional ad hoc training. Finally, the *Gymnasium* is reserved for strong students and prepares them to university studies. Although parental choice is considered in some states, its influence on admission to the three streams is very limited. Educational guidance is strongly correlated with parents' income and level of education. Only one in three students (32%) whose parents have a low level of

education is admitted to the *Gymnasium*, while among those whose parents have a higher education degree, the proportion is three in four (76%). Likewise, only 26% of students whose parents have a lower income access the *Gymnasium*, while this rate reaches 73% in the case of high-income families.

In comprehensive systems (i.e., the Nordic countries, Poland, Spain, and Iceland), the gap between weak and strong students is also present and correlated with parents' socioeconomic status. However, it tends to be smaller compared to differentiated systems (Le Donné, 2014). Extending the duration of the common core program gives weak students the chance to improve their performance and reduces the gap between them and strong pupils who, as stated above, generally come from socially advantaged backgrounds. Therefore, leveling the educational options would help reduce social inequalities in educational and vocational guidance.

Although the existence of a common program is favorable to equal chances of success and academic performance, it is not sufficient. This equalization is, first of all, based on a culture of social justice that characterizes a system, which is also embedded in social organization (Dubet et al., 2010). Such a culture rests on social cohesion and the implementation of concrete measures to combat all forms of exclusion in various spheres of social life (education, labor market, housing, health, leisure, etc.). In other words, not all integrated systems are necessarily egalitarian. The scope of school integration varies according to public policies and social relations between families often involving competition (Verdier, 2010), but also mainly according to the regulation of institutional practices (Iannelli, 2013). Even in the presence of a common program, the reconfiguration of the link between social and educational inequalities can be maintained through socially accepted practices of segregation in institutions: for example, parents' right to choose their children's school (Van Zanten, 2009), the link between the quality of institutions and the social organization of neighborhoods, which favors socially homogeneous student groupings in the same schools (François & Poupeau, 2004), learning differentiation and the proliferation of optional courses (Felouzis, 2009; Kamanzi, 2019; Kamanzi et al., 2020), the autonomy of institutions to adapt or reorganize programs, as well as competition between institutions (Draelants, 2013; Kamanzi, 2019).

The case of the USA is eloquent in this regard, as evidenced by Brathwaite (2017). Parents' right to choose schools allows families to enroll their children in institutions located outside the area of residence. This right is more beneficial to families with high economic, cultural, and social capital, able to access information and mobilize the necessary financial resources. More often driven by the rejection of social diversity, these families target schools mainly attended by children of the same social classes. This phenomenon is especially frequent in neighborhoods characterized by socioeconomic inequal-

ities and ethnic heterogeneity. Its consequences are the social homogenization of schools and the marginalization of students from poor families in the same schools. Students from cultural minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds find themselves concentrated in institutions marked by low performances, a bad climate, lower quality resources (human and material), an anti-school culture and high dropout rates. This situation is very common among students from Black and Spanish-speaking communities of Latin American origin; as a result, few of these students persevere through higher education, especially university.

In sum, the link between social origin and educational inequalities has a structural character anchored in the organization of school curricula and is correlated with the degree of selectivity at the different levels of education (Hillmert & Jacob, 2002; Verdier, 2010). Internal to each system, mechanisms that allow students to be divided into educational pathways predispose them to educational inequalities at upper levels (Draelants, 2013). The differentiation between these pathways establishes institutional enclosures between spaces in the educational system that are protected from the effects of massification and reserved for the elite. In contrast, there are those that can be viewed as 'parking lots' that lead to careers such as manual trades with no lane towards postsecondary studies. Of course, in a context of equal access in schools, admission to general education courses leading to higher education is based on academic results, as well as on student and parent choices, but it must be emphasized that public policies are far from neutral. They operate directly (Checchi et al., 2014), indirectly, and invisibly through institutional selection practices (Gibbs, 2002; Reay, 2004), such as tracking, separating, and grouping students by abilities in classes offering unequal quality of education (Dupriez, 2010). As a result, social inequalities in university should be considered as the result of cumulative exclusions (Tsui, 2003).

The following section demonstrates that while massification increased access opportunities for all social groups, the negative social effects of differentiation on educational pathways are accentuated by the stratification and segmentation of higher education.

5. The Stratification of Higher Education

Higher education massification policies have contributed to reducing social inequalities in terms of university access, at least initially (e.g., Cantwell et al., 2018; Goastellec, 2020; Liu et al., 2016). However, massification does not guarantee a decrease in postsecondary access inequalities, and can also cause a displacement and an accentuation of inequalities within higher education when coupled with policies of supply stratification.

Indeed, mass higher education has not only been characterized by an increase in student numbers and heterogeneity, but also by a proliferation of institutions and

the diversification of the training offer. Driven by the theory of human capital (Becker, 1964/1993), industrialized societies and their governments have considered training a critical mass of highly skilled laborers as essential to meet the needs of a growing knowledge economy (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Over the past three decades, economic growth has enabled public authorities to invest more resources in higher education and de facto, to legitimize the right of governments to exercise direct or indirect control over institutions, whether in terms of management or educational programs (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). In turn, the expansion of higher education has helped creating mechanisms for sustainable economic development supported by research, knowledge generation, and innovation (Peters, 2013; Kruss et al., 2015). Finally, we are witnessing the interweaving of developments in the economic and educational markets, which is accentuated under the effect of globalization and the expansion of neoliberalism (Boguslavskii & Neborskii, 2016; Lynch, 2006; Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Along with accessibility measures and higher education expansion, public authorities have invested significant resources in the differentiation and diversification of training structures and have offered to increase the capacity of education systems to respond to increasingly diversified social and economic demands (Marginson, 2015, 2016b; Triventi, 2013). In terms of structure, we observe to varying degrees cohabitation, often accompanied by competition between private and public institutions. Fueled by globalization and economic competition between countries, this dynamic contributed to transforming higher education systems into a market (R. Brown, 2008; Callender & Dougherty, 2018; Chapman, 2008; Gibbs, 2002). On the one hand, students and parents struggle to access the most prestigious institutions, meaning reputed to provide superior training and increase chances of accessing employment of high socioeconomic status. On the other hand, to maintain or increase their prestige, institutions are encouraged to play the same game of competition among themselves to acquire more financial resources—whether private or public—but above all, better quality students either locally or internationally, who constitute the most important resource in education (Clark, 2009). In several national contexts, this competitive game has been transferred within institutions and has led to the hierarchization of fields and courses of study (Marginson, 2016b).

In a comparative analysis of 11 European countries, Triventi (2013) shows that the reproduction of social inequalities in higher education is linked with institutional stratification in two ways. Firstly, students from culturally advantaged backgrounds have greater chances of graduating from a prestigious institution, with a degree of a higher status and with more advantageous occupational outcomes. Secondly, the author finds an association between parents' education and the prestige of the students' field of study. Also highlighting this link between stratification and educational inequalities,

Marginson (2016b) notes that massified higher education systems in socioeconomically unequal societies such as the USA have a tendency to be more stratified; as a result, the effects of social background in educational attainment are strengthened. In the United Kingdom, R. Brown (2018) stresses that the competition between individuals and institutions, amplified by the marketization of higher education, generates a stratification of the institutions, which is associated with the socioeconomic composition of the students they enroll. All in all, the greater the institutional stratification, the greater the access inequalities based on social origin, as underscored by the comparative studies of Davies and Zarifa (2012) in the USA and Canada, Liu et al. (2016) in OECD Countries.

In the name of meritocracy and educational system efficiency, the institutional stratification and the hierarchy of fields of study have established new institutional barriers and legitimized social exclusion in spaces that are protected from higher education and the job market. As summarized by Marginson (in Cantwell et al., 2018, p. 167): "There is a common failure to democratize the elite institutions during the massification process." The work of these authors on High Participation Systems (HPS) also underscores the following dynamic: while massification is not necessarily associated with horizontal diversification—but rather with a decline in educational diversity—vertical stratification is important and contributes to inequalities. They note that "with the expansion of participation, plus greater institutional stratification and associated social competition in education, there is a secular tendency to social inequality" (Cantwell et al., 2018, p. 449). The authors thus highlight a strong tendency towards separating a small elitist university sector from a large university sector absorbing the demand for access. According to these authors, this stratification stems from social dynamics that are distinct from the process of massification on its own. Here we find the hypothesis that competition between individuals and between institutions reinforces stratification all the more as systems are massified, except when proactive policies to limit these effects are implemented (Liu et al., 2016).

With massification, "the positional structure of the higher education system increasingly resembles that of society. The High Participation System is increasingly implicated in the reproduction of existing patterns of social equality/inequality" (Cantwell et al., 2018, p. 448). This is also reflected in international comparative studies on welfare regimes and higher education, which report fewer inequalities in less stratified social democratic systems of Northern Europe (Pechar & Andres, 2011; Willemse & De Beer, 2013). According to Pechar and Andres (2011), in Nordic countries, higher education systems promote expansion while ensuring social protection for individuals who do not have the ability or the will to pursue a university education. Aside from generous loans and grants, high public expenses, and low private financing, public policies include a pronounced

institutional standardization, which contributes to reducing overall inequalities in higher education (Willemse & De Beer, 2013). However, a recent review of literature argues that since the 1990s, the social democratic model characterized by high standardization has been challenged by an increased institutional stratification (Isopahkala-Bouret et al., 2018).

All things considered, studies focusing on the stratification of higher education underline the importance of political choices made to support and accompany massification and, consequently, the variety of national configurations in which more or less significant inequalities of access are embedded. It is in the structure and organization of university systems that the social contract specific to each society is expressed, and not in the process of massification itself. The link between the reproduction of social inequalities and the internal organization of higher education seems thus deeply rooted in policies that "take place within frameworks of historical institutionalization that differ qualitatively between countries" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 80).

6. Financing of Studies and Tuition Fees

As we previously highlighted, the competition that characterizes higher education has been associated with economic issues: In an era of national deficits, some governments tended to reduce the amount of basic funding to universities (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). In a dynamic of competition for financial resources, universities aimed to diversify their sources of income (Goastellec, 2012). This diversification of income implied, among other things, a greater financial contribution from students, perceived as consumers of a service (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In this light, the trend of rising tuition fees in industrialized countries (Goastellec, 2012; Marginson, 2016a) has been linked to the social reproduction of inequalities of access to university education.

Among public policies affecting education, financial policies are considered as an important tool to compensate for inequalities. They are the subject of recurrent and contradictory debates, especially with regard to tuition fees. For some analysts like Castro and Poitevin (2018), it is the students' (and parents') responsibility to assume part of the training costs since they are the main beneficiaries of the human capital thus produced. Without denying the social return generated by university education, the authors emphasize that it brings a higher private return than primary and secondary education, since university studies are only accessible to a limited section of society. Recognizing, however, that high tuition fees can be a barrier for young people from low-income families, the authors advocate for a public policy of increased financial assistance and the least restrictive repayment terms as possible.

In contrast, opposers of tuition fees and defenders of free higher education base their arguments on the prin-

ciple that these represent a welfare good (Martin, 2016). Higher education is a good that is essential to human dignity (Calame & Ziaka, 2015) and, consequently, a social right for every citizen who requests it. As Martin (2016, pp. 9–10) highlights:

> Higher education should be available to all because it is necessary for living a good life. Here higher education is understood to be a welfare good in the same class as health care and basic schooling. It is something to which citizens have a *social right*.

Following this perspective, higher education should be conceived as 'morally special,' as it contributes to human development (autonomy, social and individual well-being, health, freedom, etc.) and to the production of other goods for society according to its priorities (Martin, 2016). Therefore, the author argues that tuition fees and the debt they impose distract citizens from their moral and democratic duty to society, since the only important obligation after graduation is to repay the debts incurred. Conversely, when all the costs of studies are covered by public authorities, graduates integrate the moral duty to fully mobilize their acquired knowledge to contribute to the development of their societies.

On another level, financial policies regarding both fees and student financial supports inform the conception of students as autonomous individuals or dependent on their families, and as socio-philosophically associated with a state model. In this regard, Charles (2015) shows how in socio-democratic states students are considered as autonomous individuals through funding policies that center on social equality and freedom of choice. In the 'Swedish metro' of higher education, student pathways are open, and the consolidation of work and studies is encouraged to help reduce the influence of a diploma on economic outcomes. The financing of studies does not consider parents' resources nor the linearity of the educational path. In this light, the financing of studies appears to be a universal right. This is not the case in conservative regimes: Families' socioeconomic resources influence those that are made available by the welfare state. As for liberal regimes, they index funding to family characteristics and individual academic success. These educational financing policies are derived from the social philosophy specific to each country.

Beyond these philosophical principles that guide public authorities' decisions, what does empirical research tell us about the effect of tuition fees on social equity? Studies in several developed countries show that a rise in tuition fees decreases access to university for certain groups of young people. In Germany, Bahrs and Siedler (2019) studied the impact of tuition fees on high school students' intention to obtain a university degree. Their analysis concludes that the introduction of €1,000 annual tuition fees in Germany had a negative impact on 17-year-olds' intention to pursue a higher education training: Proportions declined overall by 10%, with

a particularly steep decrease in low-income-household students (33%). In Canada, Doray et al. (2015) observe a double effect of tuition fees on certain social groups' access to university: A rise of $1,000 in annual fees decreases first-generation students' access by 19% and increases access by 10% for students whose parents hold university degrees. In the USA, Allen and Wolniak (2019) conducted multivariate analyses to verify the effects of an increase in tuition fees at public colleges and universities on institutions' racial and ethnic diversity. Their results suggest that tuition increases are negatively linked to the racial and ethnic diversity of institutions' student population. Also, studies by Coelli (2009) in Canada, Callender (2008) and Galindo-Rueda et al. (2004) in England show that a rise in university tuition fees coincides with declining enrollment for students from low-income families. In conclusion, high tuition fees thus seem to constitute an obstacle to access to higher education for young people from low-income families while the same trend does not apply to their peers from middle-and higher-income families, as evidenced by the comparative study of Liu et al. (2016) in OECD countries.

7. Conclusion

The objective of this article was to revisit the role of public policies in the social production and reproduction of university access inequalities in contemporary massified higher education systems. Our comparative analysis of contemporary studies highlights the universal and undeniable responsibility of public policies in this reproduction. This is mainly the result of exclusion mechanisms based on successive selection instituted by public authorities. At the secondary level, the influence of public policies acts through educational and vocational guidance systems in academic streams and curricula leading to university and, more broadly, to higher education. Defined by political powers, these systems are often vectors of segregation. The social and ethnic exclusion as the result of selection is to the advantage of students from families endowed with cultural and economic resources. After secondary school, students admitted to university undergo a second selection process and those of disadvantaged social and ethnic origins are subjected to a second exclusion process; few of them are admitted to prestigious universities and fields of study that are socially valued and rewarding in the labor market (Di Pietro & Cutillo, 2006; McGuinness, 2003). As previously mentioned, different countries allow these selections to multiply to promote competition and institutional stratification, as well as the prioritization of streaming and university training courses (Bloch & Mitterle, 2017). Finally, another source of exclusion concerns the financing of studies. Governments can provide universal funding for studies and may or may not allow institutions to charge students tuition fees to increase their financial resources. These fees can accentuate social exclusion when arrangements are not in place to ensure adequate

financial support for students from low-income families. In sum, mass university is not synonymous with social justice. On the contrary, it conceals social inequalities which are reproduced through different forms of social segregation and exclusion. Paradoxically, these are often generated by institutional practices, governed by public policies, in the name of social justice.

The way these three main dimensions combine varies depending on the countries and along the lines of the welfare state types and their intrinsic equality principles. Three main types of combinations are particularly salient in countries with massified higher education systems: early official tracking at secondary level, moderately stratified higher education and low to moderate fees and financial support (conservative model); internal tracking, highly stratified higher education, high fees and financial support (liberal model); little tracking at secondary education, little higher education stratification, low fees and highly important support (social-democratic model). These combinations lead to various levels of inequality (Goastellec, 2020), the latter thus directly resulting from policy choices.

Still, as mentioned in the introduction, the influence of factors associated with public policies analyzed in this article does not act alone. It operates in tandem with social factors, notably the cultural, social, and economic capital of parents (Galindo-Rueda et al., 2004; Reay, 2004). In other words, the production of social inequalities is shared between responsibilities assumed by families and public authorities, as recalled by Van Zanten (2005), as well as Motel-Klingebiel et al. (2005). However, the way in which this partitioning takes place fluctuates over time and space depending on political choices (Checchi et al., 2014). As Whelan et al. (2011) point out, the degree of intergenerational mobility, or the persistence of social reproduction, is ultimately strongly anchored in the history of each society, the evolution of public policies, and the inner workings of social institutions. The influence of social and ethnic origin and characteristics on the reproduction of educational inequalities is closely linked to public policies that can mitigate or accentuate it through the regulation of institutional practices (Checchi et al., 2014; Reay, 2004). In all cases, contemporary research supports the claim that the persistence of social inequalities in the context of mass university is highly policy dependent. Policy matters, as much to sustain, reproduce, or limit inequalities.

If in contemporary societies, higher education is recognized as a common good and an instrument for improving individual and social well-being and social cohesion (Calame & Ziaka, 2015; McMahon, 2018), it is all the more time that university access and its various fields and levels of training become equitable.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Inclusive Higher Education Access for Underrepresented Groups: It Matters, But How Can Universities Measure It?

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Abstract

Measuring access to higher education for underrepresented groups is a relevant yet challenging task. The article shows that while social inclusion is recognised as a priority, policymakers, academics, and institutional leaders struggle to define, operationalise, and measure it. This makes answering the question of what constitutes a socially inclusive higher education institution quite difficult. While the answer to this question may be context-specific, there is a clear need for a set of commonly defined indicators that allow higher education institutions to measure their progress throughout time and in relation to others. The article synthesises insights from policy, practise, and scientific research to identify which indicators are the most promising for assessing the access of under-representative students to higher education. By discussing indicator relevance, validity and feasibility, the article contributes to the quest for internationally comparable social inclusion indicators of underrepresented student groups.

Issue

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

The inclusion of underrepresented groups in higher education is on supra-national and national policy agendas around the world (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). Governments are increasingly holding higher education institutions (HEIs) accountable for their performance in ensuring equity (Pitman et al., 2020). Measuring access to higher education for underrepresented groups is a relevant yet challenging task (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019; Pitman et al., 2020). The central question that has yet to be answered is: access for whom? Clearly, the answer to this question is paramount for designing access indicators.

Research has shown that there are many different definitions and, as such, no unified understanding of what social inclusion means and who underrepresented groups or non-traditional students are (Chung et al., 2014; Kottmann et al., 2019). This makes answering the question of what constitutes a socially inclusive HEI a rather complex task. While the answer may be context-specific, there is a clear need for a set of commonly defined indicators that allow HEIs to measure their progress throughout time and in relation to other institutions so they can monitor the effectiveness of their interventions and learn from good practices.

In this article, we continue the quest for such a set of indicators. We ask two central research questions: (1) What underrepresented groups are considered in describing social inclusiveness in access to higher

education? (2) What are the most promising indicators for comparing the social inclusiveness of HEIs in terms of access for underrepresented students?

To answer these questions, the article builds mostly on research done for the U-Multirank project, a multi-dimensional ranking and transparency tool that allows students, HEIs and policymakers to compare the performance of HEIs on a variety of issues (research, teaching & learning, knowledge transfer, international orientation, regional engagement). U-Multirank aims to expand its coverage to new and highly relevant issues in higher education, such as social inclusion. For this purpose, exploratory analyses of policy documents and large-scale projects on social inclusion (e.g., rankings, international surveys) were conducted, and the identified indicators were discussed with a group of international experts and stakeholders to assess their relevance, validity, and feasibility for comparing the performance of HEIs. In addition to expert and stakeholder insights on access indicators, we include preliminary findings from a broader ongoing systematic literature review on social inclusion in higher education.

1.2. European Policy Context

In the last decade, social inclusion in higher education has considerably advanced on the supra-national policy agenda in various forums such as the United Nations, the Bologna Process or the European Union. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations. Some of the key goals of this 17-point strategic agenda are ensuring gender equality (SDG 5), improving the quality of education (SDG 4) and reducing social inequality (SDG 10) by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). These SDGs seem to provide an answer to the central questions of inclusive access to higher education: access to whom, to what, and for what purpose?

Social inclusion is not a new policy priority in the higher education sector. In Europe, 'widening participation' has been high on the agenda for nearly three decades. However, a recent review on social inclusion policies in the EU found that definitions for underrepresented students vary across countries, and the lack of social inclusion indicators makes a meaningful comparison difficult (Kottmann et al., 2019). By looking at the heterogenous European context, we intend to highlight challenges and potential solutions relevant within and beyond Europe. We acknowledge that social inclusion policies have received considerable attention in the US (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007), the UK (Gorard et al., 2019), and Australia (Pitman et al., 2020), yet policy reflections in these regions are beyond the scope of this section.

The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) on Social Dimension is one of the major steering bodies for social inclusion policies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In 2015, it published the *Widening Participation for Equity and Growth* strategy, emphasising that in the 49 member states, "still too many capable students

are excluded from higher education systems because of their socio-economic situation, educational background, insufficient systems of support and guidance and other obstacles" (Bologna Process, 2015, p. 1). Building on the 2015 strategy, in 2020, the BFUG proposed the *Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education* (Bologna Process, 2020) adopted by the EHEA ministers. The new strategy proposes ten interconnected principles of accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education to be incorporated into member states' laws, policies, practices. Principle 4 explicitly states that "reliable data is a necessary precondition for an evidence/based improvement of the social dimension in higher education" and "higher education systems should define the purpose and goals of collecting certain types of data" (Bologna Process, 2020, p. 26). As before, the guidelines encourage member states to collect internationally comparable data and provide information on the composition of their student body within the limits of their national legal frameworks.

As part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Commission set the target of improving tertiary education attainment among the EU's population aged 30 to 34 from 31% in 2010 to 40% a decade later (European Commission, 2010). The EU target was reached in 2019, but there were discrepancies across member states (Eurostat, 2020). In 2017, the renewed EU agenda for higher education emphasised the importance of building inclusive and connected higher education systems that are open to talent from all backgrounds (European Commission, 2017). In 2018, the Council of the European Union issued recommendations on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, inviting member states to provide the necessary support to all learners according to their needs and facilitate their transition across various educational levels and pathways (Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018, 2018). The groups of learners identified included those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, migrant backgrounds, and those with special needs.

What becomes apparent from the above-mentioned policies is a need to measure and compare the advancement of social inclusion throughout time and between countries and HEIs. So, the question becomes: How can social inclusion in higher education be measured in an internationally comparable manner? Measurement theory distinguishes different levels and tasks for ensuring measurement validity: (1) Start from a background concept which includes the "broad constellation of meanings and understandings associated with a given concept'' and through conceptualisation reach a systematised concept that has an "explicit definition" from which (2) indicators can be operationalised to (3) score empirical cases (Adcock & Collier, 2001, p. 531). The insights gathered from this process should be used to refine indicators and fine-tune the systematised concept to ensure that our measurements are better capturing the phenomenon under scrutiny. The next sections

will follow these steps providing an overview of insights from experts, academic literature and practice on how to measure social inclusion in higher education.

2. Measuring Social Inclusion: Insights from Research and Practice

To ensure that the article covers insights on measuring social inclusion in higher education from both research and practice, we conducted a review of both. First, we identified existing rankings and recent large-scale projects that fully or partially focus on social inclusion. These were the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking (THE Impact Ranking), the INVITED survey carried out by the European University Association (EUA; Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019) and the Australian Equity Ranking (Pitman et al., 2020). The list of projects is not exhaustive but offers current insights on relevant social inclusion measures used in practice.

Second, to ensure that the literature review presented in this article is representative of previously published scientific research on the access dimension of social inclusion in higher education, a systematic literature review methodology was employed. The literature synthesis on access presented here is part of a more extensive ongoing project that aims to provide an evidence gap map of review studies on social inclusion in higher education from the last two decades (2001–2020). The project followed the research design and methodological guidelines proposed by other systematic literature review studies in higher education research (Craciun & Orosz, 2018; Grosemans et al., 2017). Literature was retrieved from four databases of scientific research (ERIC, Econlit, Scopus, Web of Science) using controlled keyword searches (see Table 1).

After removing duplicates, 39,720 unique references remained which were screened for relevance in Covidence—a systematic literature review management software. During the title and abstract screening, each publication was screened by two researchers and only those that met all three of the following inclusion criteria were kept: (1) focused on social inclusion issues at (2) the higher education level, (3) following a systematic literature review style research design. After the screening, 267 references moved to the full-text review, and we excluded items that met any of the following criteria: (1) They did not deal with access to higher education (i.e., for this article, we excluded articles that dealt with the other stages of social inclusion, see Figure 1), (2) had the wrong study design (did not follow systematic literature review methodological guidelines), (3) were not at higher education level, (4) were not written in English, (5) the full text was not available for review or (6) were not scientific publications (e.g., conference proceedings, reports, opinion pieces). A total of 26 articles passed the initial review and were categorised according to the theme covered. Four broad themes were distinguished: overviews of state of the art, barriers/enablers to participation, definitions/indicators, and the effectiveness of interventions to improve access. In line with the aim of the article, we only included insights from the systematic literature reviews which cover the theme of definitions/indicators (Chung et al., 2014; Gorard et al., 2019; Nikula, 2018; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013).

2.1. Conceptualisation

Shaped by changing norms and societal values, the meaning of social inclusion in higher education has shifted over time. Just a decade ago, social inclusion was seen as synonymous with higher education access (Gidley et al., 2010). The concept has evolved to include the whole educational career (i.e., steps prior, during, and after to higher education)—a development visible in both scientific research (Gidley et al., 2010; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007; Pitman et al., 2020; Salmi & Bassett, 2014)

Table 1. Keywords used for database searches.

Literature type search term	Context search term	Topic search term
Systematic literature review	Higher Education	Social inclusion
Meta-analysis	Post-secondary education	Access
Systematic review	Tertiary education	Outreach
Systematic synthesis	Student	Entry/Entr*
Evidence map	University	Social dimension
Evidence gap map	College	Participation
Qualitative review		Equity
		Diversity
		Admission
		Selection
		Social integration
		Participation
		Success
		Outcomes
		Underrepresented group

and policy documents (Bologna Process, 2015, 2020). For example, the most recent principles and guidelines on social inclusion issued by the BFUG emphasise the need to move "beyond widening accessibility clauses and focusing on the concept of 'leaving no one behind'" (Bologna Process, 2020, p. 24).

Gidley et al. (2010) note that *access* to higher education should be seen as the first step towards social inclusion, followed by *participation* and *success*, collectively representing 'degrees' of social inclusion. Salmi and Bassett (2014) and Pitman et al. (2020) also consider graduate *outcomes* (e.g., labour market outcomes, further study) as part of social inclusion and a report by the EUA (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019) includes *outreach* activities prior to accessing higher education in the same process. Building on these ideas, social inclusion can be represented as a sequential process (see Figure 1) moving through different stages: from (1) outreach activities aiming to reduce the academic, aspirational, informational and personal barriers that restrict (2) access to higher education to underrepresented groups and impede (3) participation (or progress) in their studies towards (4) success (often marked by obtaining a degree) and further educational or labour market (5) outcomes.

To measure social inclusion at HEIs across countries, we "need to proceed from a sound conceptual basis" (Pitman et al., 2020, p. 620). So how do we know social inclusion when we see it? We have identified the BFUG conceptualisation (Bologna Process, 2020) as a good standard since it is precise enough to incorporate a comprehensive understanding of the process and general enough to be applied to multiple contexts. Social inclusion in higher education entails that the "composition of the student body entering, participating in, and completing higher education at all levels should correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large" and encompass "the creation of an inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity and diversity and is responsive to the needs of local communities" (Bologna Process, 2020, p. 13). We adopt this as the substantive definition and background concept of social inclusion—a reference point for the article, recognising the consecutive steps of social inclusion (see Figure 1) and engagement with the community.

Due to the lack of consensus on internationally comparable social inclusion indicators (Kottmann et al., 2019) and to limit the scope of this article, we settle for a minimal definition as the systematised concept of social inclusion: access to higher education for underrepresented groups. As an early stage of social inclusion, 'access' is concerned with increasing the proportion of underrep-

resented or disadvantaged students entering higher education but does not consider participation and success (Gidley et al., 2010). We are aware that access is not sufficient for achieving substantive social inclusion, but it covers the necessary condition. The need to restrict the concept to the minimal definition will immediately become apparent in the next sub-sections, where we discuss the difficulty in measuring social inclusion encountered by other large-scale projects (e.g., rankings, international surveys).

The article focuses on underrepresented groups as defined by the BFUG on Social Dimension. Underrepresented groups are those whose share among the students in relation to certain characteristics (e.g., gender, age, nationality, socioeconomic background, migratory background) is lower than the share of a comparable group in the total reference population. In addition to underrepresented students, BFUG also encourages collecting data on disadvantaged and vulnerable student groups. Disadvantaged students are those exposed to specific challenges compared to their peers in higher education, while vulnerable students are those at risk of disadvantage and have special (protection) needs. Vulnerable students need additional support and attention to prevent them from potential harm (Bologna Process, 2020). The status of both vulnerable and disadvantaged groups can be assigned temporarily, from time to time or prolonged periods, and may be removed if a certain obstacle (e.g., financial, physical, study restrictions) is addressed or eliminated. Students in these groups might self-identify as belonging to the group and needing a certain service (e.g., psychological counselling), or an institution might have predefined guidelines. With a few exceptions (e.g., physical disability), indicators on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are less likely to utilise the total population as a reference group. Both groups may but do not necessarily overlap with underrepresented student groups. Due to these differences, we decided to focus on underrepresented student groups only.

For instance, a systematic literature review of 45 studies on 'non-traditional students' in higher education—an umbrella category similar to the label underrepresented students—found that there were "wide range variations on how the term was defined" (Chung et al., 2014, p. 1224). No less than thirteen different categories of meaning had been associated with the term in the studies reviewed. These were: age, sex, ethnicity, disability and trauma, having multiple roles in addition to being a student, mode of study (full-time vs part-time), having a gap in studies, having a commuter

Figure 1. Constitutive stages of social inclusion in higher education.

status (not living on campus), being demographically 'different' from the norm, admission pathway to higher education, enrolment in 'non-traditional' programs, being 'disadvantaged,' or having a previous degree. The article rightfully concludes that while it is essential to consider "societal, geographical and systemic context" in defining the terms, the "lack of consistency in categories in the definition of 'non-traditional students'… limits the usefulness of this already ambiguous term" (Chung et al., 2014, p. 1233).

Our conceptualisation of social inclusion also entails "the creation of an inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity and diversity and is responsive to the needs of local communities" (Bologna Process, 2020, p. 13). To develop such an environment, institutions can pro-actively deploy a variety of intervention mechanisms such as outreach programs, non-discrimination policies, financial and housing support, flexible study path options. During the stakeholder consultations, we also discussed and collected information on the most promising access measures and interventions, yet these insights are beyond the scope of this article. Moreover, a recent article by Baltaru (2020) cautions against solely focusing on the display of inclusiveness measures without reference to the diversity of student and staff population, highlighting that elite HEIs are more prone to present themselves as inclusive (e.g., through inclusiveness offices) without references to the diversity of student/staff population.

2.2. Indicators

Developing and selecting indicators to measure underrepresented student access to higher education is no easy task. While we might be able to reach a consensus in research, policy and practice on the broad dimensions of social inclusion, it "is far more difficult to quantify which indicators should be used to measure perfor-

mance and even further, which indicators should be prioritised over others" (Pitman et al., 2020, p. 621). There is a need to balance validity criteria (i.e., providing an accurate picture of the phenomenon under study) with relevance criteria (i.e., the extent to which societal needs and priorities are addressed) and feasibility criteria (i.e., availability of data, cost of data collection, restrictions to data collection).

The INVITED survey (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019) analysed responses from 159 HEIs in 36 EHEA countries on their diversity, equity and inclusion strategies for students, academic and non-academic staff. The project surveyed various institutional types (e.g., comprehensive universities, universities of applied science, specialised universities, technical universities, open universities, music and/or art schools), but almost two-thirds of the sample was represented by comprehensive universities. The survey results showed that institutions collect data on a variety of underrepresented student groups (see Figure 2).

Overall, the two most often invoked rationales for collecting data on students were transparency, accountability and external reporting purposes (66%) and to identify disadvantaged/less represented people (61%). However, setting institutional strategic targets regarding social inclusion was not commonplace. The most frequent targets focused on gender (41%), disability (41%), socioeconomic background (24%) and ethnic/cultural/migration background. Finally, two common indicators were used by HEIs to measure the impact of social inclusion interventions: (1) number/share of students enrolled from less represented backgrounds (60%) and graduation rate of students from underrepresented backgrounds (45%; see Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019).

These results are encouraging in terms of the feasibility of collecting data on underrepresented groups in higher education. Nevertheless, they should be qualified. As the authors also noted, the survey was voluntary, and therefore self-selection bias is likely, i.e., only
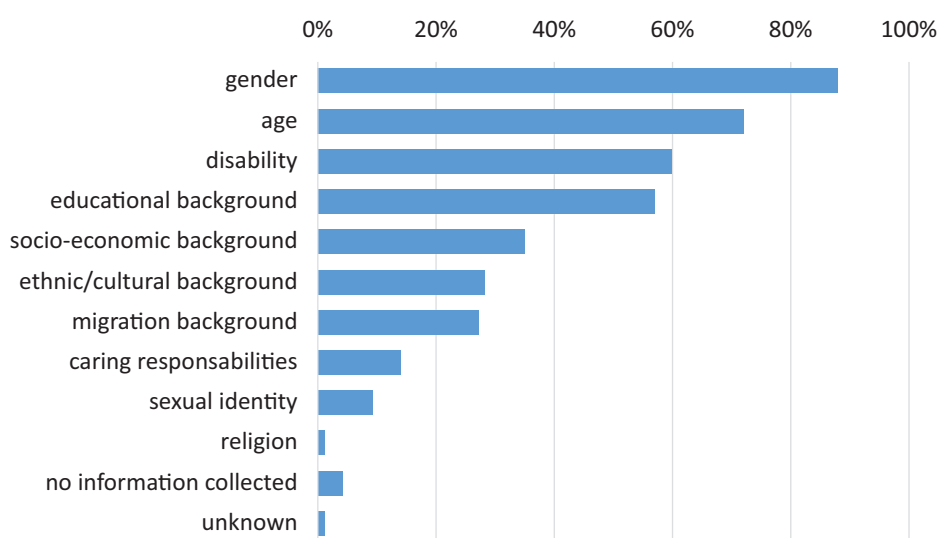

Figure 2. Percentage of responding HEIs by type of underrepresented group for which information is collected (N = 159).

those institutions that collect data on underrepresented students responded, providing a skewed picture of the availability of such data at the institutional level. In addition, the results might also suffer from self-reported measures bias which "will generally be less reliable than information that has been administratively verified—due to misreporting, whether intentional or not" (Gorard et al., 2019, p. 104). So, while the availability of data is essential, we should not use it as a sole criterion for selecting indicators. We should measure what we value rather than valuing what we can measure (Pitman et al., 2020). A systematic literature review of 231 research reports on indicators used in contextual admissions to higher education in England found that the indicators used in practice "are often chosen because they are readily available, without consideration of the quality of possible alternatives" (Gorard et al., 2019, p. 99). This is problematic for the validity of the results.

2.3. Scoring Universities

After we have selected and defined indicators, we can see how they work in practice by using them to score universities on these indicators. For instance, we could use them as rankings or benchmarking tools. The attempts to systematically score and rank HEIs on the dimension of social inclusion are limited (Pitman et al., 2020). Our search for practical comparative large-scale examples has yielded two such efforts: (1) the THE Impact Ranking and (2) the Australian Equity Ranking. We will discuss both next.

First, the THE Impact Ranking was first released in 2019, and its latest edition from 2020 included 768 HEIs from 85 countries. It is currently the only ranking that assesses the performance of HEIs against the UN SDGs. The goals relevant for this study are quality education for all (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10; see Times Higher Education, 2020a). Each goal is measured through multiple weighted indicators: some measuring populations of underrepresented students and others measuring whether institutions have set up proactive interventions and policies to forward social inclusion. The underrepresented student indicators used to measure the performance of HEIs in achieving the SDGs are the share of first-generation students in their first degree (SDG 4 and SDG 10), students and staff with disabilities (SDG 10), students from developing countries (SDG 10), first-generation female students (SDG 5), and women receiving degrees (SDG %). The other indicators for the SDGs are either focused on relevant academic research (e.g., gender equality, lifelong learning), institutional policies and interventions (e.g., non-discrimination policies, maternity/paternity policies, childcare facilities, outreach) or student tracking (e.g., application, acceptance and completion race tracking; see Times Higher Education, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d).

The ranking provides its own definitions of categories, which may not be compatible with national/

institutional definitions and uses of the terms. For example, the THE first-generation student indicator is defined as "the number of students starting a first (bachelor's) degree who identify as being the first person in their immediate family to attend university, divided by the total number of students starting a first (bachelor's) degree" (Times Higher Education, 2020d). However, a systematic review of 70 research articles and reports on first-generation students finds that the indicator "does not necessarily mean to be the first student within the family as older siblings may have already attended university" (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013, p. 319). Even when the definition of first-generation students is solely related to parental education, the study finds that some definitions are broader than others. For instance, the US literature considers as first-generation students, not just those students whose parents have no higher education experience, but also those with some college education such as community college or associate degrees (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). In fact, the authors find that there are such colossal divergences across countries in defining what it means to be a 'first-generation' student that there is limited comparability of cases across contexts.

Second, Pitman et al. (2020) ranked the 37 Australian public HEIs on their equity performance on the access, retention, completion, and graduate outcomes of underrepresented students. The underrepresented groups identified and included in the ranking are students from a low socioeconomic background, indigenous students, students from regional and remote areas, students with a disability, and students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The ranking shows that underrepresented groups are considered as the most relevant category for measuring social inclusion in HEIs. Nevertheless, the statement should be qualified by two important observations. On the one hand, the label 'underrepresented groups' is an umbrella term that covers different groups depending on the context. While both the Australian Equity Ranking and the INVITED survey (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019) covered underrepresented groups, they contextually operationalised the term. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and with a disability were covered by both, but the INVITED survey did not collect data on most categories covered in Australia, such as indigenous students, students from regional and remote areas, and students from non-English speaking backgrounds. On the other hand, the indicators used in scoring cases might not provide an accurate picture of reality. After building an equity ranking of Australian HEIs and analysing the results, the authors conclude that "out of the 33 potential indicators, only 5 were deemed appropriate for use" (Pitman et al., 2020, p. 621). For instance, the performance of an HEI in attracting underrepresented groups is not only determined by its interventions and policies to promote access but also by its location. Institutions in territories with larger populations of underrepresented groups tend to enrol a higher number of underrepresented students. Therefore, Pitman et al.

(2020) propose the use of indicators sensitive to this reality to measure the impact of an institution's performance in relation to others. In addition to the access rate (the participation rate of underrepresented students in an HEI), they suggest using an access ratio that adjusts the access rate to the relative population share of the relevant equity group in the institution's state or region.

As mentioned, the socioeconomic background is used as an indicator to gauge social inclusion both in Europe (e.g., INVITED survey) and Oceania (Australian Equity Ranking; see Pitman et al.,2020). However, a systematic review of 31 studies on socioeconomic inequalities in higher education in Finland and New Zealand found the use of socioeconomic status "problematic as it may be constructed from various data sources" (Nikula, 2018, p. 2305). Reviewed studies operationalized socioeconomic status through parental education level (n = 14), parental occupation group (n = 11), socio-geographic area (n = 11), parental income level (n = 3), or other (n = 2). When it comes to comparable cross-country research, the study found that the various indicators are measured differently in the countries (e.g., considering characteristics of both parents or just the mother) or do not exist at all (i.e., socio-geographic area), which affects the comparability of institutions across contexts. Having reflected on the relevant literature and several large-scale projects, we now move on to empirical insights obtained during stakeholder consultations and a broader discussion on the most promising indicators.

3. Measuring Social Inclusion: Insights from Stakeholders and Further Discussion

3.1. Stakeholders Consulted

Between September and December 2020, the U-Multirank project team conducted stakeholder consultations to identify the need for new social inclusion indicators. Among the stakeholders were the U-Multirank Advisory Board (16 participants), participants of three U-Multirank' benchmarking' workshops (49 participants), an expert panel on social inclusion (4 participants) and student representatives (7 participants). While the Advisory Board, 'benchmarking' workshop participants and students reflected on the relevance of social inclusion indicators more broadly, the expert panel provided insights on how to operationalise the specific underrepresented student groups. Despite student consultation being focused on indicator relevance, students provided several practical insights on indicator validity and feasibility. The U-Multirank Advisory Board consisted of representatives from intergovernmental organisations (e.g., OECD, IAU, EUA), student organisations (European Student Union [ESU], Erasmus Student Network [ESN]), university networks (EURASHE, CESAER) and institutional representatives of European HEIs. The participants of the 'benchmarking' workshop were members of European university networks—ACUP,

ECIU and CEASAR. The four experts were representatives for the BFUG on Social Dimension at the EHEA, EUA INVITED project, UNESCO, and an expert on the US higher education system and inclusion efforts. Finally, the students represented ESU and ESN. The geographical coverage of the stakeholders was global (e.g., IAU, OECD, UNESCO), yet most of the stakeholders represented European institutions. No representatives were included from Asia, Australia, Africa, and Latin America. Thus, the insights presented here would be of most relevance to European countries and, to some extent, North America.

3.2. Criteria for Indicator Assessment

A broad initial list of indicators was considered for the stakeholder consultations and for inclusion in U-Multirank. Nevertheless, to ensure the consultations led to fruitful discussions on viable indicators, the list was narrowed following the insights gathered on measuring social inclusion in higher education from both research and practice. In line with the aim of U-Multirank and this article, indicators with the potential to be compared cross-nationally were pre-selected (see Table 2). For instance, indicators related to neighbourhood deprivation or types of schools attended, which are highly relevant, but for which data is not widely available outside the UK context, were excluded. Stakeholders were invited to reflect on three criteria for indicator assessment: relevance, validity, and feasibility. All three criteria are commonly used in the research literature on education indicators (Cave, 1997; Kaiser, 2003; Nuttal, 1994). The relevance criterion was considered paramount since "all efforts to develop an indicator are in vain if the indicator is not used" (Kaiser, 2003). To assess the relevance of various underrepresented student groups, we explored the importance of these groups in recent policy documents, large scale projects and academic literature and validated these insights during stakeholder consultations. Identifying which categories are important to stakeholders and institutional leaders was essential since institutions would not invest time in collecting data on measures of limited interest. The next criteria—validity—refers to whether an indicator describes the phenomenon it is believed to be associated with (Bottani & Tuijnman, 1994, p. 31). Since our adopted definition of social inclusion aims to attain a student population that represents the heterogeneous profile of society at large, focus on underrepresented students was deemed reasonable, but possible operationalisations of various sub-groups needed to be further explored. Finally, feasibility refers to practical aspects of data collection such as institutions' ability and willingness to collect the required data, given capacity, cost, expertise (Nuttal, 1994) and, in some cases, legal constraints (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). The following sections reflect on stakeholder feedback regarding the three criteria—relevance, validity, feasibility. It also discusses how stakeholder feedback relates to previously examined literature.

Table 2. Overview of underrepresented student groups and considerations for operationalisation, consolidated insights.

Underrepresented group	Considerations for the operationalisation of the indicators	Potential indicator
New entrants from low socioeconomic background	The indicator is frequently used in literature and practice and considered highly relevant by experts and stakeholders. However, the socioeconomic background may be operationalised in multiple ways—a threat to the validity in an international comparative setting. Although definitions are not always fully aligned, information on the socioeconomic background is often collected by national statistical agencies, possibly fostering common definitions. Since the composition of the population by socioeconomic background may differ between regions, the regional population's use would create a more valid result (Pitman et al., 2020) than the national population or the composition of the institutional student body.	The number of new entrants with a low social economic background as a percentage of the total number of new entrants, normalised by the regional percentage of population with low socio-economic background.
First-generation students	In UN SDGs, in the literature and in a current data project (THE Impact ranking), this indicator has a prominent place and is therefore seen as highly relevant. Definitions for first-generation students differ, with some definitions being more restrictive than others (e.g., none of the parents had tertiary education, only one parent had tertiary education, none of the siblings and parents has tertiary education). Here again, the choice of reference group when operationalising the indicator may be important as there are regional differences in the higher education attainment of the population.	The number of new entrants who are the first student in his/her immediate family, as a percentage of the total number of new entrants, normalised by the regional level of higher education attainment.
Students with disabilities	Students with disabilities are a relatively well-recognised group in policy priorities and research and is a group that is relevant and generalisable to most contexts worldwide. A disability may refer to diverse types of impairment, and definitions are not always clear on selection criteria. Moreover, research suggests that due to stigma associated with disability, students may choose to not disclose their disability and others are misdiagnosed, which reduces the validity (Lombardi et al., 2018). The feasibility of this indicator is still considered to be medium as research has shown that institutions are likely to collect the data, but students may not always disclose it.	The number of new entrants with disabilities as a percentage of total number of new entrants. Disabilities refer to health, sight, hearing and speech impairments, and learning disabilities.
Migrant or indigenous students	The relevance of this indicator is rising as many institutions host students with a migrant background due to increasing internationalisation and mobility for work and studies. An indicator of indigenous students is relevant in some regions (not in Europe). At the international level, no universally accepted definition for migrant exists, which may have an impact on the validity of the indicator. Since the composition of the population regarding migrant or indigenous status may differ by region, region-based reference groups should be considered.	The number of new entrants with migrant background as a percentage of total number of students, normalised by the regional percentage of population with migrant background.

Table 2. (Cont.) Overview of underrepresented student groups and considerations for operationalisation, consolidated insights.

Underrepresented group	Considerations for the operationalisation of the indicators	Potential indicator
Ethnic minorities	There is a general agreement that such a characteristic as ethnicity should not be an obstacle to higher education access and has long been one of the priorities in policy documents. Data on ethnicity can be sensitive and even restricted by law in some countries. Definitions often depend on historical developments in national contexts, and internationally comparable definitions may not be readily available. Data based on national definitions may be retrieved from statistical agencies.	The number of new entrants with ethnic minority background as a percentage of total number of students, normalised by the regional percentage of population with ethnic minority background.
Mature students	In all knowledge economies, lifelong learning and participation of mature students in higher education are high on policy agendas. The EHEA has a goal to have 50% of Europeans engaged in lifelong learning by 2025. International organisations define mature students in similar ways, which makes international comparability and feasibility high.	The number of new entrants older than 29 years as a percentage of total number of new entrants.
Gender balance*	This indicator is on global (UN SDGs) and European (EHEA) agendas, often with a focus on the field level, especially in STEM fields. However, recent debates have questioned whether dichotomous categories are sufficient to capture gender. Definitions used for this indicator are similar across countries and institutions. In most cases, data are readily available.	The number of (fe)male new entrants as a percentage of the total number of new entrants.

Note: *Gender balance indicators were not included in the original list of indicators presented to stakeholders but were added later since an indicator on gender balance is already available in U-Multirank, and hence was not proposed as a 'new' indicator.

3.3. Relevance

The Advisory Board members, the U-Multirank workshop participants and student representatives considered social inclusion indicators to be of high importance and advised to include such indicators in following U-Multirank editions. Reflecting on the new indicators, student representatives saw first-generation students and students from a low-socio-economic background as high priority underrepresented groups but also emphasised that disability needs to be addressed along with accompanying measures.

The expert panel (4 members) provided more in-depth feedback on indicator operationalisation. Having reviewed the preliminary list of underrepresented student categories (see Figure 1), experts agreed that all six categories are relevant but did not identify priority groups. The list contained the following student categories: low socioeconomic background, first-generation, disability, migrant or indigenous, ethnic minority and mature students. In addition, the expert panel proposed several other groups for consideration: refugee students & students seeking asylum, gender balance in certain study fields (e.g., STEM), students from rural areas, homeless students, students with children, students from alternative pathways (e.g., vocational education). While experts thought that acknowledging other underrepresented groups is important, it was also agreed that the number of groups should not be too large and context-specific, particularly in a ranking tool, where comparability is paramount. Thus, it was agreed that using the six groups should be sufficient. Gender balance was not included in the preliminary list of new indicators because U-Multirank already has indicators on gender balance, but it was shown to stakeholders as an example of a relevant existing social inclusion indicator, given the importance of gender indicators in European policy discourse (European Commission, 2020; Leišytė, 2019).

At the institutional level, the number of groups might be customised to fit the context-specific needs. The input received from stakeholders aligned with the general trends found in higher education policy documents—social inclusion is an increasingly relevant topic in the higher education sector (European Commission, 2017, 2020), and there is a growing interest to capture social inclusion indicators in a systematic and transparent manner (Bologna Process, 2020).

3.4. Validity

The expert panel considered the underrepresented student categories (Table 2) to be valid for identifying underrepresented students accessing higher education. The key concern was the international comparison of various underrepresented groups, which would have different definitions and qualifying criteria across countries and regions. For example, definitions for groups such as first-generation students, low-income (or low SES) or

migrant students might use either more or less restrictive definitions (e.g., first-generation students), different thresholds (e.g., a limit for low-income students) or criteria (income data, zip-codes, educational attainment of parents for low socioeconomic background). A recent study on social inclusion measures in Europe indicates that data on underrepresented groups and social inclusion measures more broadly are not collected in a comprehensive and systematic manner (Kottmann et al., 2019). Thus, agreeing on transparent and cross-nationally applicable definitions would be necessary. Moreover, the use of different definitions or criteria would have a considerable impact on the final scores and international comparability, even if the indicator is valid at the institutional level for their intended purposes. Experts also noted that when data collection is legally restricted in some countries, contextual information should be provided to explain the deviances in the scores.

Student representatives noted that amongst existing U-Multirank indicators, gender is expressed as a binary category and recommended to expand the options if possible. It was flagged as an issue because not every student identifies with the binary categories, yet most are classified and addressed within these categories at HEIs.

3.5. Feasibility

The expert panel as well as students reiterated that data collection for underrepresented groups might be restricted by several factors, including legal constraints in some countries, as also shown by the INVITED survey (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). In addition, experts proposed not to develop too many categories for underrepresented groups since it may lead to having too few students in each group and overburdening HEIs with data provision. Furthermore, clear and cross-nationally applicable definitions are necessary to ease the data collection process. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the new principles and guidelines proposed by the BFUG on Social Dimension will facilitate a more coordinated approach across European HEIs, focusing on underrepresented, disadvantaged, and vulnerable groups (Bologna Process, 2020).

3.6. Prioritising Indicators

All four stakeholder groups considered the six underrepresented student groups as highly relevant. While additional groups were identified, experts advised keeping the list short to ease data collection process and international comparison. Given the international relevance of the six groups, practical considerations (feasibility) such as availability of data and legal restrictions will likely determine the priority groups. In cases when data is available for all groups, but institutions need to prioritise some groups over others, institutions should reflect on the purpose for collecting the data. If the intention is to

consequently reduce the barriers for these groups, institutions may want to prioritise those groups where barriers can be reduced. Moreover, it is worth investigating which groups overlap or entail several other groups in the specific national or institutional context and prioritise these groups (e.g., first-generation students may entail students from the low-socioeconomic background, migrant or indigenous students and ethnic minorities). Yet, such an approach may exclude relevant sub-groups and key information. Therefore, the authors recommend exploring all six groups while considering local context and institutional priorities.

4. Conclusion

This article examined how underrepresented groups can be operationalised in practice, learning from a project carried out by U-Multirank on identifying indicators for underrepresented students and preliminary insights from a systematic literature work. Having looked at academic literature (Chung et al., 2014; Gorard et al., 2019; Nikula, 2018; Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013), policy documents (focus on Europe; see Bologna Process, 2020; Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018, 2018; European Commission, 2017; United Nations, 2015) and large-scale projects (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019; Pitman et al., 2020; Times Higher Education, 2020a), we presented a list of indicators for underrepresented student groups, discussed their operationalisation and limitations. The study might be of value to academics interested in social inclusion as well as institutional practitioners seeking to develop internationally comparable indicators on underrepresented groups at their institutions.

4.1. Recommendations to Institutional Leaders

To support institutional leaders in developing relevant, valid, feasible, and internationally comparable indicators, we have proposed a few recommendations. First, institutional leaders should identify underrepresented student groups (most) relevant to their context. In this article, we have identified seven underrepresented student groups that are likely to be applicable to a wide spectrum of countries/institutions while acknowledging that numerous other groups exist that may be more context-specific (e.g., indigenous students) as shown by Pitman et al. (2020). This highlights a dilemma between regional relevance and international comparability, and both are important considerations. The selection of the groups may depend on numerous factors, including historical context, geographical location, disciplinary focus, legal regulations, and national and international policy discourse.

Next, the literature has shown that a wide spectrum of definitions and criteria exist for identifying underrepresented or non-traditional student groups (Chung et al., 2014). While the definition and underlying criteria should primarily aim to capture the phenomenon of interest (validity), it is also important to remain transparent and consider the international comparability of indicators. This may also reduce workload in the future if data needs to be reported either at the national or international level. Moreover, not only the criteria for underrepresented groups are important, but also the reference groups used. Some institutions choose to use the total student population as a reference group, while a more representative manner would be to include the regional or national representation as a reference group, also suggested by the definition offered by the BFUG on Social Dimension (Bologna Process, 2020). This, however, requires access to and dependence upon external data.

Furthermore, a clear trade-off exists between the relevance and feasibility of data collection. If the number of relevant student groups becomes too large and granular, the cost associated with collecting and processing data as well as communicating results increase. Finally, as highlighted in this article, social inclusion is gaining momentum on the higher education policy agenda, and initiatives to collect comparable data at the European level and beyond are underway (Bologna Process, 2020; Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019; Pitman et al., 2020; Times Higher Education, 2020a). Investing early in social inclusion efforts at the institutional level is likely to be worthwhile in the long run. Ensuring clear definitions and transparency of indicators are essential for making indicators nationally and internationally comparable.

4.2. Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

This study offers insights on how to conceptualise and operationalise social inclusion indicators for underrepresented groups in an international context, yet it has its limitations. First, the scope of the article was restricted to underrepresented groups entering higher education. Hence, it did not reflect on the indicators in the further stages of higher education (e.g., participation, outcomes). Moreover, by focusing solely on underrepresented student groups, it did not consider other classifications such as vulnerable and disadvantaged groups as proposed by the latest Principles and Guidelines of the BFUG on Social Dimension (Bologna Process, 2020). Furthermore, the scope of policy analysis as well as expert consultations were primarily focused on the European higher education sector and may not be generalisable to other geographical areas. Lastly, this article did not address the intersectionality of underrepresented student groups (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). While these themes were beyond the scope of this article, the topics deserve further attention in the research community.

Specifically, we see fruitful avenues of further research on social inclusion in higher education in three areas. First, an up-to-date survey and comparison of universities to find out what data they already collect or intend to collect in the near future that could be useful in measuring social inclusion is needed (e.g., age, gender,

disability, ethnicity, first-generation students, low socioeconomic status). Coupled with an overview of the legal restrictions for data collection in different national contexts, this like of research would get us closer to a list of viable cross-nationally comparable indicators. Second, ethical research on underrepresented, disadvantaged, and vulnerable groups is needed to better understand their composition, the barriers they face, and what interventions work in promoting their inclusion in higher education. Little progress will be made on the social dimension of the Bologna Process without such insights. Third, there is already a plethora of research on all stages of social inclusion in higher education, not just access. A systematic literature review of the last decades of research in this area could help to understand not just what the actual research gaps are or how to measure social inclusion in higher education, but what works. We encourage researchers to explore these themes and reflect on how the insights presented in this article may be applicable to other contexts beyond Europe.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Facilitating Intercultural Encounters with International Students: A Contribution to Inclusion and Social Network Formation

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Abstract
Higher education has become increasingly mobile and international, with many students taking the opportunity to study abroad during their studies. When they do so, forming and maintaining social networks is fundamental for their development of a sense of social inclusion. According to Coleman's model of concentric circles, international students can establish networks with students from their own country (inner circle), with other international students (middle circle) and with local students (outer circle). This study explores various formats of organised student encounters in these three circles which contribute to the social inclusion of international students. The article is based on desk research of 15 formats of intercultural student encounters which facilitate social network formation during a study placement abroad in six countries in Europe. The findings show that all the studied formats of organised student encounters facilitate social networks in the middle and outer circles, while those in the inner circle are established by the students themselves and through informal social interaction. Formats embedded in the curriculum are most suited to facilitating social network formation throughout the academic year. Extracurricular formats, in contrast, tend to be single occasion activities without follow-up. The study shows that universities can facilitate social network formation and assist social inclusion for international students through organised encounters in which international and local students meet. Organising such encounters does, however, require resources, evaluation, and adequate funding.

1. Introduction

Forming and maintaining social networks is fundamental for developing a sense of belonging and social inclusion. Social inclusion in higher education means maintaining relations with peers and faculty as part of university life—both inside and outside the classroom (Souza et al., 2017). International students who have friends in their host and home cultures, share accommodation with one another or join a student association report a positive influence of these social networks on their social inclusion (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013). However, when focusing on the perspective of international students, "study abroad remains an ill-defined research domain, embracing related but disparate experiences" (Coleman, 2013, p. 17). Social inclusion or exclusion of international students on a study placement abroad has long informed debates about cross-cultural adaptation and student migration (Kinginger, 2013). While international students are not at risk of being excluded from higher education

as such, they are at risk of being socially excluded, for example due to language barriers. According to Coleman (2013), many such studies focus on second language acquisition during a stay abroad, and both group and individual acculturation processes have been investigated (Berry, 1994; Berry & Ward, 2016; Pitts, 2017). Social exclusion might take place because of a mixture of dimensions, such as gender, culture, language, special needs, or social background (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Haug, 2017). In the present study, we define a 'stay abroad' as a specific period of time in which a student engages in an educational activity in another country (minimum of one semester).

While the decision to study abroad is generally viewed as a voluntary act of mobility, the academic, social, and cultural transition to a different higher education institution (HEI) can be difficult for students (Schaeper, 2019). The social transition requires them to form a new social network and make new friends inside or outside their host university. HEIs can facilitate such network formation processes and assist cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001, 2005) by offering, for example, intercultural exchange or buddy programmes for international students, which allow them to experience social inclusion and build new networks. However, bringing international and local students together remains one of the main challenges for HEIs when it comes to tackling exclusion (Meier & Daniels, 2013). We use the terms 'international students' and 'local students' merely for ease of readability and not because we assume homogeneity of these groups.

This article looks at how HEIs can facilitate the social inclusion of international students. The data on intercultural student encounter formats referred to in this article is taken from the SOLVINC ("Solving Intercultural Conflicts with International Students") project, which collected corresponding data in several universities in Vienna (Austria), Paris, Orléans (both France), Mainz (Germany), Warsaw (Poland), Madrid (Spain), and Porto (Portugal). This comparative data provides insights into social network formation for international students which tackle social isolation and exclusion.

2. Cross-Cultural Adaptation in Study Placements Abroad

Study programmes have become increasingly mobile and international (Brooks & Waters, 2010; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). Typically, international students make a conscious decision to study abroad and expose themselves to new cultural experiences. However, culture as a shared set of practices and understandings (Elder-Vass, 2011) is not always tangible or explicit, and students may find it difficult to experience and comprehend implicit gender roles in a host culture, invisible hierarchies, or a new student culture (Resch et al., 2021). We use the term 'culture' here in the broader sense of a set of beliefs, norms, and values specific

to a social group and see the process of adjustment (*enculturation*) as that of engaging and interacting with cultural and social practices. The adjustment process is twofold: Students are generally expected to adapt to their new HEI, learning environment, and campus culture within a few weeks, while HE structures must also adapt to the diverse student population, for example by offering support structures:

> An intercultural encounter is an encounter with another person (or group of people) who is perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself….They may involve people from different countries, people from different regional, linguistic, ethnic or religious backgrounds, or… gender, social class, sexual orientation, age or generation, level of religious observance, etc….In such situations, intercultural competence is required to achieve harmonious interaction and successful dialogue. (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 16)

However, the campus climate encountered may not always be welcoming, and prejudices of local students against international students on campus are a critical factor in cross-cultural adaptation (Quinton, 2019). Some studies refer to a deficit perspective on internationalization, in which international students are criticised for not integrating with local students or vice versa (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009).

Forms of stress associated with adapting to a new culture have been studied at length since the 1950s, in particular for the higher education context of completing a placement abroad (Doerr, 2015; Georgiou & Savvidou, 2014; Lysgaard, 1955). Adjusting to higher education in their host country is a complex process for international students, not only from an academic perspective but also in cultural and social terms (Resch et al., 2021). This results in different levels of stress while adapting to the new student, campus or learning culture at the host university (Ward, 2001). Some international students find the personal, emotional and social adjustment processes to be demanding, while others adjust in a more straightforward way (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013). International students can also experience cognitive dissonance when they encounter cultural differences that confound their previously held expectations about culture (Mitchell & Paras, 2016).

3. Conceptual Framework: Social Network Formation through Intercultural Student Encounters

Students often report difficulties in integrating with locals during their time abroad (Meier & Daniels, 2013). A study by Maiworm and Over (2013) indicates that 86% of German international students spend time with other international students in their host country, but only 51% have regular contact with local students. 65% spend time with other Germans who are also studying in the same

host country. King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003, p. 240), in turn, find that approximately 30% of international students only have contact with students from their home country, while 39% also have contact with students from the host country. According to van Mol (2011), European students tend to spend their time with other Europeans when studying abroad because they are familiar with the culture in which they were socialised. These findings are important because "the social networks a student establishes, maintains and develops while abroad are crucial to learning outcomes" (Coleman, 2013, p. 29). Learning processes are not merely of an academic nature, but also social. For international students, the adjustment to the new culture can be challenging (Souza et al., 2017). During cross-cultural adaptation phases, the capacity to facilitate relationships is essential for social inclusion (Byl et al., 2016).

By social networks, we mean 'friendship networks,' which are significant and continuous for the student, in contrast to 'familial networks' (Brooks & Waters, 2010, p. 149). These social networks give each other a sense of belonging and trust, which is the basis for academic and social learning. When it comes to explaining the dynamic socialisation patterns and social networks of international students, Coleman's (2013) model of concentric circles appears to fit well in the European context. This model seeks to explain these patterns and behaviour using three concentric circles of intercultural student encounters: engagement with students from the same country (inner circle), engagement with other international students (middle circle), and engagement with local students (outer circle). According to this model, students initially socialise with other co-nationals when they study abroad, gradually expand their social contacts

to international students from countries other than their own and then finally broaden their circle to include local students as well. The circles are not mutually exclusive. Co-nationals (level 1) are likely to share the same first language, while international students (level 2) might use the host country language or another lingua franca to communicate. On level 3, the use of the target language becomes necessary (Coleman, 2015).

Empirical data for Coleman's model testifies that international students move from their initial reliance on co-nationals in level 1 to a broader social mix in levels 2 and 3 (Coleman, 2015). Close friendships and romantic relationships are more likely to stem from level 2 encounters than from those with co-nationals (Coleman & Chafer, 2010). Encouraging local students to participate in formalised student encounters with incoming international students poses a constant challenge to higher education, not least because international students have more to gain from them unless their local counterparts are pursuing linguistic objectives (Kinginger, 2013). Romantic relationships are most likely to help a student 'jump' from level 1 to level 3; they are delineated as a "short-cut" (Coleman, 2013, p. 32).

Although a stay abroad is a situated cultural experience, international students remain in touch with their home culture (Coleman & Chafer, 2010). Yet the use of virtual technologies to communicate regularly with family and friends at home makes social inclusion more difficult (Coleman, 2015). The broad availability of digital media means that international students are thus at risk of not having to negotiate cultural meanings with local students (level 3)—a factor which inhibits social inclusion when studying abroad (Citron, 2002). One significant factor that aids social inclusion is language, which
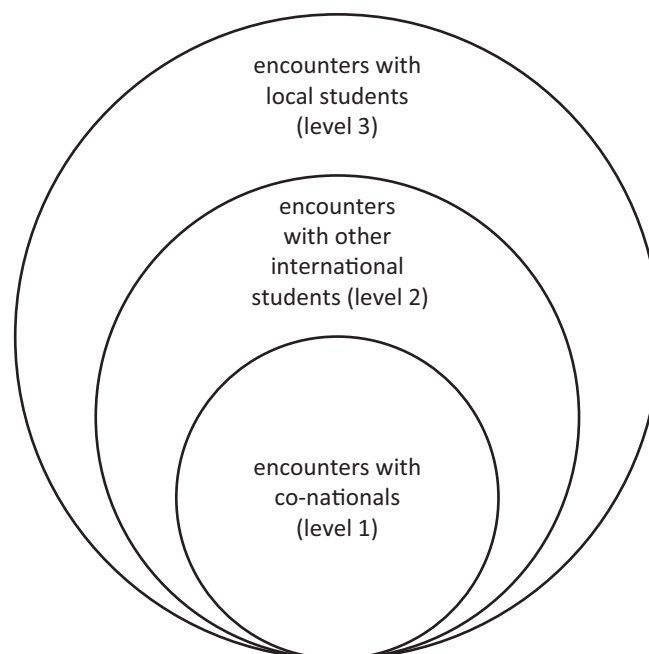

Figure 1. Levels of intercultural student encounters. Source: Adapted from Coleman (2013, p. 31).

students acquire more quickly when they interact with peer students from the outer circle (level 3). A study by Montgomery and McDowell (2009) found that there is a strong sense of academic support within international student groups (level 2). Their social networks in this sense enrich their learning processes abroad. Accordingly, Hernandez (2018) recommends that international students move out of their comfort zone as soon as possible and interact with local students.

The phenomenon of studying abroad can be looked at from various perspectives, including that of a rational choice following an individual decision process regarding costs and benefits (Lörz et al., 2016), biographically in terms of academic career coherence (Brooks & Waters, 2010; Hillmert & Jacob, 2010), or in the social networking context of exploring social capital acquired while studying abroad and maintained after returning home (Bourdieu, 1986; Granovetter, 1973). From an organisational or institutional angle, researchers can examine how student encounters can best be arranged to contribute to the social inclusion of international students.

In this article, we combine the social network formation perspective with the organisational angle, since our review of the available literature revealed only few prior studies that had researched this particular aspect of studying abroad (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). The main question we seek to answer is as follows: Which examples and practices of social inclusion in the form of organised student encounters can be found in European universities and how can their main strengths and weaknesses be reconstructed?

4. Methodology

To answer this question, we used a combination of desk and empirical research methods to collect data on intercultural student encounters from within the SOLVINC project data (Amorim et al., 2020). Student encounters were investigated in universities in Vienna (Austria), Paris, Orléans (both France), Mainz (Germany), Warsaw (Poland), Madrid (Spain), and Porto (Portugal). In internationalization research, still little attention is being paid to the complexities of intercultural student encounters and lived experiences (Trahar, 2014). We studied these lived experiences across six European countries acknowledging this gap.

4.1. Procedure

We started our desk research by conducting a keyword-led search on websites relevant to the higher education sector (university*international*students*networking*format*programs*encounters). In a next step, we identified and gathered descriptive information (*raw data*) on 26 formats of intercultural student encounters which met our inclusion criteria, i.e., (1) addressed international students explicitly, (2) were offered on a regular basis, (3) were encountered in the countries of the study,

and (4) were applied mainly during the stay abroad (and not before or after). We then explored the basic criteria for each format agreed on in our study design:

- Characterisation of the target group
- Thematic focus of the activity
- Short description of the student encounter
- Degree of institutionalisation, innovation and reach throughout the university
- Major strengths and weaknesses

Formats which did not address international students, which were no longer offered, or had only been used on one occasion were ruled out. Formats used to prepare students for a stay abroad or to reflect on a stay after returning home (pre-/post departure formats) were also ruled out.

In our original research design, either qualitative interviews or participant observation were planned in all six countries. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was only possible to conduct the qualitative interviews by shifting them to online spaces, however, the planned participant observations could not take place as planned. The seven interviews were conducted in Germany, France, Austria, and Portugal. In Poland and Spain, we were only able to rely on desk research due to Covid-19 restrictions. The interview partners were staff members (n = 6), who managed, organised or were responsible for the organised students encounters (two from Germany, one from Portugal, one from Austria, and two from France), except for one student from Germany who took part in an encounter and was also interviewed.

4.2. Data Analysis

In total, 15 formats were analysed in detail (*processed data*). For six formats, it was possible to conduct empirical research, while the other student encounters were solely based on desk research. Empirical work was carried out by contacting either the people responsible for or—in one case—a participant in the respective student encounter. Seven interviews with staff and students directly involved in the intercultural student encounters were then conducted using digital tools (video or telephone interviews). Interviews with staff members were conducted for the formats F6, F8, F9, F10, F11 and F13 and one additional interview with a student for F9. The interviews were audio-taped, selectively transcribed, and protocoled in memos by the researchers. Data was then clustered referring to the topics identified above: characterisation of the target group, thematic focus of the activity, short description of the student encounter, degree of institutionalisation, innovation and reach throughout the university, and major strengths and weaknesses of the encounter. Details, additional references or formal evaluations of the student encounter (if any) and additional comments from the researcher were noted in unstructured, open memos. Formats are

abbreviated in the data using the letter F and a number (e.g., F13 = Format 13).

5. Findings

Based on our findings, the intercultural student encounter formats analysed can be grouped into curricular and extracurricular activities in the following categories: (1) welcome, orientation and dialogue, (2) cultural diversity, (3) social networking and mentoring, (4) language learning, and (5) bilingual teaching formats (see Table 1). International students form the explicit target group of all the encounter formats studied, while most of them also target local students (13 out of 15). Staff members are included in five formats, teachers in four formats (curricular activities), the local community in two formats and other local citizens in the host country in one format.

5.1. Curricular Activities

In the category of curricular activities, four formats were identified: Orientation Day in Warsaw (F2), the Gutenberg International School Services in Mainz (F13), the International Business Bilingual Course in Warsaw (F14), and the Vienna Innovation Programme[WU] (F15). F2, F14 and F15 facilitate level 3 intercultural student encounters between international and local students,

while F13 facilitates student encounters on level 2 (i.e., only between international students). In each case, students receive credits for participation.

Orientation Day (F2) is a mandatory event for first-semester international students at the University of Social Sciences in Poland in which they network with other international students. It also includes an informal evening event where the international students get to know local students. In the International Business Bilingual Course at the University of Social Sciences in Poland (F14), local and international students in the Faculty of Management and Security Studies work together in intercultural teams on business-oriented projects. Doing so is a mandatory element in the course, and the respective teacher serves as an intercultural mediator throughout its duration. A similar approach to facilitating intercultural student encounters is used by Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) in its Vienna Innovation Programme[WU] (F15), where students from different cultural backgrounds solve problems in intercultural teams using innovative methods. The design for this annual course stipulates the participation of a maximum of 15 local and 30 international students. Only one format in the curricular activities category does not bring local and international students together: The Gutenberg International School at the Johannes-Gutenberg-University of Mainz in Germany (F13) regularly offers courses for international

Table 1. Formats of intercultural student encounters.

	Curricular activity	Extracurricular activity
Welcome, orientation, dialogue	F2 Orientation Day (Warsaw)	*F1 Welcome Week* (Mainz)
		F3 Campus dialogue sessions (Porto)
Cultural diversity		*F4 City Tour* (Porto)
		F5 Seven Colours, Seven Continents (Warsaw)
		F6 Intercultural Cooking Workshop (Paris)
Social networking and mentoring		F7 Buddy Programme (Madrid)
		F8 ESN Buddy Programme (Vienna)
		F9 Foreigners become Friends (Mainz)
		F10 Peer Mentoring Programme (Porto)
Language learning		F11 Language Café (Orléans)
		F12 Tandem Language Learning (Vienna)
Bilingual teaching formats	*F13 Gutenberg International School—GIS* (Mainz)	
	F14 International Business Bilingual Course (Warsaw)	
	F15 Vienna Innovation Programme[WU] (Vienna)	

Notes: * International student encounters of level 2; the remaining international and local student encounters are level 3.

students to help them improve their German language skills. These courses are targeted at those students who can study only in English due to language restrictions.

5.2. Extracurricular Activities

In the extracurricular activities category, we identified eleven formats which met our criteria: Welcome Week (F1), Campus Dialogue Sessions (F3), City Tour (F4), Seven Colours, Seven Continents (F5), Intercultural Cooking Workshop (F6), Buddy Programme (F7), ESN Buddy Programme (F8), Foreigners become Friends (F9), Peer Mentoring Programme (F10), Language Café (F11), and Tandem Language Learning (F12). Participation in these activities is voluntary, i.e., students do not receive study credits for doing so. F1 and F4 facilitate level 2 student encounters between international students only, while all other formats facilitate intercultural student encounters on level 3 between international and local students.

Welcome Week at the Johannes-Gutenberg-University of Mainz (F1) is a three-day programme for international students that covers administrative issues like enrolment, obtaining a student ID, setting up a computer account, course selection and registration. Representatives of various faculties are present throughout the event, and students receive the opportunity to network at a welcome reception and on a campus tour. The City Tour at the University of Porto (F4) is held each September and provides international students with a tour of the city, introduces them to its most iconic and historic sites, explains its history and terminates with a *Sarau Cultural*—a traditional, academic music festival. Both F1 and F4 are targeted exclusively at international students (level 2).

The Campus Dialogue Sessions at the University of Porto (F3) are held monthly during term-time, with each session focussing on a different topic. The programme is targeted at local and international students alike and is designed both to improve intercultural communication competence and to prevent intercultural conflicts. In contrast to other formats, staff members can also attend the dialogue sessions. The programme's main aim is to establish level 3 interaction between local and international students in order to reduce social isolation at the start of and during the academic year.

Once a year, students from different countries arrange a Seven Colours, Seven Continents (F5) event at Vistula University in Warsaw. The event is organized like a trade fair, with the students offering traditional national dishes and souvenirs from their home countries, wearing their national costumes, and performing traditional dances. It concludes with a party for students with music provided by the university band. The Intercultural Cooking Workshops (F6) in the Cité universitaire de Paris are organised cooking sessions for local and international students in which they share recipes linked to their home cultures. Small intercultural groups are formed in student kitchens or dorms, and the par-

ticipating students then cook together with the aim of creating a new recipe that contains at least one of the ingredients in a recipe proposed by another group. The programme facilitates intercultural exchange and regular social networking between students.

Several of the formats studied focus on mentoring as a format of inclusion. In the Buddy Programme (F7) at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, local students tutor international students before and during their stay abroad. The same approach is used in the ESN Network Buddy Programme (F8) of the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna and at other universities in Austria. In contrast to more student-led initiatives, buddies in F8 are linked to the International Offices at their universities, which can offer guidance in the event of conflict. The Foreigners become Friends (F9) programme at the Johannes-Gutenberg-University in Mainz offers international students the opportunity to get to know the local culture and host community. The Peer Mentoring Programme (F10) at the University of Porto offers support to new local and international students in an organized mentoring format. F10 is a decentralized programme that extends to all faculties, with various meetings organized between mentors and mentees throughout the academic year. International students can become mentors. The programme has four major strengths: academic support (e.g., support with learning), emotional support (e.g., being listened to, giving advice), social inclusion (e.g., common leisure activities, group integration), and support with faculty.

Language is also a strong factor of social inclusion: In the Language Café (F11) at the Université d'Orléans, local and international students meet in a bar in the city centre every other week to learn French. International students thus can meet local students and people from the community in Orleans and practice their language skills. In the Tandem Language Learning (F12) programme in Austria, international students are paired with German native speakers to learn each other's language. This reciprocal language learning programme is offered at different universities across the country, where it is organized by their respective student unions. Local students volunteer to participate as native German speakers, making F12 not only a convenient way to improve language skills but also increasing the likelihood of the tandem learners becoming friends by networking on a one-to-one basis.

5.3. Comparative Analysis

Our analysis of the formats for intercultural student encounters shows that most of them are organized on levels 2 or 3. In fact, our study did not identify any level 1 encounters; these would seem to be primarily informal in nature, with students left to establish contact with other students from their own country of their own accord. Social networking with co-nationals would therefore seem to adhere to different norms and values and is not considered to be the responsibility of HEIs.

Interestingly, all organized level 2 encounters take place in the first weeks after arrival at the host university (F1, F4). They are neither continued nor augmented by any activities later in the semester.

Level 3 encounters can be organized both within and outside the curriculum. Social networking and mentoring activities seem to only be organized outside the curriculum (F7, F8, F9, F10). Encounters that focus on acculturation and language learning are likewise exclusively extracurricular activities. Language learning in informal contexts such as F11 or F12 are organized by the university but take place elsewhere. Bilingual teaching formats which attract international students also promote intercultural exchange and encounters between international and local students (F13, F14, F15). Most extracurricular activity formats (10 out of 15) encourage or require the use of the host country language outside of class. They aim at bringing students with compatible personalities and interests together to participate in various activities.

The formats identified and analysed in our study reveal two main weaknesses: First, the organizers of such encounters experience frequent and recurring difficulty in involving local students on a regular basis. There are various reasons for this. Some of the encounters are organized before the international students arrive at the host university. Others fail to mobilize local students in an adequate form, making level 2 formats easier to organize (since they only involve international students) and causing level 3 activities to be pushed into the future or even dropped. The second weakness lies in the frequency of intercultural student encounters. These often take place only once a year or semester (and only allow the participation of a small number of students), which makes continuity of action difficult. Student encounters are based on social interactions, which can only really develop into relationships of trust when the participants encounter each other on more than one occasion. Hence, single-event student encounters like F1, F2 and F4 can only be viewed as initiating formats; the actual process of maintaining the relationships they initiate is ultimately left to the self-organisation of students.

A critical analysis of the main strengths of the student encounters studied shows that bilingual teaching formats (F13, F14, F15) allow more stable social interactions that are organized around common tasks within a course (e.g., having to perform a task with a company), regular course structures and work in small groups. Intercultural exchange is an explicit part of such courses. Language learning formats (F11, F12) and mentoring or buddy programmes (F7, F8, F10) also allow students to build and maintain relationships over a period of time, which—in a best-case scenario—continue for the entire duration of their stay abroad (and even beyond).

6. Discussion

Our study shows that HEIs can facilitate social network formation and alleviate the process of cross-cultural adaptation and social inclusion for international students (Kim, 2001). Despite the overall advances in organizing intercultural student encounters and preparing students for international mobility, many students still report difficulties in integrating with local students during their placement abroad (Coleman & Parker, 2001; Meier & Daniels, 2013; Trahar, 2014). This might be predetermined (partly) by the actual numbers of international students from one's home country at the host institution. In the present study, the diversity of international students varies strongly between smaller universities (e.g., both 13% at the University of Porto and Johannes-Gutenberg University of Mainz) and larger universities (e.g., 29% at the University of Vienna or 39% at the Université de Paris). At the University of Vienna, for example, around 5,000 international students originate from Germany, which means that these students would not be subjected to cultural diversity, as they speak the same language and share the same culture as local students do, whereas in 2020 only 314 students came from Poland or 29 from Colombia (University of Vienna, 2020). Thus, the actual national mix of the international communities studied here may affect international students' experiences abroad. The fewer co-nationals on campus, the fewer contacts in this category are available.

Trahar's research in Malaysia for instance found that local students are even reluctant to interacting with other local students, who might hold identities different from their own, e.g., Chinese or Indian (Trahar, 2014). The experienced reluctance of local students to interact with each other, and consequently also with international students, cannot be explained merely by student distribution numbers. Possible explanations may be distant cultural norms and values, complex cross-cultural adjustment processes, language barriers, or cultural stereotypes (Kim, 2001; Quinton, 2019). Interestingly, research from the United Kingdom—in contrast to other knowledge produced in this field of research—suggests that non-reciprocal relationships or lose connections international students may have with local students (level 3) may not be a disadvantage. On the contrary, their purposeful connectedness to international students may provide them with a supportive learning environment (level 2; see Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). The authors go even further and add a more resource-driven perspective to the field by reporting on high positions of international students in class, offering academic support to others and achieving the best grades. Similar studies could in the future contribute to antiquating the deficit model in social network formation in study abroad research. We believe that organized intercultural student encounters—as shown in this study—can accordingly be an effective answer to the promotion of social inclusion in higher education. Organized intercultural student encounters are a way of replacing social networks which are lost in the transition to the host university, both inside (connected to academic learning) and outside the curriculum (connected to social learning). This

implies that students become active participants in organized student encounters.

Previous studies recommend advising students to sign up for language courses, engage with families from the host culture or take courses with local students to help them form social networks (Dewey et al., 2013). As our study shows, formalised or institutionalised student encounters can also help with social network formation. Such encounters can introduce students to the local culture, lifestyle or region and provide them with valuable emotional support. While some students might find that their interests overlap more with those of other international students than local citizens without academic relation, city tours or other formats that allow them to encounter local people from their host city or community are considered helpful, especially for cross-cultural adaptation (Pitts, 2017). Accordingly, listening to international and local students and finding out more about their experiences, needs and suggestions for intercultural policies and practices should be a priority for HEIs in their efforts to provide organised student encounters. Indeed, study abroad programmes which include accommodation for international and local students, club memberships or other activities to promote student encounters are assessed positively by students (Dewey et al., 2013). Situational and spatial factors can likewise have an influence on social network formation. Accommodation close to the university campus might facilitate social interaction between different student groups, especially in countries where students tend to live on campus. Living near the city centre, shops or activities in town might help students establish regular contact with local residents.

Friendships between students and ties outside the family have become more fragmented through digitalisation, with young people experiencing weaker ties to the communities in which they live (Brooks & Waters, 2010). It is still unclear whether social interaction with local students or faculty is more beneficial to international students than interaction with locals outside the university (Dewey et al., 2013). Furthermore, little is known, as of yet, about level 1 activities with co-nationals during a stay abroad. These are predominantly informal in nature and were not included in our study. However, we do know that it is common nowadays for international students to maintain long distance relationships via digital media with their friends at home (Brooks & Waters, 2010), thus giving them a sense of (digital) social inclusion during a stay abroad (Coleman & Chafer, 2010).

The tendency of international students to live in homogenous circles of friends and peers (levels 1 and 2) has long been observed. Service facilities for international students at universities have recognised the need for corresponding action by organising mixed student encounters to facilitate social inclusion. To contribute to the common goal of international student inclusion, it is crucial that these student encounter formats are promoted in an organized form within the HEI. Organising and facilitating student encounters also requires adequate funding and resources. Since the extracurricular activities analysed in our study take place in informal settings, they allow students to establish friendships, exchange experiences, thus contributing to their overall well-being, in some cases without any need for resources from the university. To further promote and facilitate the social inclusion of international students, HEIs should endeavour to augment their level 2 welcome encounter formats with activities which are repeated over time, thus providing students with interaction options that are available throughout their entire stay and are not just restricted to the first week or a single event. Such an extension to the whole academic year would naturally also require additional effort, staff, and resources.

The aim of exploring social inclusion practices in the form of organised student encounters also draws our attention to the topic of organisational responsibility. Many student encounters rely on student initiatives and volunteering, some are initiated by the students themselves, by student associations/networks or—in a more formalised manner—by the International Offices in HEI. This raises the question of institutional responsibility for the social inclusion of students. Universities could make student partnerships more explicit and welcome in this area (Hughes, 2015). Several studies indicate positive effects between student volunteering and academic success in terms of grades, continuation to higher level degrees as well as the formation of an academic and professional identity (Zhang et al., 2015). Student volunteering also enhances the social and cultural capital of the participating students (Campbell, 2000; Print & Coleman, 2003) and raises awareness for diverse community needs and social problems (Mooney & Edwards, 2001). Most of the organised encounter activities analysed in the present study still lack—and might benefit from—an evaluation.

Concluding from this study, intercultural student encounters between local and international students, which take place in the curriculum are most suited to facilitating social network formation because students get acquainted with each other on a regular basis as they achieve tasks together throughout the academic year. This implies strengthening the role of higher education lecturers in facilitating intercultural student encounters through their courses. Curricula can contain opportunities for meaningful intercultural learning, also for local students. During the course, there is enough time to build relationships between teachers, local and international students, while this may make readjustments to lecturers' syllabi, learning objectives, assignments, or feedback processes necessary (Clayton et al., 2013). There might also be opportunities for lecturers to offer local students the chance for alternative credits by encouraging them to engage in a mentoring or buddy programme with international students within the framework of their course. From the present study, we also conclude the essential role of lecturers as distributors of

information—e.g., making it possible for students to promote existing formats of intercultural student encounters in class by distributing flyers or giving time slots for short presentations of engaged students to attract more local students to different encounters. Further, lecturers could be asked systemically at the beginning of each semester to offer bilingual teaching formats in order to enable intercultural encounters within the curriculum. These measures could lead to an increase in opportunities for intercultural encounters, while lecturers might be able and willing to offer continuous guidance of students' individual learning and networking processes and thus contribute to more self-organised learning (Zinger, 2020). The challenge for lecturers might be to design coursework, which contributes to intercultural encounters on various levels: academic learning, social networking, and personal growth at the same time. However, lecturers need to balance both their personal resources for teaching with higher objectives of institutional diversity and internationalisation.

Limitations: We would first like to stress the methodological limitations of our study. Empirical research would have been at the core of our original study design, conducting qualitative interviews and participant observations in all six countries. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, this plan had to be adapted in order to complete the study within the framework of the co-funded project (which ended during the third lockdown in 2020). Still, it was possible to conduct interviews online in Germany, France, Austria, and Portugal, however, the planned participant observation of student encounters had to be dropped from the original study design and the methodology was therefore partly restricted in its range due to Covid-19. Funding conditions in the EU-project prevented us from postponing the study to a later date after the Covid-19 pandemic. Our desk research was limited to intercultural student encounters in six countries in Europe, which does not give a full picture of the possible student encounter formats in an internationally comparable dimension. Second, from a theoretical point of view, Coleman's model of concentric circles—like any other model—oversimplifies the complex and multifaceted aspects of student life while studying abroad and might not represent individual patterns of experience (Coleman, 2013). We want to stress the fact that findings cannot be generalized as 'international students' cannot be assumed to be a homogeneous group. However, Coleman's model does help to identify 'typical' levels of encounters of international students and their peers. Further studies might apply different methodologies, e.g., participant observation or ethnographical research to provide a more complete picture of the nature of student social networks.

Nonetheless, our overall findings still indicate potential fields of action for universities in order to make the higher education sector more inclusive for international and local students, by creating windows of opportunities within and outside the curriculum for intercultural student encounters. Internationalization means to ensure a learning environment that is vibrant, reciprocal, celebratory of diversity and inclusive (Trahar, 2017). From the experience of this study, we conclude that formats embedded in the curriculum are most suited to facilitating social network formation throughout the academic year. Extracurricular formats, in contrast, tend to be single occasion activities without follow-up. Inclusive practices are likely to require change, and this means shedding light on questions of inclusive leadership in higher education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). This study thus contributes to organizational development and organizational pedagogy of HEIs. It shows that universities can facilitate social network formation and assist social inclusion for international students through organised encounters in which international and local students meet. Organising such encounters does, however, require resources, evaluation, and adequate funding to strengthen the capacities of HEIs to reach out to all students (Ainscow, 2016).

7. Conclusion

The study connects social inclusion, diversity and internationalization by applying a social networking theory and placing formats of intercultural student encounters at the centre of the study. These formats of organized student encounters between local and international students bring added value to the discourse of social inclusion, diversity and internationalization by an underlying understanding of shared responsibility of students, lecturers, and departments at universities concerned with internationalization.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Gender and Globalization of Academic Labor Markets: Research and Teaching Staff at Nordic Universities

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Abstract
In this article, we investigate how the globalized academic labor market has changed the composition of teaching and research staff at Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish universities. We use national statistical data on the gender and country-origin of universities' teaching and research staff between 2012 and 2018 to study how the globalized academic labor market has influenced the proportion of women across career stages, with a special focus on STEM fields. We pay special attention to how gender and country-origin are interrelated in universities' academic career hierarchies. The findings show that the proportion of foreign-born teaching and research staff rose substantially at the lower career level (grade C positions) in the 2010s. The increase was more modest among the most prestigious grade A positions, such as professorships. The findings show significant national differences in how gender and country-origin of staff intersect in Nordic universities. The study contributes to research on the gendered patterns of global academic labor markets and social stratification in Nordic universities.

1. Introduction

Gender equality has long been one of the key objectives in European research policies. However, gender balance has not been achieved in the most prestigious teaching and research (TR) positions in universities. There are far fewer women than men in top TR positions and as leaders of international research projects (European Commission, 2019). At the same time, recruitment patterns and career trajectories within the academic profession are undergoing significant changes due to an increasingly globalized labor market and international recruitment, although with variation by country and scientific field (Ackers, 2008).

We do not know how these changes will affect the gender composition of TR staff. One possible outcome is that patterns of gender inequality will be reproduced within global landscapes, as previous research indicates that women are less likely than men to take part in international research cooperation and mobility (Jöns, 2011; Metcalfe & Woodhams, 2012; Vabø et al., 2014). Another possible outcome is that the global labor market will challenge established recruitment practices along the gender dimension. Based on data from the United States, Zippel

(2017) argues that globalization can provide new opportunities for women to move to other national and institutional contexts and be liberated from exclusive organizational structures in their home environment. Thus, an empirical question remains as to how global recruitment of TR staff affects the gender composition of Nordic universities. The key argument in this article is that the consequences of a more globalized academic labor market for staff composition, with regard to gender and origin, will be context dependent and vary by country, career level, and scientific field.

Despite the increased globalization of the academic labor market (Enders & Musselin, 2008) and policy efforts toward internationalization in higher education (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017; Huang et al., 2014), there is a lack of research on the gendered nature of the international recruitment of academics in different national contexts. Research on international academic recruitment has primarily been concerned with geographical mobility patterns (Ackers & Gill, 2008; van der Wende, 2015) and the social stratification of universities' TR staff according to the origin of staff (Bauder, 2015; Khattab & Fenton, 2016; Smetherham et al., 2010). Prior research conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) shows that foreign-born TR staff dominate in the lower career positions in universities (Khattab & Fenton, 2016). It is important to research the outcomes of the globalized academic labor markets in different national contexts. Thus, this study focuses on these outcomes in the context of three Nordic countries: Sweden, Norway, and Finland. The composition of TR staff is addressed at two career stages through an intersectional lens. This allows us to visualize social stratification of Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish universities with respect to the origin and gender of staff at different grade levels, and the opportunities available for different social groups for upward career mobility.

In a European comparative report (Lipinsky, 2013), Sweden, Norway and Finland were identified as forerunners in the formulation of gender equality policies and in the implementation of measures to improve gender balance in research. On the aggregated level, gender balance has been achieved among PhD graduates (since 2005 in Finland, 2009 in Sweden, and 2012 in Norway; see Norbal database, 2021), albeit with significant differences between fields of science. However, the proportion of women in top positions in research still lags behind men.

To our knowledge, prior research has not used full-scale population data to study in a comparative setting how the global academic labor market is related to the proportion of women in general, or in different scientific fields. This shortage is partly related to the lack of comparable and reliable data (ETER Project, 2019; Teichler, 2015). The Nordic countries offer comparable, full-scale statistical data on the teaching and research personnel of their universities. Hence, our article covers this research gap and presents a comparative study that investigates how gender and country-origin intersect in the composi-

tion of TR staff in three Nordic countries. We pose the following research questions: How has the globalization of the academic labor markets influenced the proportion of women at Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish universities in general, and in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) in particular? Are there discernible differences across grade levels? The study design allows us to make comparisons across countries, career phases and fields of science, as well as over time (2012–2018).

Gender and country-origin, and their intersection, are important dimensions when studying social stratification among university staff. Whereas previous research on global academic labor markets has largely neglected the intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1989), we apply this perspective to draw attention to how gender and country-origin are interrelated in academic careers in the Nordic countries. This approach should affect how we study and measure recruitment and promotion patterns in universities. The analysis concentrates on two critical career stages for university staff: grade C and grade A. Grade C refers to career development positions (e.g., postdocs), whereas grade A refers to top career positions (e.g., professorships). The co-investigation of these stages provides insights into the inclusion of women and foreign-born TR staff in higher and lower status positions in universities, and thus forms a basis for further hypotheses on the intersectional nature of global university careers.

2. Previous Research on Global Academic Labor Markets

Supranational organizations, such as the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and individual governments encourage geographical academic mobility. In the European Union, collaboration across national borders and international recruitment of researchers form a core part of the strategy toward a European research area (Gornitzka & Langfeldt, 2009). These strategies can support international recruitment in specific segments of the academic labor market. For instance, the Marie Curie program promotes mobility to fixed-term research positions (Bauder, 2015; Khattab & Fenton, 2016).

Global academic mobility has different push-and-pull-factors (van der Wende, 2015), and the impact of these factors furthermore differs across institutions, fields and positions. In general, the mobility of TR staff is pursued because it is expected to improve the quality of higher education and research (Horta et al., 2010; Smetherham et al., 2010; Vabø & Wiers-Jenssen, 2014). At the national level, international mobility is expected to increase knowledge production and place the country in a better position among competitive economies (Jonkers & Tijssen, 2008). At the institutional level, mobility can support long-term collaboration and the production of new knowledge (Ackers & Gill, 2008; Fontes

et al., 2013). At the individual level, mobility is increasingly a required element in academic careers, especially for those who aspire to become part of the global academic elite (Khattab & Fenton, 2016). Highly reputed universities display higher shares of academic staff from abroad (Khattab & Fenton, 2016; Smetherham et al., 2010; Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2020). This indicates that the prestige and status of universities are important pull factors for researchers. However, Lepori et al. (2015) stated that the ability to attract researchers is explained mainly by country factors. This aligns with Khattab and Fenton's (2016) observation that different countries send and receive academic labor and that globalization is more pronounced in English-speaking countries.

Demographic change in universities, especially at the grade C level, can reflect a more international orientation in research, fierce competition for positions and a more egalitarian labor market (Khattab & Fenton, 2016). However, it can also reflect a dualization of labor (Bauder, 2015; Musselin, 2004). The restructuring of the academic labor market with more external research funding, lower job security and lower wages implies that universities depend more on global labor to fill fixed-term, research-only positions (Bauder, 2015; Khattab & Fenton, 2016; Smetherham et al., 2010). According to Khattab and Fenton (2016), in the UK, grade C positions are not attractive to native academics, who would rather opt for positions that provide better career opportunities. Hence, the overrepresentation of foreign-born academics in grade C in the UK implies their overrepresentation in the secondary academic labor market with few opportunities for career progression.

Research on global universities reveals some clear trends (Ackers & Gill, 2005; Khattab & Fenton, 2016; Smetherham et al., 2010). First, the presence of foreign-born academics increases over time. Second, the inflow of foreign-born academics is higher in subject fields associated with engineering and technology, compared with social sciences and humanities. Third, a division of labor crystallizes between nationals and foreign-born academics, as the foreign-born group dominates among fixed-term and research-only positions. Fourth, the more research-intensive and high-prestige universities have more foreign-born staff compared with teaching-intensive, new universities. However, the research does not provide evidence on where the global labor comes from, but some evidence corroborates that the elite institutions recruit more staff from the United States and not from the Global East and South (Khattab & Fenton, 2016). In the Norwegian context, Askvik and Drange (2019) demonstrate that academics with majority origin and those who come from Europe and other Western countries display equal distribution across employment categories, whereas staff from the Global East and South are overrepresented in research and postdoc positions and underrepresented in grade A and teaching positions.

The stratification of the academic labor market displays a hierarchy in which white, middle-class men keep the most prestigious positions. Nowadays, the share of native men in UK academia is declining, and they are being replaced with women and non-UK academics in the lower ranked positions, part-time and fixed-term employment (Khattab & Fenton, 2016). The gender distribution is equal across non-UK and UK university staff, but non-UK staff are more prevalent in the younger age groups. This indicates that the global labor market first changed university demographics from below (Smetherham et al., 2010). Whereas for many individual academics, mobility can be a strategic choice, for some groups, the opportunities for mobility are highly restricted. Morley et al. (2018) emphasize that the opportunities for mobility are not equal among social groups but depend on the academics' gender, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status and discipline.

2.1. Women in the Global Academic Labor Markets

Previous research indicates that women are less likely than men to participate in international collaboration and mobility (Ackers, 2008; Ackers & Gill, 2005; Jöns, 2011; Nielsen, 2016; Uhly et al., 2017; Vabø et al., 2014). Research shows that female students and early-career researchers tend to be equally as mobile as men, but at advanced career stages (after 35 years of age), possibilities for women to relocate internationally become more difficult than for men (Jöns, 2011). Women's lower access to international research networks and weak support structures hinder mobility (Leemann, 2010; Uhly et al., 2017). In addition, gendered caregiving responsibilities and (immobile) partners have been identified as barriers to women's mobility (Ackers, 2008; Ackers & Gill, 2008; Leemann, 2010; Vabø et al., 2014; Zippel, 2011). Nielsen (2017) showed that mobility requirements for tenured positions in a Danish university influenced women's considerations of leaving academia.

Just as gender segregation in academia reflects the stereotypical social division of labor between the sexes, with far more men in top positions and in STEM fields, it also reflects ethnic segregation along the gender dimension (Orupabo, 2016). Thus, women in academia do not compose a homogeneous group. Instead, there continue to be significant differences in possibilities for women from different ethnic backgrounds to be mobile and to pursue an international academic career (Mählck, 2013; Morley et al., 2018; Vabø et al., 2014).

2.2. Scientific Fields and Global Academic Labor Markets

The number and proportion of both women and foreign-born academics vary significantly by scientific field, which makes it crucial to pay attention to differences between fields when studying developments in staff composition. Although international mobility is increasingly seen as a requisite to progress in academic careers

(Zippel, 2011), the expectation to be mobile continues to differ between scientific fields. International collaboration and mobility are especially important for academic careers in STEM, particularly at an early career stage (Herschberg et al., 2018; Zippel, 2011). In the social sciences and humanities, international research collaboration does not necessarily require physical mobility (Hakala, 2002), and recruitment criteria might be more detached from university internationalization policies (Herschberg et al., 2018). The differences are related not only to the different traditions of international collaboration but also to the use of languages in different fields and disciplines (Hakala, 1998; Jöns, 2007). STEM fields have traditionally been dominated by the use of the English language, whereas the languages of publications are more varied in the social sciences and humanities (Hakala, 1998).

Academic mobility is especially gendered in the natural sciences (Jöns, 2011). O'Hagan et al. (2019) showed how the need to seek professional visibility through international mobility in STEM has gendered consequences, as women are typically more restricted by family obligations.

Not only do STEM fields recruit high numbers of foreign-born academics, but these fields also display a higher research-to-teaching ratio compared with other fields, meaning that foreign-born researchers have low representation in the higher ranked, permanent positions (Smetherham et al., 2010). This indicates that there is a clearer division of work in these fields, with less opportunity for career progression. In the UK, the strong presence of non-UK academics in lower grade STEM positions could be due to a supply deficit, whereby local academics opt for a commercial career with better employment conditions than those available in academia (Ackers & Gill, 2005; Khattab & Fenton, 2016). The high proportion of foreign-born staff could also be due to high research funding in these fields, which allows universities to hire fixed-term staff and to continue to attract new talent, but not to develop candidates toward full professorships (Smetherham et al., 2010).

3. Contextual Background

Sweden, Norway, and Finland are comparatively small, open societies that engage in global research competition. Internationalization has become a strategic priority for Nordic governments and universities (Haapakoski & Pashby, 2017; Stensaker et al., 2008). This includes the aim of attracting more researchers from abroad (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017; Research Council of Norway, 2020; Swedish Government, 2018).

Nordic countries rank high on measures that have been identified as pull factors for foreign researchers, such as wage levels and expenditures for national research and development (R&D; see Lepori et al., 2015). Sweden, Norway, and Finland all represent open systems where access for international applicants is not con-

strained by formal barriers, such as accreditation systems for foreign PhD degrees (Afonso, 2016; Musselin, 2005). Yet, Finland has a weaker tradition of recruiting and retaining academics from abroad (Hoffman, 2007). In terms of possibilities for stable positions available for doctoral graduates (Afonso, 2016), Sweden and Norway can be considered systems with high security, whereas Finland represents a country with lower security and with more fixed-term positions. Better career prospects and financial resources for R&D in Sweden and Norway (OECD, 2020) can be expected to have led to a higher proportion of foreign-born academics in Sweden and Norway than in Finland.

Despite the traditions of gender equality work in the Nordic countries—described as "women friendly societies" (Hernes, 1987)—and gender equality work in the research sector (Lipinsky, 2013), women continue to face obstacles when trying to reach positions at higher academic career stages. In 2018, the proportion of women in grade A positions was ca. 31 percent for Norway and 28 percent for Sweden and Finland (in headcounts). Thus far, the gender equality policies in Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish higher education and research have been detached from the internationalization policies (for Norway see Vabø, 2020). Thus, internationalization policies have not addressed the gender outcomes of global academic labor markets and international academic recruitment. In Norway, they are addressed for the first time in the 2021–2027 strategy of the Research Council of Norway (2020).

4. Data and Method

In this study, we use full-scale statistical data on TR staff employed at Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish universities between 2012 and 2018.

The Swedish data, provided by Statistics Sweden, are a combination of several registers, where data on country origin come from the Multi-Generation Register. The data set has some missing information on the origin of staff (e.g., 4.2 percent of staff in grade A and 1.4 percent of staff in grade C in 2018; see Supplementary File 1). We removed these data from the graphs. The Norwegian data come from NIFU's Register of Research Personnel and matched employer–employee register data from Statistics Norway. The Finnish data, provided by Statistics Finland, are a combination of higher education data on university staff and statistics on the population structure. We use headcounts, not full-time equivalents, because we are primarily interested in the total composition of university staff.

The two main variables are gender and country-origin. Gender is a binary variable that differentiates between men and women. Country-origin is also a binary variable that differentiates between native-born and foreign-born staff. One advantage of country-origin is that it is unambiguous and constant (cf. citizenship, which might change), but it has some limitations.

Most importantly, we do not know the reasons for, or timing of, mobility. However, the number of 'home-grown' TR staff with an immigrant background can be expected to be small (for Norway see Gunnes & Steine, 2020; for Sweden see Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2019). In Norway, 80 percent of foreign-born researchers are international mobile researchers (Gunnes & Steine, 2020). In Finland, the majority of foreign-born staff is also likely to be international mobile academics, given the small share of the immigrant population (seven percent in 2019; cf. 20 and 14 percent in Sweden and Norway, respectively; see Statistics Finland, 2019; Statistics Norway, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2020). The vast majority of native-born staff in the three countries have two native-born parents. The proportion of second-generation immigrants among the TR staff of universities is low (our data; see also Gunnes & Steine, 2020; Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2019). Another limitation of the data is that the data do not incorporate information on the countries of origin.

The data classify the TR staff of universities according to scientific field (all countries) and position (Sweden and Norway) or academic career stage (Finland). The classification of fields of science follows the OECD international classification system. The STEM fields include (natural) science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We merged agricultural sciences with natural sciences because of the low number of staff in agricultural sciences.

We use data on staff in grade C and grade A positions. Positions at these levels have strategic importance in the universities, and they are the most comparable across the three national systems. For example, grade B positions include a more heterogeneous set of TR positions (e.g., university lecturers and senior researchers). Grade C and A positions are also more likely to be inclined to internationalization pressures than positions in grade B, which are often closely related to teaching and thus to the use of national languages. In Sweden, grade C refers to career development positions, such as postdoctoral and assistant professor positions. In Norway, grade C entails postdoctoral positions. In Finland, grade C encompasses staff in career stage II, such as postdoctoral researchers. In Sweden and Norway, grade A positions refer to professor positions. In Finland, grade A equals positions in career stage IV, the majority being professor positions. Hence, interpretations of the results should consider that the professional categories are not identical in the countries, which have somewhat different occupational structures and career logics, including different funding arrangements for R&D. For example, the absolute number of persons in grade C varies considerably between the countries, with the most people in Finland and the fewest in Norway (see Supplementary File 1).

In the analysis, we first calculated the proportion of foreign-born women, native-born women, foreign-born men, native-born men, all women and all foreign-born staff between 2012 and 2018 in grades C and A. We analyzed the overall national developments over time and compared the findings across the countries. Second, we examined the changes in the staff composition by scientific field in 2012 and 2018. Here, we focused on two fields that in 2012 had the lowest proportion of women in grades C and A: natural sciences and engineering and technology. These STEM fields have received significant policy attention due to the skewed gender distribution. For the comparability of the findings, we used proportions rather than headcounts in the analysis. Headcounts and data on (1) all fields and (2) STEM fields in grade C and A are presented in tables in the Supplementary Files.

5. Findings

5.1. Foreign-Born Staff and Women in Grade C and A Positions

We first investigated how the composition of TR staff in grade C changed between 2012 and 2018, especially regarding the proportion of foreign-born staff and women. In all countries, the number of people in grade C increased. The total headcounts and proportions can be found in Supplementary File 1.

Figure 1 shows that in all three countries, the proportion of foreign-born staff increased significantly, whereas correspondingly, the proportion of native-born staff decreased, especially that of native-born men. In Finland, the starting point differs, with a significantly lower proportion of foreign-born TR staff in 2012 (25 percent vs. 44 percent in Sweden and 50 percent in Norway). Sweden displays the strongest growth: The proportion of foreign-born staff increased by 24 percentage points and reached 68 percent in 2018. In Norway, the increase was 18 percentage points, which also led to 68 percent of foreign-born TR staff by 2018. In Finland, the increase was 12 percentage points, which led to 37 percent foreign-born staff. In all countries, the growth in foreign-born staff is due to a combination of an increase in the number of positions and a decline in absolute numbers of native staff.

When we look at gender differences, we see similar growth rates for foreign-born women and men in Finland (51 percent for both), whereas in Sweden, the increase was steeper among foreign-born women (61 percent; 49 percent for men) and in Norway, it was steeper for foreign-born men (38 percent; 34 percent for women). The proportion of all women remained quite steady in Sweden and Finland, at around 45 percent, whereas in Norway, it decreased from 48 percent to 46 percent.

Figure 2 shows the development of grade A. In Sweden and Norway, the number of people in grade A increased, whereas in Finland, it decreased by 20 percent. As in grade C, the starting points of the three countries differ considerably, with Finland having a lower proportion of foreign-born staff (8 percent in 2012; 10 percent in 2018) than Sweden (21 percent in 2012;

Grade C positions

Figure 1. Staff in grade C at Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish universities between 2012 and 2018 (percentage of all people in grade C).

24 percent in 2018) and Norway (24 percent in 2012; 30 percent in 2018). Although the proportion of foreign-born staff increased, the changes were slower when compared with grade C. The stability is at least partly related to the nature of the positions: Grade A positions in the three countries are predominantly permanent, whereas grade C positions typically last two to three years. There is a large discrepancy in gender bal-

ance when we compare the proportion of women in grade A and grade C positions: The large share of women in grade C is not reflected at the highest hierarchical level. However, an interesting and discernible trend in all the countries is the decline of native-born men, which indicates increased diversity in grade A. Female representation has improved in all three countries, with the strongest growth in Norway.
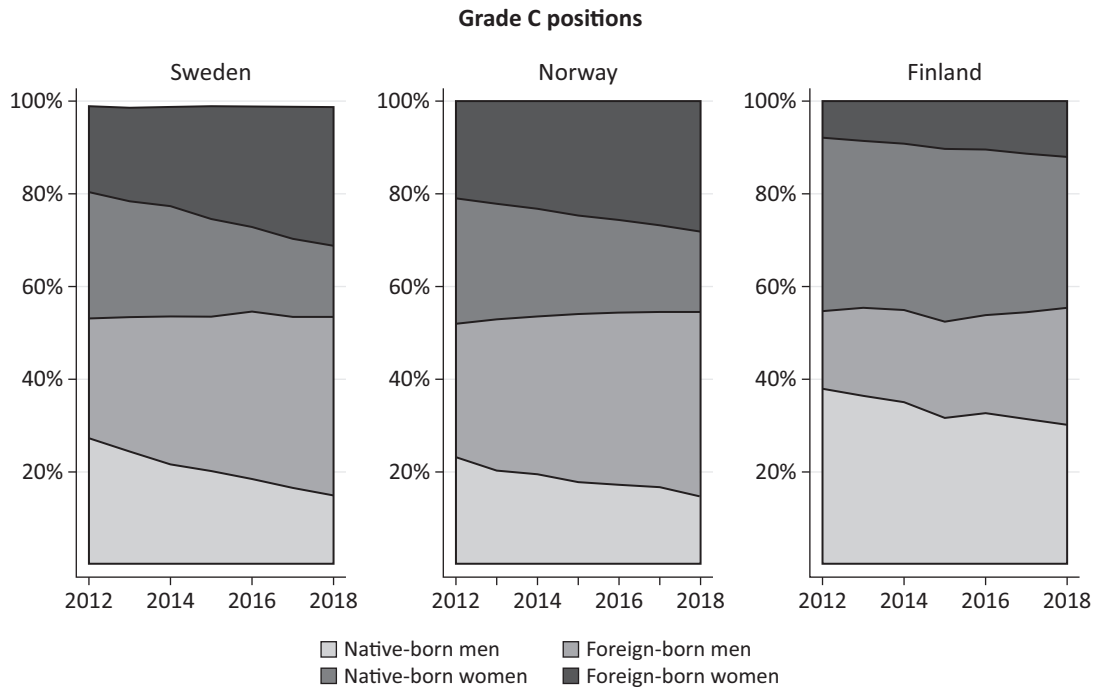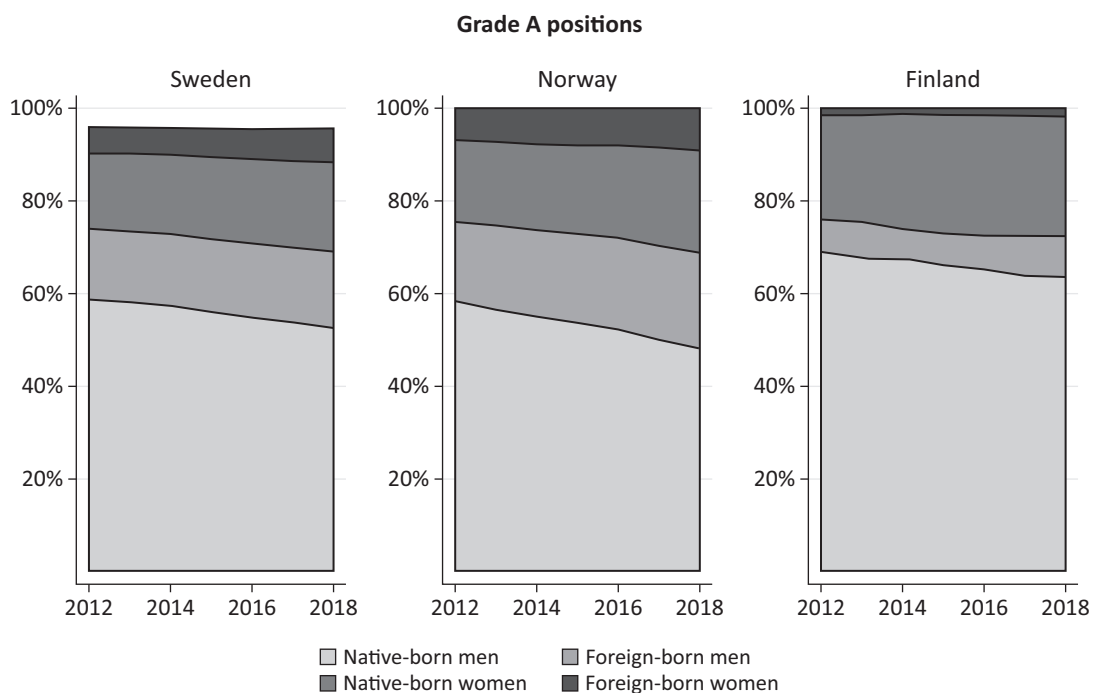
Grade A positions

Figure 2. Staff in grade A at Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish universities between 2012 and 2018 (percentage of all people in grade A).

In Sweden, the drop among native-born men is compensated by an increase among native-born women (3 percentage points), foreign-born women (2 percentage points) and foreign-born men (1 percentage point). In Norway, the proportion of native-born women and foreign-born men increased by four percentage points, and foreign-born women by two percentage points. In Finland, the number of women in grade A positions went up and down, but in relative numbers, their proportion increased. The drop in the proportion of native men has been compensated by an increase among native women (three percentage points) and foreign-born men (two percentage points), whereas among foreign-born women, there was hardly any growth. In 2018, they constituted only 1.5 percent of staff in grade A.

5.2. Foreign-Born Staff and Women in STEM

We then move on to determine the composition of staff in grade C and A in STEM fields. The majority of staff in grade C are postdoctoral researchers. Postdoc has long been a necessary career stage in STEM (Bessudnov et al., 2015).

Figure 3 shows that in Sweden, the proportion of foreign-born staff in grade C increased significantly, by 24 percentage points in the natural sciences (in 2018, the proportion was 76 percent) and 21 percentage points in engineering and technology (in 2018, the proportion was

71 percent). The proportion of women remained stable at c. 35 percent in natural sciences and increased in engineering and technology from 25 percent to 33 percent. This increase among women is mostly due to the increase in the number and proportion of foreign-born women, who in 2018 clearly outnumbered native women.

Also in Norway, where the proportion of foreign-born staff was already high in 2012, the proportion increased by 13 percentage points in natural sciences (in 2018, their proportion was 76 percent, as in Sweden) and 14 percentage points in engineering and technology (reaching 82 percent in 2018). At the same time, the proportion of women decreased by a few percentage points, resulting in 39 percent in natural sciences and 31 percent in engineering and technology. This is explained especially by the increase among foreign-born men. Foreign-born women outnumbered native women, especially in technology and engineering.

When compared with Sweden and Norway, in Finland, the proportion of foreign-born staff was low in 2012: 31 percent in natural sciences and 28 percent in technology and engineering. Their proportion increased by 14 percentage points in natural sciences and by 20 percentage points in engineering and technology. Foreign-born staff were more skewed toward men than in Sweden and Norway. The proportion of women decreased by one percentage point in natural sciences (35 percent women in 2018) and increased
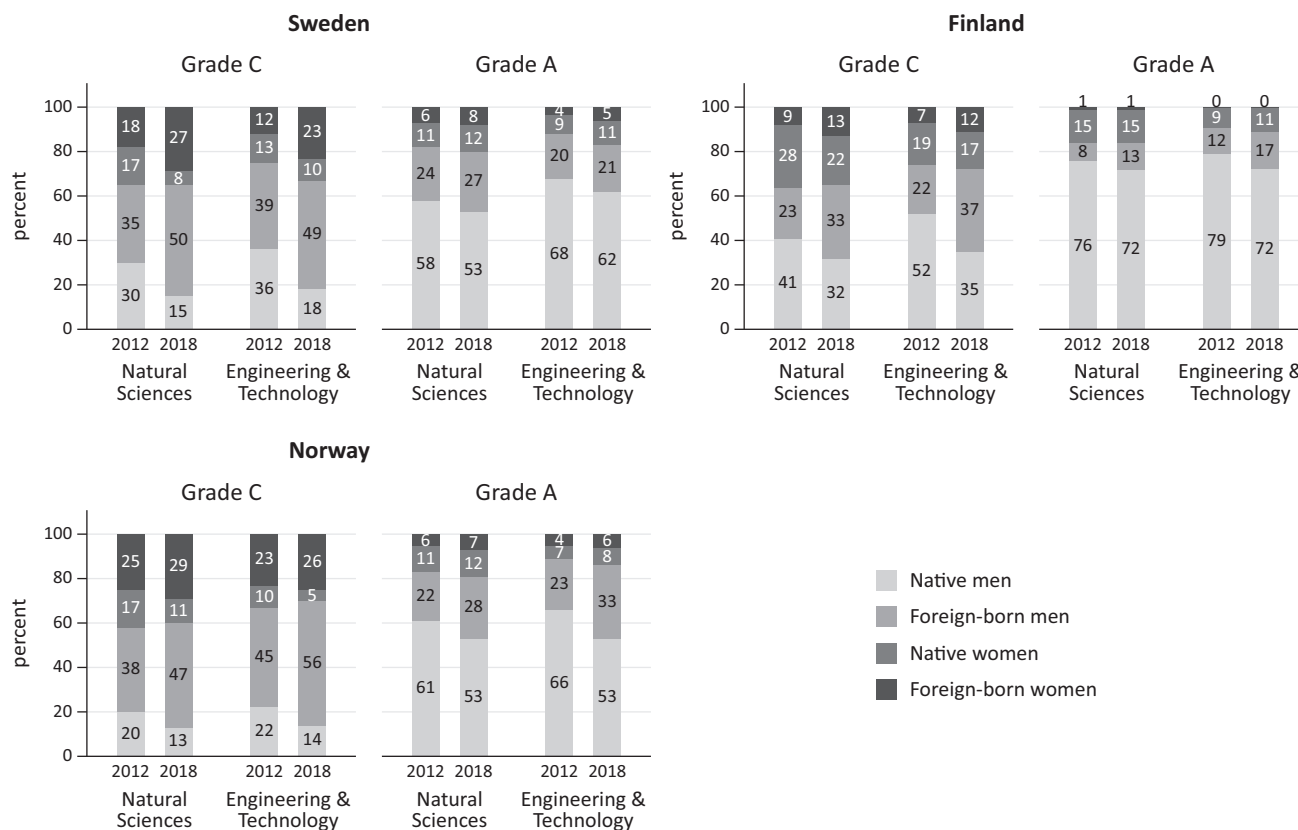
Figure 3. Staff in grades C and A in natural sciences and engineering and technology in 2012 and 2018 at Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish universities (percentage of all people in the scientific field).

by two percentage points in engineering and technology (28 percent women in 2018). Although the number of foreign-born women increased and the number of native women decreased, native women still outnumbered foreign-born women in 2018.

Figure 3 shows that the increase among foreign-born staff in grade C is not (at least yet) reflected in grade A. Furthermore, gender balance is more skewed toward men than in grade C. Although the proportion of native men has decreased in all the countries, they still dominate grade A positions in STEM, especially in Finland.

In Sweden, whereas native men comprised only 15–18 percent of grade C staff in STEM in 2018, in grade A, they represented the majority. However, the staff have become more diverse, as both the proportion of foreign-born staff and women has increased. The proportion of women increased by approximately 3–4 percentage points, quite similarly for native and foreign-born women, and reached 19 percent in natural sciences and 16 percent in engineering and technology.

In Norway, the proportion of foreign-born staff increased significantly in grade A: from 28 percent to 35 percent in the natural sciences, and from 27 percent to 39 percent in engineering and technology, the majority of them being men. The ratio of foreign-born to native-born staff is quite similar across both genders in grade A. Hence, we do not see the same intersecting gender and country-origin profiles that applied to grade C positions in STEM. The proportion of women increased by approximately three percentage points, resulting in 20 percent in the natural sciences and 14 percent in engineering and technology, again quite similarly for native women and foreign-born women.

In Finland, as in grade C, the proportion of foreign-born staff was significantly lower in grade A than in Sweden and Norway. In the time-frame, the overall number of people in grade A in STEM decreased. The proportion of foreign-born staff in grade A increased also in Finland: from nine percent to 14 percent in natural sciences and from 12 percent to 17 percent in technology and engineering. It is notable that at both time points, nearly all foreign-born staff were men: Foreign-born women comprised less than one percent of grade A positions in STEM, and their low proportion even decreased in the 2010s. Overall, the proportion of women remained at a lower level than in Sweden and Norway and with small changes over the years: at approximately 16 percent in natural sciences, and with an increase from nine percent to 11 percent in engineering and technology.

6. Discussion

Today, international academic recruitment is an important part of building excellent research and teaching environments. Recruitment patterns in the Nordic region are an expression of a growing global labor market for academics. The global market for postdoctoral researchers in particular acts as a catalyst for a new recruitment practice where international mobility is not only an ingredient for success in a scientific career but also contributes to legitimization of more deregulated and flexible working conditions, as expressed in the use of temporary positions (Vabø, 2020).

The findings indicate that the proportion of foreign-born staff increased rapidly in the 2010s, especially at Norwegian and Swedish universities. Interestingly, the gender distribution in grade C has remained quite stable, with foreign-born men and women substituting native-born men and women. In grade A, native-born men have given way for women and foreign-born men. Compared with grade C, the changes in the composition of TR staff in grade A are modest, and native-born men maintain the majority share in all three countries.

There are several explanations for the differences in the increase of foreign-born staff between grade C and grade A positions. First, grade A and grade C are affected by different labor market dynamics. For example, there is likely to be a larger pool of applicants in grade C as international experience has become a qualification criterion among early career researchers (Vabø, 2020). Second, the pace of renewal differs between fixed-term grade C positions and mostly permanent A positions. Third, according to the Swedish Higher Education Authority (2020) increased international recruitment in grade C is a result of specialization in STEM, which requires universities to enlarge their pool of applicants. Fourth, as in the UK (Khattab & Fenton, 2016), potential native applicants for grade C positions in the Nordic countries might find more attractive job opportunities outside the universities. For example, Frølich et al. (2019) argued that native Norwegians in STEM might find an attractive labor market outside universities, which might partly explain the large proportion of foreign-born staff in the temporary grade C positions.

In the Nordic comparison, Finland represents an outlier with a lower proportion of foreign-born staff, very few foreign-born women in grade A and steeper gender segregation in STEM. Possible explanations for the lower level of foreign-born staff in Finland include shorter traditions of internationalization, openness of the society and the labor market toward foreigners, inbred recruitment, and governmental funding cuts in R&D (Hoffman, 2007; OECD, 2020; Pietilä, 2015). What explains the low proportion of foreign-born women in grade A requires further studies.

The contributions of this study derive from the combination of excellent empirical data and a novel analytical approach. First, we use register data that comprises all universities' TR staff in Sweden, Norway and Finland for almost a decade. This allows us to track changes within and between countries. To our knowledge, this is the first comparative study that addresses the intersecting patterns of gender and foreign origin among university staff in the Nordic context. Furthermore, the study illustrates the intensity of the globalization of academic labor markets also outside the English-speaking world,

but with significant variation across national contexts. Moreover, the study contributes to existing research as it shows the varying gender outcomes of the changing academic labor market in the Nordic countries. For example, Swedish universities have been successful in attracting foreign-born women to engineering and technology in grade C. As a result, the overall proportion of women has increased. In Norway, on the other hand, the proportion of women in STEM has slightly decreased, as the upsurge of foreign-born men has been so significant. Finally, this study contributes to research on social stratification in Nordic academia. The contrast between the diversity in grade C and the native- and male-dominated grade A is striking, and in line with the stratification found in the UK (Khattab & Fenton, 2016; Smetherham et al., 2010). Thus, global recruitment acts as a catalyst for stronger stratification within the academic profession also in the Nordic countries.

In future studies, researchers should look more closely at the intersections of gender, country of origin, scientific field and position among foreign-born TR staff, as this would make it possible to discern differences in the universities' inclusionary practices and to analyze what barriers individuals with different backgrounds and genders encounter across their careers. Mählck (2013), for example, points to the different starting points and prejudices faced by women from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds entering Nordic academia. Our data cannot reveal the reasons behind the conspicuous social-demographic differences in the composition of grade A and grade C. Further studies should therefore focus on the mechanisms that lead to different staff compositions in specific national, organizational and disciplinary contexts.

The policy implication of our findings is that it is critical that policymakers in Nordic higher education and research include a clear intersectional dimension in their internationalization policies to acknowledge questions of country-origin and gender. The empirical data show that foreign-born women increasingly replace native women in grade C, especially in Sweden and Norway. If the universities are not able or willing to keep mobile foreign-born women, a crucial question is whether universities will be able to maintain and increase the female share in grade A positions. Another pressing issue is that policymakers, as well as collegial bodies in Nordic universities and research systems, need to assess the effects of internationalization policies on the gender balance and social stratification of staff systematically. Universities should critically assess their recruitment processes to identify biases and procedures that may have discriminatory outcomes according to applicants' gender, ethnicity, and country-origin.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

Towards Inclusion in Spanish Higher Education: Understanding the Relationship between Identification and Discrimination

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Abstract
It is more and more evident that there is diversity among university students, but this diversity encompasses a wide variety of personal characteristics that, on occasion, may be subject to rejection or discrimination. The feeling of inequality is the result of one stand-alone characteristic or an intersection of many. To widen our knowledge of this diversity and to be able to design actions with an inclusive approach, we have set out to explore the relationship between students' feelings of discrimination, their group identification and their intersections. Participants for the study are selected from protected groups which fall into the following criteria: ethnic minority, illness, migrant minority, disability, linguistic minority, sexual orientation, income, political ideology, gender, age and religion. We will refer to this relationship as the 'discrimination rate.' To fulfil our objective, we have given a questionnaire to a sample of 2,553 students from eight Spanish universities. The results indicate that the characteristics with which they most identify are religion, age, sex and political ideology. However, the highest rate of discrimination is linked to linguistic minority, ideology and migration. Regarding intersectionality, it is worth noting that 16.6% of students feel discriminated against for more than one characteristic, with the most frequent relationships being the following: (1) ethnic or migrant minorities (2) sexual orientation, sex, being under 30, leftist ideology, low income, linguistic minority and (3) Christian Catholic, right-wing and upper-class ideology.

Issue
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1. Introduction

The growing democratization of access to higher education brings with it the presence of an increasingly diverse student body. In Spain, the number of university students has doubled in recent decades, from just over 850,000 in the academic year 1985–1986 to over 1,500,000 today, representing 31% of the population aged 18–24 (Spanish Ministry of Universities, 2020). However, the debate about diversity in Spanish univer-

sities has been going for not even a decade (García-Cano et al., 2021). Decisive in increasing the attention paid by Spanish universities to diversity have been the global and European guidelines which, conscious of the role of universities in the development of democratic and sustainable societies, advocate the design and development of concrete actions to meet student diversity (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2012; EU, 2015; UNESCO, 1998, 2015). It is evident that there is a need to question and reflect on the role of universities in providing

adequate responses for the inclusion of traditionally excluded and under-represented groups in the educational space (Bowes et al., 2015; Goenechea et al., 2020; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2015; Mulcahy et al., 2017). The study by García-Cano et al. (2021) includes several indicators from various sources that outline that Spain still has a long way to go in this respect: (1) the likelihood of graduating after the age of 25 is lower than in other countries in the EU-23 bloc or the OCDE, which is 0.4% and 1.4%, respectively, (2) those with parents who have not obtained university qualifications and have a low income or economic difficulties are also less likely to complete higher education in Spain and (3) attendance at Spanish universities of students with disabilities is estimated to be lower in relation to populations without any disability (1.7% of all university students). Although no ethnic data are collected in Spain, previous studies (Goenechea et al., 2020) estimate that only 2% of the Roma population attend university studies.

Following the argument that education must meet social demands, these being understood as the training that students need to satisfy those positions in the job market that support and maintain the system; there is a clearly reductionist interpretation of what society is. This, subsequently, reduces educational institutions to exclusive providers of employability for companies (Díez Gutiérrez, 2011; Nussbaum, 2010). This not only relegates the responsibility that university institutions have to develop policies and practices which address vulnerable groups to second place but also their contributions to improving their social and environmental impact.

Accompanying this, deficit thinking (Banks, 2009), which holds students responsible for accessing university studies without having the sufficient skills or knowledge, forgets that there are many structures that prevent students belonging to discriminated groups from succeeding in their studies. This is even more so when the characteristics that justify their disability are intersected (Barnett & Felten, 2016; Gallego-Noche, 2019). The success of disadvantaged university students requires the consideration of an inclusive approach to diversity which is based on social justice, not exclusively on the assessment of outcomes related to employability or graduation rates.

Therefore, there are three elements that we consider fundamental in the study of student discrimination at the university:

- Inclusive attention to diversity
- Intersectional analysis of discrimination
- Social justice, understood from a multidimensional perspective (Fraser, 1997, 2011, 2012), which makes it possible to approach inclusive actions from a triple perspective: material, cultural, and participatory.

The demand for this social justice is the main argument for taking necessary actions to transform oppressive structures and allow all students, regardless of how they may identify or be identified, to maximize the development of their abilities and to do so in a context of equality. It is centered in this perspective that we place this body of research whose main objective is to investigate the perception of discrimination by sampling Spanish university students according to the most relevant identification groups and their intersections. Our main research questions are: Which groups do university students identify with? To what extent do the members of each group feel discriminated against or not? Is this feeling of discrimination intersectional?

2. An Inclusive Approach to Diversity in Higher Education, Social Justice, and the Intersection of Inequalities

2.1. An Inclusive Approach to Diversity as Social Justice

A situation of vulnerability for a student can be caused by their age, ethnic origin, gender, economic status, physical characteristics, health status, disability, cultural or political circumstances and any other factor that may present a significant risk of their rights and fundamental freedoms being violated (Hanne & Mainardi, 2013). Different research projects (Gairín Sallán & Suárez, 2016; Goenechea et al., 2020; Hanne & Mainardi, 2013; Mulcahy et al., 2017; Padilla-Carmona et al., 2017) show that a system of economic aids for the inclusion of these students is not sufficient. It is necessary to also create alternative models that contribute to changing the stereotypes and subjectivities created by the hierarchical systems of oppression and inequality, and, to this end, we refer to the contributions of Fraser (1997, 2011, 2012) and her multidimensional conception of social justice. Using Fraser's model of justice as a theoretical framework offers interesting possibilities for the theoretical construction of an inclusive approach to university education. From this perspective, justice requires social arrangements that allow all people to interact with each other as equals and as free beings.

This involves distinguishing three ways of understanding injustice: material, non-recognition, and social non-participation (Fraser, 1997, 2011). Material injustice is rooted in political and economic structures such as exploitation, economic marginalization, and deprivation from a minimal standard of living. The injustice of non-recognition operates on institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny adequate recognition. This type of injustice does not respond to the struggle for the recognition of cultural identities from hegemonic multiculturalism. Rather, it responds to the demand for equal moral value for all people regardless of their self-assigned or hetero-assigned group. The notion of injustice regarding non-participation refers to the material and cultural limitations imposed on having equality in political participation and representation. These types of injustices should not be understood as

separate realities, but as planes that generate multiplicative effects.

Moreover, it is fundamental to discard the apolitical narratives that have made people naturalize differences and their unequal value. The discourse of diversity, which is politically and ideologically related to the discourse of liberal multiculturalism and its economistic vision (Ahmed, 2007, 2012), celebrates differentiation in a society that is understood as a multicultural kaleidoscope where differences coexist in harmony. These differences are understood in isolation and homogenize people who are part of the same group. No further could this be from the reality in which differences are seen as inequalities, their intersections are treated with complex oppression and the experiences of each person are singular and, on too many occasions, dramatic (Gallego-Noche, 2019).

On the contrary, the critical perspective considers heterogeneity to be a constitutive part of the human being and finds that the social, political, and economic structures, which give a subordinate value to certain groups, are the cause of the oppression and inequality that provoke social disadvantage. It is therefore the responsibility of institutions to act according to the values of equity and social justice (Rawls, 1999).

This approach to injustice, therefore, defends the need to combine policies of redistribution, which not only encompass the equitable distribution of resources but also include the deconstruction of economic structures that generate inequality, with policies of recognition. This is to be done through radical strategies that allow the construction of the alternative discourses that are reflected in the organization of political, economic, social, and cultural structures (which are racist, androcentric, heteropatriarchal, adult-centered and colonial).

Establishing interpretative schemes in the community supposes doing things in a way that makes university education be based on critical questioning, deliberative democratic participation, and equal decision making. These schemes would allow for the understanding that situations of inequity are not unfortunate, but rather unjust and are acts of domination. They would also allow people not to blame themselves for their situation, but to channel their legitimate indignation towards social transformation. To this end, it is necessary that inclusive university policies and practices integrate a triple perspective: equality of economic resources (material justice), critical questioning of unequal value attributions (recognition justice) and deliberative democratic participation (participatory justice).

2.2. The Intersection of Oppression

Since the first contributions from Crenshaw (1989), Collins and Bilge (2016) have situated the antecedents of the concept of intersectionality in the conjunction of different social movements during the 60s and 70s that acted to denounce structural inequality and

the consequences it had on the lives of people from oppressed groups. Collins (2015, p. 2) defines it as "the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities."

The concept of intersectionality has become a springboard for the analysis of power relations that produce inequalities and oppression and has given way for the need for critical inquiry that questions educational practices and political interventions that are incapable of responding to non-hegemonic realities (Romero & Montenegro, 2018).

We believe, supported by Fraser (1997, 2011, 2012), that in addition to the need to address material deprivation (redistributive justice) and how it affects post-compulsory education possibilities, attention must also be paid to how cultural patterns of unequal value (recognition justice) and lack of participation hinder social and educational equity. Fraser's conception of social justice establishes its dimensions in an intersected way, just as the social inequalities that generate oppression are intersected. These inequalities are not accumulative but rather are mutually constitutive and the ways of experiencing them are multiple. It is in the ways of experiencing them, or rather, perceiving them, that this article puts its emphasis.

Whilst it is not possible to say that said oppressions accumulate and operate in the same way in each and every case, this can be said to be true for the omnipresence of the definition of power and the oppressive forms with which it is executed. West and Fenstermarker (2010) recognize the existence of multiple forms of oppression which are derived from social, cultural, and political categorizations whose particular intersections depend on the concrete context where they take place and the way these are experienced by each person.

Thus, intersectional analysis allows us to challenge the ways in which structures of domination interact and intersect to influence the specific identity experiences of people from minority groups (Harris & Patton, 2019; Nash, 2008).

These hierarchical forms of social organization, which are socio-historical systems and mutually constitutive structures of inequality, are (1) social, cultural, and psychological systems of homogenizing, segregationist imposition, obedience, and undervaluation, (2) economic class systems and (3) political systems in which there is no true participatory democracy. These all impede equality and social justice (Bookchin, 2006; Gallego-Noche, 2019; Harris & Patton, 2019).

In this way, the inclusive approach that we maintain based on social justice and contemplating the intersectionality of oppression, allows us to further understand the information gained from the students' self-identification with certain political, social, and cultural categories and the perception that they themselves have

of the experience of discrimination that their membership entails.

3. Methodology

One of the specific objectives of the research project this article is based upon (supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities) is to explore the perception of discrimination from a sample of university students according to the most relevant identification groups and their intersections.

Both the need to understand the discourses of the agents involved in the reality we intend to investigate and the challenges put to those structures which generate oppression, respond to the notion of inclusive and intersectional research (Collins, 2015; Lall, 2011; Museus & Griffin, 2011; Nind, 2017). We intend to generate knowledge from the voices of the community, which will contribute to the unveiling of the oppressive and unequal structures that operate in higher education and will transform them into spaces of equality and social justice.

In order to understand the students' perspective, semi-structured interviews, discussion groups, and an ad hoc questionnaire have been developed (mixed method). This research is limited to the information provided by the questionnaire and seeks to respond to the knowledge regarding students' self-identification with a protected group and the feeling of discrimination they experience. The research also addresses the intersection relationship between the characteristics that constitute a diverse identity but for which students feel discriminated against:

> In reality, when asked "who are you?" most students, faculty, and administrators in higher education would not respond with a single identity. Rather, an individual's sense of self can be based on many groups with which he or she identifies, and people can be defined simultaneously by their race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and other aspects of their identities. (Museus & Griffin, 2011, p. 7)

Firstly, we validated the content of the questionnaire using inter-rater reliability (four people with expertise in the conceptual area of diversity care and 1 person with experience in instrument design) to which both a content validity coefficient (CVC) and a content validity index (CVI) analysis were applied through the SPSS program (v22). Based on the results obtained in both analyses (CVC and CVI), the items with the highest values—between 0.95–1.00 in the criteria of relevance, comprehension and ambiguity—were selected, and the experts' contributions were included. Later, we carried out a pilot test with 51 students which led to the final version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was configured around the following dimensions:

- Socio-demographic variables (10 items)
- Beliefs, attitudes, and practices which focus on diversity in the university space (24 items)
- Ideological attitudes (20 items)
- Personality measure (24 items)

The items in the first two dimensions were created by the UCA research team reviewing the work of Lombardi et al. (2016). The items from the final two dimensions were selected from the proposal by Álvarez et al. (2016), which includes several related validated instruments. The theoretical dimensions and item design were established. The items formulated to identify and explore the feeling of discrimination caused because of a student's membership in a group are based on the European Directives on non-discrimination, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR). This resulted in the establishment of the specific groups being included in Table 1.

Table 1. Diversity of identification groups.

Protected groups
Ethnic minority
Migrant minority
Minority sexual orientation
Sex (Gender)
Older population group (over 40 years old)
Young population group (under 30 years old)
Catholic religion collective
Collective of another Christian religion
Collective of the Muslim religion
Jewish religion collective
Collective of another minority religion not mentioned above
Atheist collective
Agnostic collective
Collective indifferent to religion
Group of members or supporters of a right-wing political party
Group of members or supporters of a left-wing political party
Minority with a disability
Minority with a chronic or infectious disease
High-income socio-economic group
Low-income socio-economic group
Linguistic minority
Other

The final version of the questionnaire was given to students from eight universities which were selected by the project management for: being a Spanish university; being diverse in size and regional location; and having

associated faculty be specialized in the subject and be with whom we had worked previously. The questionnaires were sent between May and September 2019. In some universities, permission to send the questionnaires through the official distribution lists was achieved. In others, this was not possible and the questionnaires were subsequently sent through academic officials. In the academic year in which the questionnaire was carried out (2018–2019), the Spanish university system had a total of 1,290,455 undergraduate students, distributed among 84 universities. The eight participating universities—all public—had a total of 333,408 undergraduate students, representing 25.8% of the national total. Specifically, and from highest to lowest number of students, the participating universities were: National Distance Education University (129,074), Complutense University of Madrid (58,305), University of Seville (52,315), University of Cadiz (18,378), University of Cordoba (14,881), University of Jaen (12,474), and Pablo de Olavide University (9,713).

Finally, 2,553 students completed the online questionnaire, creating a significant sample of the population (confidence level greater than 95% and estimation error less than 2%). Of the total number of participants, 62.7% were women and 37.2% men. Considering the studies carried out, 83.9% of the respondents were undergraduate students (first level of university studies), 10.3% corresponded to master's degree students (second level of studies), and the remaining 5.8% were doctoral students (final level).

The data analysis was done with the help of SPSS version 22, which allowed us to organize, summarize, and analyze the information obtained from the 2,553 participants. Specifically, the data analyses that were carried out are as follows: firstly, we performed a descriptive analysis of the dichotomous variables which referred to the identification of students with a protected group, as well as an analysis of their feeling of discrimination, organized by collective. This allowed us to analyze the impact of each of the groups, establishing the modalities which we found corresponded with the same factor. Secondly, a percentage indicator of the discrimination rate in each of the protected groups was provided. Finally, the analysis of clusters or grouping carried out allowed us to recognize patterns of behavior with respect to the feeling of discrimination, with not only the resulting groups being of interest but also the discriminative or classificatory power derived from them.

4. Results

4.1. Identification with Protected Groups

In this section, we gather the answers to the question: In which of these groups do you recognize yourself or identify with? The answers to which were chosen from the multiple options from Table 1. Focusing on which of the groups from the questionnaire students identified,

we note that 2,221 of the 2,553 students surveyed identify with at least one, that is 87%, of which: 63.26% are women and 87.16% are studying a degree in one of the universities. On the other hand, 13% do not identify with any of the 21 groups mentioned.

It is noteworthy that it is religious belief (or the absence thereof) the factor with which the participating university students most identified. This is above other identification groups such as gender or socio-economic background which could be assumed, a priori, to generate a greater sense of belonging. Thus, 71.23% of those who identify with a group do so with those related to religion. Among these students were those who consider themselves as atheists and indifferent (31.98% and 36.29%) or as Catholics (28.76%), with a very small minority (3%) corresponding to other religions (Muslim, Jewish, other Christian religion or other minority religion not mentioned above).

The next group to be noted is that of age. 61.9% of the 57.32% who identify with age do so because they are over 40.

We note that only 38.78% say they identify themselves with the corresponding group in terms of gender, being mostly (83.14%) women. Specifically, 715 of the 1,595 participating women (44.82%) and 145 of the 950 men (15.26%) marked this response. Therefore, it is a factor that causes a strong feeling of identification for women, but not for men, which may be due to the fact that being a man does not lead to a feeling of identification in an andronormative society.

The next group to be mentioned is political ideology, with which 35.84% of respondents identify themselves. Specifically, 81.53% do so with left-wing political beliefs, as opposed to 18.47% with right-wing political beliefs.

Per capita income ranks fifth as an identification factor, with 25.08% marking this. 84.02% of this group marked this group due to low income.

This is followed in descending order by sexual orientation, linguistic minority, disability, migrant minority, illness, and ethnic minority.

Table 2 shows the data in detail. In it, we have grouped some of the identification items into the major factors mentioned (religion, sex, income, political ideology, age). Figure 1 allows us to visualize the situation described.

4.2. Perception of Discrimination Caused by the Identification with a Protected Group

Analyzing the feeling of discrimination of those who identify with a group or several is the objective of this section. Specifically, the question asked was: Have you felt personally discriminated against, in the last twelve months, due to…? The same 21 multiple choice answers were offered (see Table 1).

Figure 2 illustrates the results obtained and highlights those groups for which most people feel discriminated against, using the specific data collected in Table 3.

Table 2. Identification with protected groups.

Identification		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Sex	860	38.72
	Woman	*715*	*83.14*
	Man	*145*	*16.86*
	Political ideology	796	35.84
	Left-wing	*649*	*81.53*
	Right-wing	*147*	*18.47*
	Income	557	25.08
	Low	*468*	*84.02*
	High	*89*	*15.97*
	Age	1,273	57.32
	> 40	*788*	*61.90*
	< 30	*485*	*38.10*
	Sexual orientation	290	13.06
	Linguistic minority	214	9.64
	Migrant minority	136	6.12
	Disability	152	6.84
	Ethnic minority	71	3.20
	With illness	105	4.73
	Religion	1,582	71.23
	Catholic-Christian	*455*	*28.76*
	Others	*47*	*2.97*
	Atheist	*506*	*31.98*
2,221	*Agnostic-Indifferent*	*574*	*36.29*

Notes: Created from the information obtained with SPSS.

Of the 2,221 people who identify with at least one group, 44.03% say they feel discriminated against because of their membership. This supposes a total of 978 students, compared to 55.97% who do not detail feeling the same. That is, identifying with a group does not necessarily imply a feeling of discrimination because of it. There is also another interpretation: It does not seem necessary to have been discriminated against for
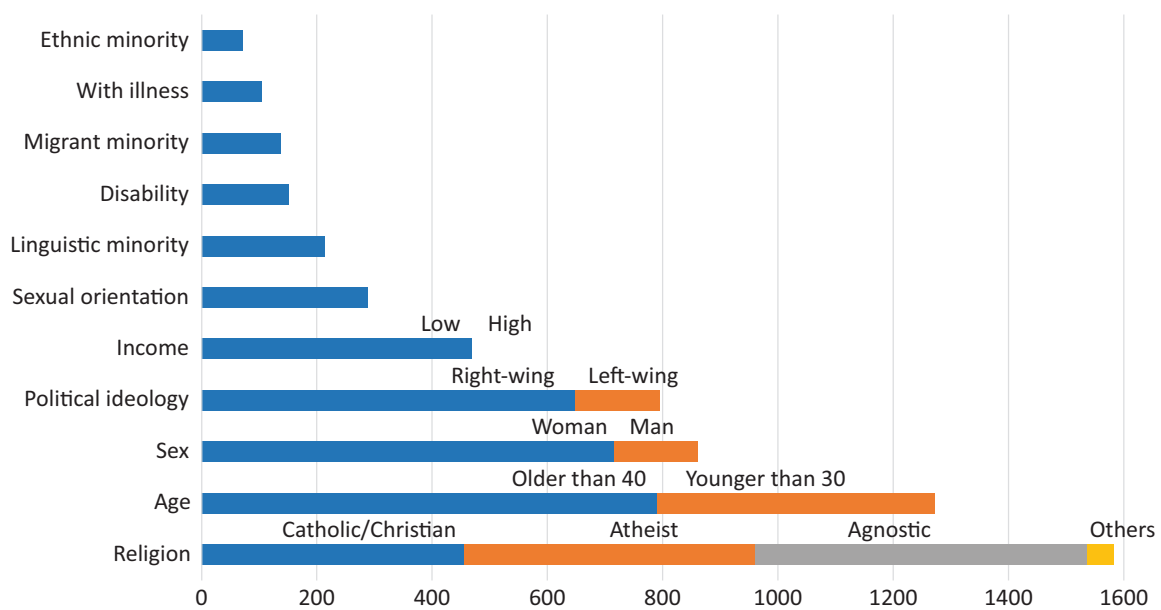
Figure 1. Identification with a group. Created from the data in Table 2.

Table 3. Feeling of discrimination by collective.

Discrimination.		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Sex	346	35.38
	Woman	*318*	*91.91*
	Man	*28*	*8.09*
	Religion	268	27.40
	Catholic-Christian	*158*	*58.96*
	Others	*7*	*2.61*
	Atheist	*52*	*19.40*
	Agnostic-Indifferent	*51*	*19.03*
	Political ideology	233	24.54
	Left-wing	*150*	*64.37*
	Right-wing	*83*	*5.63*
	Age	221	22.60
	> 40	*111*	*50.23*
	< 30	*110*	*49.77*
	Income	180	18.4
	Low	*150*	*83.33*
	High	*30*	*16.67*
	Linguistic minority	132	13.50
	Sexual orientation	108	11.04
	Migrant minority	59	6.03
	Disability	50	5.11
	Ethnic minority	25	2.56
978	With illness	22	2.25

Note: Created from the information obtained with SPSS.

belonging to a group in order to identify with it and, therefore, there is not a question of there being reactive identities forming as a result of negative experiences.

Whilst among the identification groups religion was the one with the most response, in terms of discrimi-

nation the cause that appears in our analysis with the most pertinence is gender: 35.38% of the participants feel discriminated against because of their gender, of which 91.91% are women, something that, although may be expected, is not without its significance. Of the
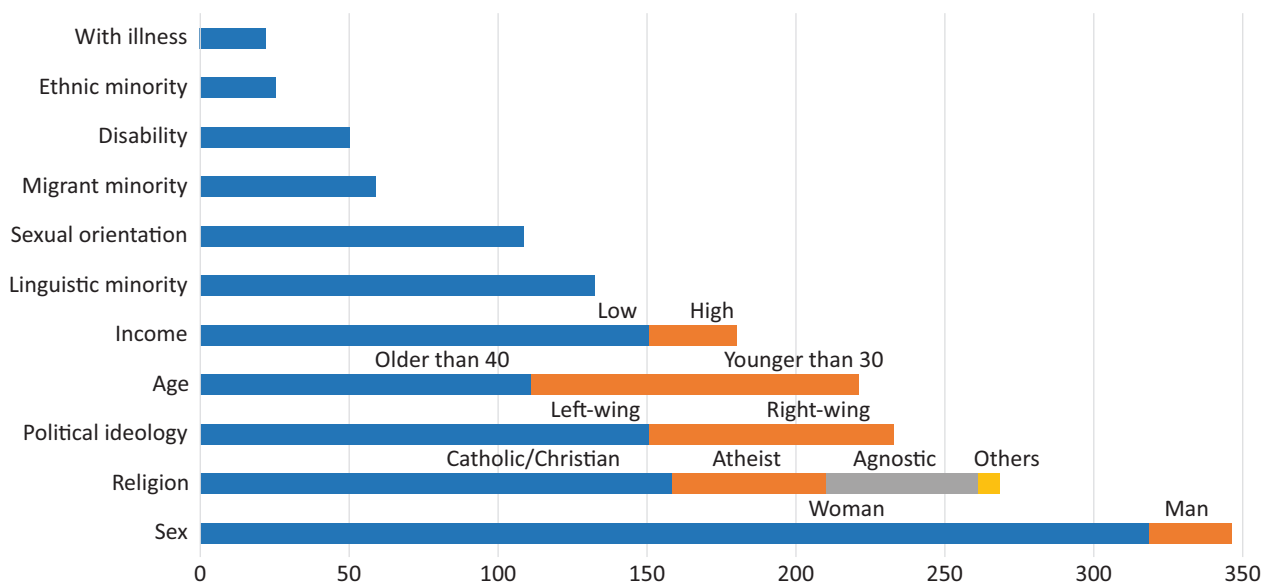
Figure 2. Discrimination. Created from the data in Table 3.

1,595 women participants, 715 identify with the gender group and 346 have felt discriminated against in the last 12 months for being women.

The second reason why university students feel discriminated against is because of their religious beliefs or lack thereof (27.4%); clearly standing out within this category are those who have felt discriminated against because they are Catholics/Christians (58.96%).

The next factors that cause a feeling of discrimination are the groups regarding a student having a defined political ideology, having a low per capita income and being over 40 years old, followed by belonging to a linguistic minority and having a specific sexual orientation.

In this item, an open space in which students could specify their belonging to another group for which they felt discriminated against was offered. Among the particularly diverse responses, those which stand out refer to: being a mother, being unemployed, having high intellectual capacities, physical appearance, and living in a rural environment.

4.3. Discrimination Rate

We are interested in knowing, in addition to the number of people who identify with one or more protected groups, to what extent this membership is or is not accompanied by a perception of discrimination. To do this, we define the discrimination rate as the percentage of people discriminated against with respect to those who identified with the group (discrimination rate = 100 × no. of people discriminated against in a group/no. of people identified with the group). The data are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Discrimination rate.

Discrimination	Discrimination rate (%)
Linguistic minority	61.68
Right-wing ideology	56.46
Migrant minority	43.38
Sex	40.23
Sexual orientation	37.24
Ethnic minority	35.21
Being Catholic/Christian	34.73
High income	33.71
Disability	32.89
Low income	32.05
Left-wing ideology	24.19
Older than 40	22.89
With illness	20.95
Other religions	14.89
Older than 30	13.96
Atheist	10.28
Agnostic	8.89

Note: Created from the information obtained with SPSS.

The factors that result in the highest rate of discrimination are, in this order, belonging to a linguistic minority, having right-wing ideology, being a migrant, and gender. As the group discriminated for being a linguistic minority is the one with the highest rate of discrimination and considering that the University of Valencia is part of the study and has its own dialect, we have calculated the rate separately for those students (63.2%), although the difference is very little from the rate for the rest of the participants (64%). Therefore, we conclude that it does not have a particular influence on the rate, although it does on the number of individuals to be considered.

The discrimination rate allows us to understand the strength of an identification factor as a generator of a feeling of discrimination, regardless of the size of that group. Regarding frequency, the group that feels most discriminated against is gender, but this result is due to the fact that it is also the most numerous group. The discrimination rate allows us to re-state the importance of these factors, for example, moving gender to a fourth place in terms of generating a feeling of discrimination.

4.4. Intersectionality in the Discrimination Rate

We have focused in this section on looking for relationships between the causes of the feeling of discrimination for those who feel discriminated against in more than one group. A total of 424 students make up this sample, constituting 43.35% of the 978 who feel discriminated against. This justifies our study into intersectionality, despite the fact that 56.65% of students attribute their feeling of discrimination to a single cause.

In this section, we look to deepen the knowledge of the intersectionality of categories, analyzing the factors that most often occur in a convergent way and which act as the origin for the feeling of discrimination. In our first analysis, we studied the relationship between variables on a two-by-two basis. The chi-squared test allowed us to detect the association between several pairs of variables (obtaining P-values lower than 0.05) when performing the contrasts. However, this did not allow us to classify the variables into groups that present similarities.

We then resorted to a hierarchical cluster analysis, given the nature of the variables (binary absence/presence variables). This multivariate statistical classification technique groups variables together to achieve maximum homogeneity in each group and the greatest possible difference between the groups created. Specifically, we made use of the Jaccard Index to obtain the similarities between the variables.

After the attempts to classify with 4–6 clusters or groupings and once we established the groups as isolated elements (Muslim, Jewish and other religions), we proceeded to eliminate the groups from the exploratory study, with the understanding that they did not present similarities with the rest of the groups that we intended to group.

The cluster analysis of the remaining 18 groups that led to the feeling of discrimination made us consider certain relevant groupings. The dendrogram in Figure 3 shows the groupings derived from the application of a hierarchical clustering algorithm, organizing the groups into subcategories which are then divided into others until the desired level of detail is reached.

Graphically, the dendrogram, which is derived from the Jaccard Coefficient Cluster analysis, is based on a similarity matrix that shows the relationships between the different protected groups considered and the students' feeling of discrimination. The scale on the left shows the similarity index. The limit was established at 23% similarity. This type of representation allows us to appreciate the relationship between five different groups, highlighting the intersectionality that exists between them:

- Cluster 1: ethnic or migrant minorities
- Cluster 2: sexual orientation, sex, under 30, left-wing political ideology, low per capita income, linguistic minority
- Cluster 3: Catholic-Christian, right-wing political ideology, high income
- Cluster 4: over 40, disabled, with illness
- Cluster 5: atheist, agnostic, indifferent to religion

With the dendrogram, we obtained five groups of factors which together usually produce a feeling of discrimination for the persons who present them. They would therefore be profiles of students who are more likely to feel discriminated against because they belong to several specific groups at the same time. However, our work does not represent the intensity of this feeling (since it works with binary variables and not with a scale) so we cannot say that the feeling of discrimination is greater in those who belong to several groups than in those who only identify with one of them. Yet, it can be assumed that the intersection of discrimination factors is more intense than the experience of only one.

5. Conclusion

Both the democratization of access to higher education that universities have experienced, as well as the social recognition of multiple diversities from political movements that have championed the recognition of difference, have led way to an increasingly visible presence of particular groups in the university space. The question of what the university does with this reality has not been the focal subject of this research, but it is certainly a question that we should not lose sight of when addressing inclusion in higher education. In the work presented, and whilst having this question on the horizon, we have looked to evidence the perception of discrimination that a sample of Spanish university students have regarding the groups with which they identify. The analysis carried out, based on the research questions posed at the beginning of the study, reveals several issues of interest.

Firstly, as stated by Museus and Griffin (2011), we consider self-identification to be a completely free
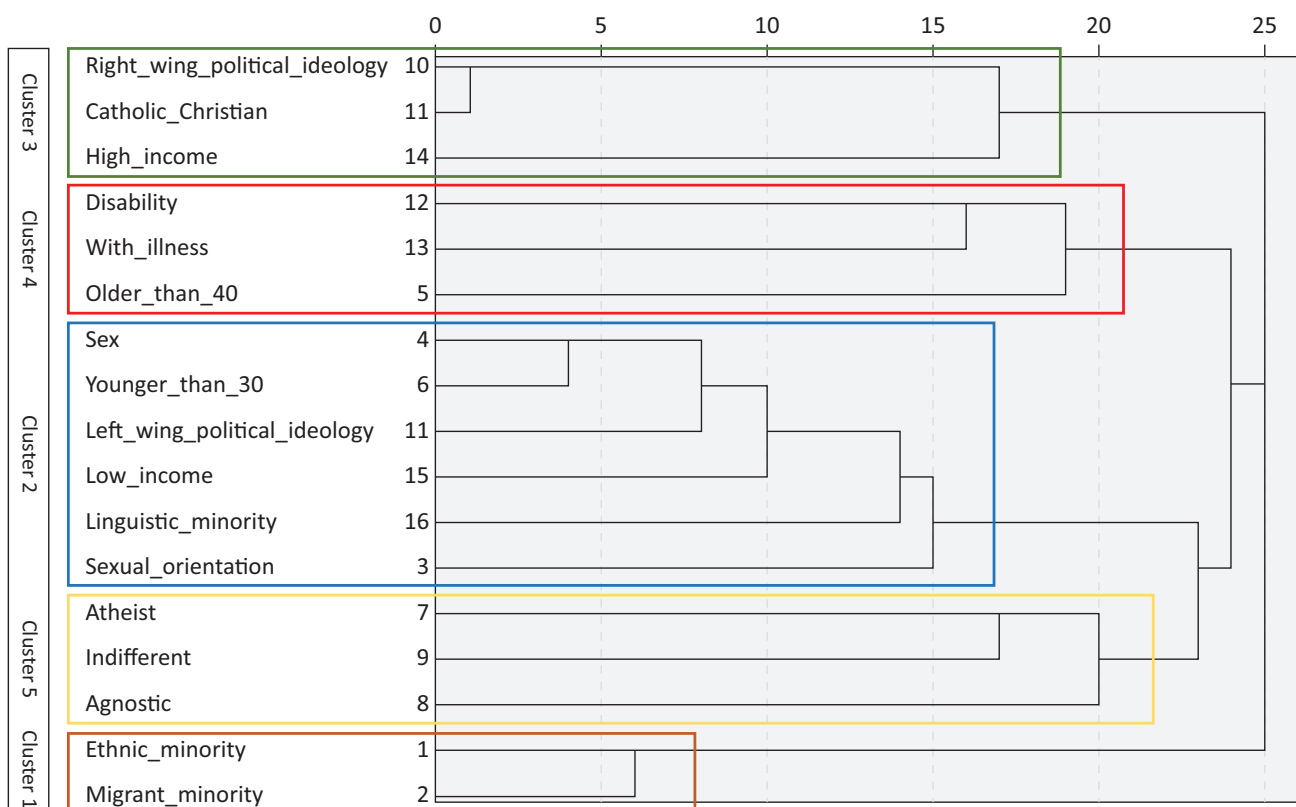

Figure 3. Dendrogram: Feeling of discrimination.

process, as well as being one that changes over a lifetime However, it should be noted that this work has focused on the categories regarding self-identification as established by the European Directives on non-discrimination, the ECHR and the CFR, as a way of operationalizing the study. We consider, moreover, that such a priori categorization also conditions the educational policies, which sometimes are directed at the group populations to be addressed, thus losing the necessary comprehensive approach in the attention to diversity.

Having clarified this issue, it should be noted that identification with a group considered as vulnerable does not necessarily lead to a feeling of discrimination. Among those who do feel discriminated, belonging to a linguistic minority, having right-wing ideology, being a migrant, and being a woman are the most relevant factors in generating this feeling.

Our study has shown that, beyond the feeling of discrimination by a single category, 43% of those who feel discriminated against feel this way because of more than one cause. Thus, among the clusters that have emerged, the most relevant is that which establishes an association between ethnic and migratory identity (cluster 1). This is logical given that immigration in Spain is still recent. As such, it can be understood that people from ethnic minorities studying at university are (in)migrants, with the exception of the Roma population which is the only national ethnic minority and which, as we stated in the introduction of this study, has an extremely scarce presence at university. This is followed by cluster 2 with a diverse grouping that starts with the essential combination of sex and being under 30, something that may be related to gender identity movements among younger populations. In addition to these two variables, other somewhat coherent ones are associated such as sexual orientation, left-wing ideology, low income, or belonging to a linguistic minority. These first two clusters respond to issues widely addressed by studies of intersectionality where gender, racialization, sexuality, class, or nationality appear as basic categories of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Harris & Patton, 2019). The fourth brings together categories that have also been highlighted in intersectional studies such as age (over 40), disability and illness (Collins, 2015). The fifth is the least relevant with a combination of identifications around being atheist, agnostic, and indifferent to religion. The implications of these clusters are of great interest as they evidence, from an intersectional analysis perspective, the ways in which structures of domination interact and intersect to influence the specific identity experiences of people from minority groups (Harris & Patton, 2019; Nash, 2008). Thus, in agreement with cluster 2, a student at a Spanish public university may perceive, within the university, an intersection of oppressions where their gender, sexual orientation, social class, political positioning, and age place them in a differentiated—if not unequal—situation.

In the third cluster, having been ordered according to the greatest similarity between the groups that make them up, an interesting combination emerges as it brings together a series of factors that are not oppressive in themselves and that, at the same time, we could consider hegemonic in Spanish society. On the one hand, Spain is a country that recognizes freedom of religion but is Catholic by tradition. On the other hand, the right-wing ideology in the country is not that of the party that currently governs, but its importance in terms of parties with parliamentary representation in Spanish democracy is clear. Finally, belonging to a high social class would not be a reason for oppression in any context. Hence, we point out the anomaly that this cluster generates and which calls for reflection on the reasons for such perception.

Secondly, from this work, we highlight the importance of conducting research based on the voices of the students themselves, as the protagonists of their experiences of discrimination. In this sense, our work circles back to the proposal from those who point out the importance of starting from the voices of the protagonists in the educational process, especially those of the students (Christensen & Allison, 2000; Goenechea et al., 2020).

Finally, the empirical evidence provided from this research is considered to be very useful diagnostic material for rethinking what the university can and should do. Based on an inclusive approach from a social justice perspective (Fraser, 1997, 2011, 2012), the results presented in this article allow us to rethink the role of university institutions in three directions: That (1) those who suffer from material deprivation are not limited in their access to higher education, a fact that could affect, to a greater extent, the people whose responses we found in cluster 2, that (2) the diversity of the student body can be freely recognized in the university space, as evidenced by clusters 1, 2, and 5 and that (3) both access and participation in the institution are guaranteed with equal opportunities for all, as especially evidenced by cluster 4, which brings inclusion to the realities of those who have historically experienced social barriers. This all leads to crucial questions regarding redistributive policies that allow people from disadvantaged groups to access and continue in the higher education system. Moreover, it also brings forward questions focused on the recognition and protection of certain especially vulnerable groups through student support systems and, finally, questions regarding the need for university teaching practices to favor social questioning from a critical perspective, as well as the democratic participation of all sectors, especially those historically made invisible, as pointed out by Bowes et al. (2015).

In order for the university, as a fundamental institution of our society, to move beyond a neoliberal role (Díez Gutiérrez, 2011; Nussbaum, 2010) towards inclusion, it is made necessary that we understand the perceptions and experiences of those who experience the university. Although this issue has been addressed in previous studies in the Spanish context (Gairín Sallán & Suárez, 2016; Goenechea et al., 2020; Padilla-Carmona

et al., 2017), they have tended to focus on specific collectives. This work has aimed to be an additional contribution to the analysis of this reality in the Spanish context both from the students' perspective and from a commitment to an intersectional approach.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Comparative Inclusion: What Spanish Higher Education Teachers Assert

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Abstract

From a critical comparative perspective (far from more naive and resolute trends) this study delves into the problematisation that comes with recognising comparative education as 'the science of the difference' (Nóvoa, 2018). Despite the cementation of discursive, regulatory, and normative governance, of a new higher education regime (Zapp & Ramirez, 2019) revealing the growing isomorphism in the global political and educational discourse of academics, some idiosyncratic characteristics can be detected as a result of the policy implemented in each context. The aim of this article is to compare the beliefs and attitudes of professors from seven Spanish universities regarding diversity, as well as the level of inclusion in higher education, by means of an exploratory, descriptive, and comparative survey. A total of 977 educators participated in a purposive sampling. Descriptive techniques, contrasting differences and comparing proportions allowed us to detect that, although there are no major differences between the teachers' beliefs and attitudes, some of the minor ones are still worth highlighting. Some of these are the commitment to incorporate diversity in methodologies and teaching resources, in their attempt to meet the needs of diverse people, or the way they perceived personal or institutional commitment to diversity. In conclusion, it is necessary to take a stance on diversity and inclusion that supports the need to stop and reflect on the richness they can provide, from a comparative position and constantly distancing ourselves (Kim, 2020) from today's university system.

Issue

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1. Introduction

In today's global learning scenarios, educational inclusion is an issue of increasing relevance, given that current times call for a new ethical revolution, because "we need freedom in education and its associated responsibilities" (Escotet, 2020, p. 74). Based on this evidence, higher education institutions constitute key sites (Powell, 2020) and even contestation environments (Allais et al., 2020) that can transfigure inclusion into comprehensive and effective organisational, management, and extension policies.

This study wants to provide an additional contribution to a promising and trending line of research which Schuelka and Lapham (2018, p. 38) called 'comparative and international inclusive education,' one that recognises that there is no single answer to how to compare inclusive education. To do this, we want to found our research on critical comparative education, which tries to move away from the solutionist drift of current politics and recognise the urgency of a science of the difference (Nóvoa, 2018). A science to evince the idiosyncratic characteristics of each policy in relation with the

establishment, in the shape of a global discursive governance that reveals a new higher education regime (Zapp & Ramirez, 2019), largely promoted by international organisations. Besides inclusion, other critical and intersectional readings can be done from paradigms such as colonialism, humanism, modernism, conventionalism (Whitburn et al., 2017), transculturality (Thomsen et al., 2020), feminism (Djavadghazaryans, 2020; Tzavara & Wilczek, 2019), and human rights and social justice models (Khumalo, 2019). From these models, globalisation is paradoxically seen as a factor that causes more inequity in higher education (van Vught et al., 2018). In this sense, system diversity constitutes an essential condition that makes it possible for education to play its meritocratic role in society and counter the negative effects of globalisation. This, therefore, calls into question how higher education institutions have become hybrid organisations that subordinate morals and educational imperatives to economic obligations, including business interests, competition, innovation, flexibility, and productivity (Matthews et al., 2019) instead of focusing on training students with a critical and civic mind and according to cultural, social, and economic demands (Dias & Soares, 2018).

Based on these considerations, the general aim of this study is to explore the beliefs and attitudes of the teaching staff of different universities regarding diversity and their degree of inclusion in the context of higher education. It attempts to do so coming from comparative education. Based on institutionalism and New Institutionalism (Meyer & Powell, 2020), this line of research focuses on estrangement (Kim, 2020; Nóvoa, 2018) as a process of enquiry, visible in the results of our research.

2. General Framework

2.1. Higher Education, Inclusion, and University Faculty

Inclusive education has focused on political, social, and cultural processes to the detriment of the educational systems themselves, under the aspiration to become an 'education for everyone' (Black-Hawkins, 2017). In this regard, the work of international organisations has contributed to strategically formulate political orthodoxy in relation to global inclusion (Martínez-Usarralde, 2021), as is the case with UNESCO, the World Bank, or the OECD, integrated in agendas that demand increasingly global standards and focus on specific goals to improve the students' success. The Sustainable Development Goals (commonly known as the SDGs) also contribute to provide new opportunities to address the challenge of transnational inclusion (Cox, 2019). Under the motto "Leave No One Behind," the 2030 Agenda aims to ensure that all human beings can realise their potential with dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

On the other hand, higher education has also embraced this principle, leading to an internationalisation that could be classified as isomorphic (Lingard et al.,

2013), as defined by the New Institutionalist current (Meyer & Powell, 2020). From its heuristic potential to explain how institutions strive to emulate each other' best practices, this sociological-political theory scrutinizes the spaces in which the different social protagonists develop their practices. It also focuses on the study of institutions, from a methodological combination of both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (ethnographic, cross-cultural, historical, and comparative studies). In their attempt to gain legitimacy, universities tend to imitate the forms and structures of established institutions through a discursive, normative, and regulated governance for accreditation, standardization, recognition, and quality assurance. At the same time, and together with equity, it establishes inclusion as a priority in the political agenda, based on access, progress, participation, and fulfilment criteria. In addition, it integrates inclusion into policies, programs, curricula, methodologies, practices, innovation, evaluation, research, climate, culture, impact, projection, and transfer (Bayrak, 2020; Buenestado et al., 2019; Carballo et al., 2019; Sengupta, et al., 2019), all of them indicators of institutional assessment. The prolific discourse on the social responsibility of universities, through the growth of fields such as education for sustainable development and global citizenship and the development of civic and community capacities, among others, also contributes to inclusion, because it highlights the aspiration to create a more inclusive, responsible, and holistic higher education sector (Symaco & Tee, 2018), although it is also critically read as yet another contradiction, compared to a competitive university model. Together with all that, we can currently discuss aspirations to inclusive leadership (Blessinger et al., 2018) or inclusive excellence resulting from current university policies that confirm and extend good practices and make them more visible, while also measuring parameters that constitute elements of institutional analysis.

Within this framework, university educators and their regard of inclusion educational policies represent a promising line of research, although we must note that this sort of studies are still scarce. The present project aspires to contribute to them. In line with this trend, several fronts are detected in current research. On the one hand, there is a line focusing on learning more about the beliefs, attitudes, and values of educators in relation to this universal principle (Carballo et al., 2019; Emmers et al., 2019; Martins et al., 2018; Moberg et al., 2020). On the other, there are studies evidencing the need to better train this group of professionals in diversity and educational inclusion (Benet, 2020; Collins et al., 2019; Sanahuja et al., 2020). And there is a third research trend analyzing the adequacy and relevance of teaching methodologies with regards to the presence of inclusion in daily classroom practice (Sharma & Mullick, 2020), from the consideration of inclusive pedagogies (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2020), peer-review processes (Sengupta et al., 2019), students as collaborators

(Matthews et al., 2019), or service learning (Chambers & Lavery, 2018; Ramia & Díaz, 2019).

The latter includes many studies. Lawrie et al. (2017) reviewed 53 papers connected to inclusive teaching and learning published since 2010 and concluded that the literature considered in the study used the term 'inclusive' to discuss pedagogies that understand the diversity of needs of the students and do not create obstacles for particular students or groups. Rubio (2017, p. 213) revealed in her study the critical self-reflection of academics regarding their own educational practices, related to integration, rather than inclusion. Orozco and Moriña (2020) argued that the methodological strategies related to the needs of students should be compulsory for all members of the staff. Insisting on the latter, Carballo et al. (2019) analyzed inclusive teacher training programs and how they allow professionals to develop inclusive strategies from a practical point of view, integrating Universal Design for Learning (commonly referred to as UDL) into them. Melero et al. (2019) also discussed this topic. For their part, Nind and Lewthwaite (2018) recognize the pedagogical role of educators to send the students along inclusive paths, which is a core element in the teachers' development of their own methodological capacities. Ryder et al. (2016) maintain that faculty members are influential not only because of how they teach, but also in relation to the climate they create for learning, exploring the relationship between students' perceptions of the learning environment and their openness to diversity and change. Moliner et al. (2020) analyzed inclusion-related information and interaction used by university teachers and researchers, aiming to take advantage of this knowledge and disseminate their practices.

In the Spanish context, educational inclusion policies have traditionally been developed in schools, rather than in the university environment (Orozco & Moriña, 2020), so, at present, there is still a long way to go (Melero et al., 2019), both in research and in practice. Based on this, Spanish universities have been following the recommendations from their regulatory framework, although the debate on diversity in universities has been initiated by leaders themselves and has barely been broached in Spain (García-Cano et al., 2021). From an institutionalization approach and with a firmly rooted commitment to attention to student diversity (Carballo et al., 2019), Spanish universities have mainly focused until very recently on providing attention to disability with support services and units, which currently constitute a notable idiosyncratic line in these institutions (Morgado et al., 2017; Moriña, 2017). This is evidenced by the research developed to test the advances of the social model of disability (Melero et al., 2018), which has been the starting point to measure evaluation and innovation processes, the teaching atmosphere, or the strategies and methodology of the teaching staff (Carballo et al., 2019; Morgado et al., 2017; Moriña & Carballo, 2017). Today, state initiatives in the field of inclusion are

varied, although there is still no global Spanish diagnosis, nor have sufficient studies been carried out to establish which model of inclusion is being used as a starting point. Although research insists on the importance of providing better training in inclusive strategies for the Spanish university teaching staff (Benet, 2020; Moliner et al., 2020), as well as on the strategic role of university leaders (García-Cano et al., 2021), the actions they carry out, examined in light of the few studies based on the publication of plans, programs, guides, and specific qualifications (Álvarez et al., 2021), are mostly aimed at accessibility in spaces and buildings, curricular adaptation, disability awareness policies, welcoming and guidance processes for students, and, to a lesser extent, specific counselling for other diverse groups or the implementation of plans or programs to cater for diversity. All of the above is evidence of the existence of a dual asymmetric model based more on productive rankings than on the rhetoric of social justice (Álvarez et al., 2021).

Thus, based on these educational challenges, this study proposes the following research questions: Are there idiosyncratic features regarding the beliefs and attitudes of the teaching staff of the different universities towards diversity and their degree of inclusion? In what areas and dimensions? If that is not the case, is there a certain degree of homogenization as a result of the socio-political and educational influences of global governance, which impact university faculty's considerations regarding educational inclusion?

3. Methodology

The present research is a first approach to address this subject: the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of Spanish university lecturers regarding the attention to diversity. To this end, we present an ex post facto, exploratory, quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional research design. The coincidences and divergences in the beliefs and attitudes of higher education faculty members regarding diversity and inclusion are explored based on a descriptive-comparative survey. From a research approach fueling the trend on comparative and international inclusive education discussed by Schuelka and Lapham (2018), this study has reconsidered both the actions and the underlying mindsets. Ethics has also been considered as a cross-cutting element in all research phases, which were informed by three basic ethical principles: consent, care, and honesty (Wood & Smith, 2018).

3.1. Participants

Given the exploratory nature of this research, a purposive sampling was chosen, with voluntary subjects from the teaching staff of the universities collaborating in the InclUni Project. Seven public universities took part in the survey. In order to collect the teaching staff's perception, an online questionnaire was designed. This method

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offers important advantages (the possibility of accessing a large pool of respondents, increased speed and lower cost in the collection of information) but also disadvantages such as the low response rate due to the high rate of abandonment or the fact that often not all the questions in the questionnaire are completely filled in. These aspects led to a total 977 respondent educators (see Table 1). Within this group, 51,90% are women and 48,1% are men, with an average age of 47 years; 81,90% are permanent staff and have 15 years seniority at their institution. It should be stressed that, while this is not a probabilistic sample, the characteristics of the group of teachers in the sample (sex, age, professional category, and seniority) are similar to those of the reference population.

3.2. Instrumentation

The information collection procedure was common for all universities during the 2018–2019 academic year. It was made using an ad hoc online questionnaire (LimeSurvey). The elements were extracted from the following references: American Association of Colleges and Universities (2015), Baker et al. (2012), Ford Foundation (1999), and NERCHE (2016). The initial questionnaire was submitted to several experts which, according to quantitative and qualitative criteria, assessed the representativeness, relevance, understandability, and clarity of its content (items and dimensions). Evidence of the validity of the questionnaire's internal structure was then collected. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out using the principal components extraction method, with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to determine the appropriateness of the scale (Ramos et al., 2021). Analyses carried out with different subsamples and with factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.40. The questionnaire validity was tested using Cronbach's Alpha method. The total Alpha value (.89) indicates a high correlation and a high level of stability in responses. The resulting document consists of 19 items and five dimensions whose answers are measured using a Likert ordinal scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.3. Data Analysis

The statistical analyses of this study were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v. 24. First of all, we set out to find out the subjective opinions of the teaching staff by carrying out a series of basic descriptive statistics. Secondly, and respecting the measurement level of the variables, as well as the lack of variance of the items, the answers given by the teachers were dichotomized (1–2) to perform the Chi-square (χ^2) analysis with subsequent contrasts based on the z-test for difference in proportions.

4. Results

Data exploration allowed us to describe the collective perception of the faculty of the 7 universities participating in the study (see Table 2).

To answer whether or not there are idiosyncratic characteristics in teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards diversity and their degree of inclusion in the different universities, this study uses Pearson's Chi-square test, which allows us to verify that the hypothesis of independence between the variables studied in seven items of the analyzed set is not supported. In other words, there are seven items in which the association between belonging to a specific university and the evaluation provided by the teaching staff is confirmed.

In item 6—*specific subjects focusing on the role of women and minorities in the development of societies should be integrated into university curricula*—the association seems to be explained by the higher proportion of agree or strongly agree answers given by the teaching staff of the Universidad Pablo de Olavide, as opposed to the teaching staff of other Universities (Sevilla, Córdoba, Complutense de Madrid, Cádiz, and València), where the highest proportion corresponds to strongly disagree, disagree or neither disagree nor agree answers (see Table 3).

From our initial research approach, which aims to stand on the abovementioned attitude of initial estrangement and questioning, and as additional information, when examining this association we consider that the identification characteristics of the staff involved in this difference can enrich this study and illuminate the

Table 1. Participating universities.

University			Frequency	Percentage	Established	Website
1	Universidad de Pablo de Olavide	UPO	51	5,4%	1997	www.upo.es
2	Universidad de Sevilla	US	118	12,4%	1505	www.us.es
3	Universidad de Córdoba	UCO	105	11,1%	1972	www.uco.es
4	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	UCM	444	45,4%	1293	www.ucm.es
5	Universidad de Cádiz	UCA	59	6,2%	1979	www.uca.es
6	Universidad Nacional a Distancia	UNED	52	5,5%	1972	www.uned.es
7	Universitat de València	UV	101	10,7%	1499	www.uv.es
Total			977	100%		

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

Concept of diversity dimension	$\overline{X}$	Xm	S	As	K
1. The concept of diversity means different ethnicity, race, nationality, or culture.	3,97	4,0	1,18	−1,17	,53
2. … means people with different thoughts and ideas.	3,91	4,0	1,24	−1,11	,25
3. … means different level of education.	3,16	3,0	1,45	−,23	−1,29

Institutional diversity dimension	$\overline{X}$	Xm	S	As	K
4. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are essential in education and must be addressed in any university institution.	4,43	5,0	,94	−1,86	3,17
5. … are an institutional matter, but also an individual one, for each member of the institution.	4,45	5,0	,87	−2,05	4,69
6. Specific subjects focusing on the role of women and minorities in the development of societies should be integrated into university curricula.	3,46	4,0	1,34	−,40	−1,01
7. For universities, training people to succeed in a diverse world is as important as providing them with technical or academic skills.	4,08	4,0	1,05	−1,16	,82
8. Universities should develop specific actions to address diversity in the student body.	4,12	4,0	1,05	−1,27	1,15

Diverse teaching-learning practices dimension	$\overline{X}$	Xm	S	As	K
9. I provide support to help my students develop individualized learning plans.	3,81	4,0	1,09	−,83	,18
10. In my classes, I implement different teaching-learning methodologies to cater for the diversity of the students.	3,60	4,0	1,15	−,63	−,26
11. I offer resources to respond to the needs of students and to address the development of inclusive education.	3,65	4,0	1,14	−,76	−,04
12. In my subjects I include digital learning and/or cooperative activities to promote learning for students with different needs.	3,63	4,0	1,17	−,68	−,28

Research, training and teaching dimension	$\overline{X}$	Xm	S	As	K
13. I develop research that reflects, in form and/or content, my commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity as an added value to the research project.	3,22	3,0	1,35	−,26	−1,05
14. I incorporate into my research designs elements that favour the diversity, inclusion, and equity of cultures, gender, and age, among others.	3,20	3,0	1,34	−,29	−1,03
15. I design innovative teaching projects with an attention to gender, age, culture, and religious diversity, among others.	2,61	3,0	1,38	,27	−1,16
16. I design teaching objectives focused on diversity, inclusion, and equity.	3,34	3,0	1,31	−,41	−,87

Commitment of the leaders or governing bodies dimension	$\overline{X}$	Xm	S	As	K
17. In general, the management team of my university promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity actions.	3,61	4,0	,98	−,51	,15
18. My university has a deep-rooted tradition in favor of diversity, inclusion, and equity in curricular choices.	3,33	3,0	,99	−,27	-,15
19. … offers training courses related to diversity, inclusion, and equity.	3,64	4,0	1,03	-,51	-,13

Notes: $\overline{X}$ (Item average), Xm (Item median), S (Standard Deviation), As (Asymmetry) and K (kurtosis).

results. We refer to the fact that, when evaluating this item, the percentage of female lecturers responding from the Universidad Pablo de Olavide is higher than that of the rest of the universities—with the exception of the Universitat de València. In addition, the percentage of respondents who work as permanent lecturers was also higher, with a higher average age (with the exception of those at the Universitat de València), and 55,10% of them taught in Social Sciences.

As for item 10—*In my classes, I implement differ-ent teaching-learning methodologies to cater for the diversity of the students*—and item 12—*In my subjects I include digital learning and/or cooperative activities to promote learning for students with different needs*—although there is a connection for both items, as shown by the Chi-square values and their associated probability, no sufficiently significant keys were found in subsequent comparisons of proportions to help us interpret which group of teachers favors the difference (see Table 4).

Continuing with the interpretation of the results, and looking at the proportions compared for item 14—*I incor-porate into my research designs elements that favor the*

Table 3. Chi-square and comparisons of proportions (item 6).

Chi-square χ^2	16,939 [a]						
Gl	6						
Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)	,010						

		UPO (A)	US (B)	UCO (C)	UCM (D)	UCA (E)	UNED (F)	UV (G)
	(1)		A (,012)	A (,026)	A (,002)	A (,005)		A (,041)
Item 6	(2)	B (,012) C (,026) D (,002) E (,005) G (,041)						

Notes: ([a]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom, (1) strongly disagree/disagree/neither disagree nor agree, (2) agree/strongly agree; significance level for capital letters: ,05.

Table 4. Chi-square (item 10 and item 12).

	Chi-square (χ^2)	Gl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
item 10	15,384 [a1]	6	,017
Item 12	12,774 [a2]	6	,047

Note: ([a1]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, ([a2]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom.

diversity, inclusion, and equity of cultures, gender, and age, among others—the association seems to be justified by the higher percentage of responses given by UCM lecturers, who tended more towards agree or strongly agree than those given by lecturers at the University of Valencia (see Table 5).

As substantial information and for reflection on the results regarding this item, we can add ideas such as the fact that the average age of the teaching staff at the Universitat de València is somewhat more advanced than that of the teaching staff at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (50 and 47 years, respectively). that the teaching staff at the Universitat de València has more years of seniority (18 and 15 years, respectively), that it has a higher percentage of permanent teaching staff (88% and 76,2%, respectively), and that the Universitat de València is the only university with a higher percentage of male lecturers than female lecturers.

As for item 15—*I design innovative teaching projects with an attention to gender, age, culture, and religious*

diversity, among others—the justification for this association can be found in the proportions of responses of the teachers ("agree or strongly agree") at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide, which are higher than those of the teachers at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (see Table 6).

Complementary information, which may help to extract other evidence and understand this association, could be found in the fact that teaching innovation projects in Spanish universities are promoted by their governing bodies. In this context, the management team of a young university, as is the case at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide, is more inclined to call for teaching innovation projects as an added value to its management policy. This is reflected in the higher frequency of applications from teaching staff and, consequently, the greater potential for incorporating attention to diversity in their projects.

The association found for item 18—*My university has a deep-rooted tradition in favor of diversity, inclusion,*

Table 5. Chi-square and comparisons of proportions (item 14).

Chi-square χ^2	20,457 [a]						
Gl	6						
Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)	,002						

		UPO (A)	US (B)	UCO (C)	UCM (D)	UCA (E)	UNED (F)	UV (G)
Item 14					G (,023)			
	(2)							D (,023)

Notes: ([a]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom, (1) strongly disagree/disagree/neither disagree nor agree, (2) agree/strongly agree; significance level for capital letters: ,05.

Table 6. Chi-square and comparisons of proportions (item 15).

Chi-square χ^2	14,897 [a]						
Gl	6						
Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)	021						

		UPO (A)	US (B)	UCO (C)	UCM (D)	UCA (E)	UNED (F)	UV (G)
Item 15	(1)				A (,012)			
	(2)	D (,012)						

Notes: ([a]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom, (1) strongly disagree/disagree/neither disagree nor agree, (2) agree/strongly agree; significance level for capital letters: ,05.

and equity in curricular choices—seems justified by the higher proportion of UNED teachers who answered agree or strongly agree, compared to teachers at other Universities (Seville, Cordoba, and Complutense; see Table 7).

From the line of research that has guided us, where estrangement from the results assumes a fundamental role in their interpretation, we would like to explain the associations found in this item by pointing out that the UNED is the only distance-learning university among the participants. This university is organized with associated centers in most Spanish cities, and it offers a wider range of courses than the rest of the universities, which leads to a wider curricular offer. Furthermore, due to its nature as a distance-learning university, it caters for a more diverse student body, which can undoubtedly lead its teaching staff to make greater curricular adaptations.

Finally, regarding item 19—*My university offers training courses related to diversity, inclusion, and equity*—the association seems to be explained by the higher proportion of teaching staff at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid who responded agree or strongly agree, compared to the teaching staff at the Universidad de Sevilla (see Table 8). We should note here that the general trend in the responses of the teaching staff of both universities on this item evidences the visibility that the UCM's governing team gives to attention to diversity. It is one of the universities with the widest range of diversity services in Spain, which shows its commitment to diversity and, therefore, to training its teaching staff in and for diversity.

Generally speaking, there is a general agreement among the faculty of the participating universities. More specifically, they agree in the way they understand diversity and its social value, as well as in the objectives and actions needed to address it. However, this level of agreement does not exist when assessing whether their universities' governing bodies show a long-standing inclination towards diversity or offer training courses in this area. They do not have the same perception either regarding the specific educational practices that they implement in their classrooms; nor do they have the same perception of the extent to which they incorporate diversity into their research projects.

The results reveal the need for further qualitative and quantitative research focused on analyzing the responses to the questionnaire. From a quantitative perspective, this will require submitting the questionnaire to a stratified random sample with affixation proportional to the size of the teaching population of each university and area of knowledge, together with collecting contextual indicators that show the specific actions of each university. This new procedure and data collection timing would allow us to carry out a comparative analysis (of both similarities or differences) and a relationship analysis (contextual indicators that promote actions to address diversity in universities) that can be extrapolated to other Spanish universities, including techniques such

Table 7. Chi-square and comparisons of proportions (item 18).

Chi-square χ^2	22,270 [a]						
Gl	6						
Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)	,001						

		UPO (A)	US (B)	UCO (C)	UCM (D)	UCA (E)	UNED (F)	UV (G)
Item 18	(1)		F (,000)	F (,018)	F (,002)			
	(2)						B (,000) C (,018) D (,002)	

Notes: ([a]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom, (1) strongly disagree/disagree/neither disagree nor agree, (2) agree/strongly agree; significance level for capital letters: ,05.

Table 8. Chi-square and comparisons of proportions (item 19).

Chi-square χ^2		17,984 [a]						
Gl		6						
Sig. asymptotic (bilateral)		,006						
		UPO (A)	US (B)	UCO (C)	UCM (D)	UCA (E)	UNED (F)	UV (G)
Item 19	(1)		D (,005)					
	(2)				B (,005)			

Notes: ([a]) 0 cells (0,0%) have expected a count less than 5, (gl) degrees of freedom, (1) strongly disagree/disagree/neither disagree nor agree, (2) agree/strongly agree; significance level for capital letters: ,05.

as, for example, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc comparisons, regression analysis, or cluster analysis presenting teaching staff profiles according to their perception of 'attention to diversity' beliefs, attitudes, and practices. Likewise, and from a qualitative perspective, we urge experts to strive for a better understanding of these phenomena, by examining the macro, meso, and micro aspects of the educational context analyzed. In other words, an analysis of the complexity and diversity of elements involved in and affecting the institutionalization of attention to diversity, as well as individual perceptions of it.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

According to the objective and research questions guiding this investigation, in which we have explored and compared the beliefs and attitudes of the faculty of seven Spanish universities regarding diversity, we can draw some conclusions that aim to feed into the 'comparative, international, and inclusive education' line suggested by Schuelka and Lapham (2018).

Given the results obtained, and from a critical perspective encouraging us to take an attitude of 'estrangement' (which some comparatists maintain and we subscribe) through which, by distancing ourselves from the object of study, the interpretation opens up to new possibilities, limited not only to the naturalization of solutions (Nóvoa, 2018), we want to highlight the convergence of trends towards the homogenization of higher education policies which could be identified with the socio-political parameters of global governance (Zapp & Ramirez, 2019). But it is also worth noting that there are divergences between some of the compared aspects which help to redirect attention to the underlying idiosyncrasy of each institution. From this perspective, stemming from the sociological new institutionalism that is the basis for our research, the aim is to disseminate the results internationally, thereby generating relevant knowledge so that other audiences and contexts interested in working from and for inclusive excellence can explore this research approach.

The limited number of participating universities, as well as the dissimilar size of their faculty, does not allow for conclusive results, but represents a possibility to explore, from the point of view of comparative education, the emergence of both analogous and idiosyncratic features of the participating universities.

As a result of the above-mentioned homogenization observed in the faculty regarding the analyzed dimensions, the isomorphism umbrella for some opinion trends is evident in their level of agreement, which, from a New Institutionalism perspective, can be seen as a unified understanding of inclusive education from standards of quality assurance, transparency, and mutual recognition. This can be observed in a triple tendency. The first aspect is marked both by the degree of agreement among the teaching staff on the concept of diversity and by their positive evaluation of proposals aimed at institutionalizing attention to diversity and involving the entire university community. The second, by the aforementioned indecision—neither agreement nor disagreement—in assessing their teaching-learning practices and the commitment of the people who lead their institutions. And the third, by their tendency towards disagreement when they evaluate the implementation of diversity in research, training, and teaching. These trends should be understood in the context of the universities' commitment to the institutionalization of diversity through inter-sectoral cooperation and strategic initiatives for impact and transparency.

However, this comparative micro-analysis has led to the emergence not only of isomorphisms, but also idiosyncratic characteristics. From a New Institutionalist perspective, these attributes translate into the need to also highlight the autonomy that these institutions should enjoy and, consequently, to shed light on the different ways university educators believe and act on diversity, which function as constructs derived from an estrangement that builds and even praises the science of difference. In connection to this analysis, the agreements that accentuate the concept of inclusion based on the idea of differences connected to ethnicity, race, nationality, and culture, compared to other collectives, confirm the results of previous studies (Krischler et al., 2019). This, in turn, endorses the critical inclusive vision that reaffirms the idea of "post-inclusive pedagogy" (Gibson, 2015, p. 876), evidencing power imbalances are a disadvantage in the management of educational groups. All of it crystallizes under the

empowering, transcultural, and intersectional prism of equity and social and emancipatory justice (Thomsen et al., 2020; Walker, 2020). It follows a pedagogy that understands the moral concept of diversity in connection with social responsibility, focusing on learning opportunities (Martínez-Usarralde, 2021).

On the other hand, the differences derived from the participating teaching staff evaluations can be categorized into four significant findings whose evidence may be useful to those with university management and administration responsibilities. Firstly, the respondents understand University Social Responsibility as the institutional commitment from all impacts generated by the universities, but also from the personal conviction that implementing actions and methodologies is necessary, as is preparing students in a highly competent way (Carballo et al., 2019; Emmers et al., 2019; Orozco & Moriña, 2020). Secondly, the university faculty are committed to these issues, which proves the need to incorporate different teaching-learning methodologies to cater for the diversity of the students, as stated in prior studies (Lawrie et al., 2017; Maringe & Sing, 2014; Moriña & Carballo, 2017; Nind & Lewthwaite, 2018). Thirdly, we need to look for resources to meet student needs, including digital learning and/or cooperative activities to facilitate the learning of people with diverse needs (Rubio, 2017; Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2020). And, finally, we have found out about the governing bodies' commitment and tradition regarding the principle of inclusion and attention to diversity (Collins et al., 2019; Wise et al., 2020).

Lastly, on a global, and even transversal sense, we must conclude that the process of interpretation of the data from this research has evidenced slight nuances that have outlined the similarities and idiosyncratic features of the analyzed universities, which are the result of differential beliefs and attitudes about diversity and inclusion that may be linked to some institutional and contextual factors (institution size and demographics, leadership and governance styles, economic and cultural characteristics of the environment, etc.), proving the need to keep shedding light on identity discourse of a critical, intersectional, and rights-based nature (Rubio, 2017) to complement the collective construction of an institutional educational inclusion discourse (Kermit & Holiman, 2018). This study has therefore helped to continue nurturing an intellectual dialogue that assumes contradictions and refutes orthodoxy by adopting, based on comparison, a constant attitude of estrangement (Kim, 2020), together with ethics that make it impossible to silence discourses that can broaden real participation and thus feed the aforementioned social and emancipatory justice, far removed from the mechanisms of social control in today's university.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Faculty Perception of Inclusion in the University: Concept, Policies and Educational Practices

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Abstract
European universities must face the challenge of diversity and design inclusive practices to address it as part of their social responsibility. However, not all universities are doing the same in terms of diversity practices, so it is important to gather the perceptions of the protagonists. To this end, we have analysed university faculty's perceptions using a mixed model with a concurrent methodological strategy, including an ad hoc questionnaire validated with 880 educators, as well as 17 semi-structured interviews. The triangulation of these two instruments allowed us to analyse three key dimensions associated with the idea of attention to diversity in the university: diversity concept or culture, policies and programmes of the institution, and inclusive educational practices. The conclusion is that faculty members are positively predisposed to get involved in the process of attention to diversity in all three dimensions, especially in the design of inclusive teaching practices such as the UDL (universal design for learning), although they do point out that it is important to systematise diversity policies in research, innovation, and teaching to keep promoting the social commitment and responsibility of higher education institutions.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Achieving educational inclusion to alleviate social inequalities is one of the main aspirations of the different European higher education systems, and has become a societal priority (European Commission, 2010; Eurydice, 2011).

Despite the controversial discourse surrounding the implementation of inclusive educational models—focusing on the rationale for and realisation of inclusion—inclusive education is undoubtedly a funda-

mental human right based on an egalitarian society, and it requires the design of policies, strategies, processes, and actions to guarantee the success of all students. This is the only vision of education that promotes social justice, against traditional segregated education (Dyson, 1999; Moriña, 2017).

We might say that a democratic society is based on the idea that education must be guaranteed for all students, especially for those who are disadvantaged. To achieve this objective, universities must undergo a process of educational inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2013;

Díaz-Jiménez, 2019). Recent international agreements of great historical relevance such as the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, 2015)—through its fourth Sustainable Development Goal—require ensuring "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Kestin et al., 2017). University education must support the active participation of students and training opportunities on an equal footing for everyone (Díaz-Jiménez, 2019), guaranteeing the right to education regardless of the personal and social circumstances of the students, as well as their economic situation, gender, ethnicity, age, or disability (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2012). Higher education must be a referent for the development of an inclusive education model that integrates equality, equity, accessibility, and excellence (Benet, 2020). All of these aspects are reflected in a learning model based on the universal design for learning (UDL) methodology, which makes it possible to adapt and transform educational practices to make them accessible to all university students. UDL contributes to the significant implementation of inclusion to improve learning for all university students, which in turn contributes to the improvement of faculty practices, enhanced by university policies that follow these inclusive principles.

Therefore, faculty members are fundamental actors in the promotion of educational inclusion in higher education institutions (Benet et al., 2019; Díez-Villoria & Sánchez Fuentes, 2015; Forlin et al., 2011). As such, the objective of this study is to address the current state of inclusion in higher education from the perspective of the teaching staff, regarding three main aspects: their diversity concept or culture, the related policies and programmes of the institution, and the transformative practices carried out by the faculty. We will take a look at how they define attention to diversity, what their perception is of educational policies related to inclusion, and what they consider to be the best methods and practices aimed at true educational inclusion in the university environment.

2. Theoretical Basis

According to Booth and Ainscow (1998), walking towards more inclusive communities/universities—and, consequently, more inclusive societies—involves addressing three closely-related dimensions: educational culture, policies, and practices. More specifically, with the development of a more inclusive culture, policy and practice changes might follow. Successful changes would become established and be passed on to new members of the educational community (Booth & Ainscow, 2015).

2.1. Concept of Attention to Diversity in Higher Education

The concept of attention to diversity in the university context has been reviewed from the perspective of inclusive education for all (Dyson, 1999), with the understanding that this idea of diversity in higher education contemplates different ideological perspectives depending on the meaning ascribed to the term and the associated area of research. Traditionally, in the American context, two different expressions are used, namely students of different race or ethnicity on the one hand, and socially disadvantaged students on the other, these last ones with a low socioeconomic level: "Given this context, it is important to examine the current and historical discourses of both 'diversity' (race and ethnicity) and 'disadvantage' (socio-economic status) employed by many colleges and universities" (Grant & Allweiss, 2014, p. 34).

Conversely, in European universities, the idea of diversity tends to be related to cognitive and functional differences (Díaz-Jiménez, 2019), in addition to gender. Above all, the concept of diversity in university is connected to disability and learning difficulties (Benet et al., 2019; Biewer et al., 2015; Grant & Allweiss, 2014; Hardy & Woodcock, 2015). There are more and more voices that include in the definition of diversity the need to consider the student body from a social, cultural-intercultural, and gender perspective, as a more global entity (Klein, 2016).

Diversity is understood as difference, and 'attention to diversity' as the educational intervention towards those people with regards to their characteristics. Langa-Rosado and Lubián-Graña (2021) have published a study questioning whether attention to diversity is perceived as the attention to that which is diverse—the traditional understanding of attention to deficits—or in a broader sense—including different capacities, different genders, and different social and cultural backgrounds understood as richness, rather than a problem (Moriña, 2017).

For this reason, the study of the faculty's perception of what 'attention to diversity and inclusion' means conditions the type of teaching methodology and practices developed in the classroom, the way they understand the particularities of university students, and how they understand and apply inclusive policies (Díez-Villoria & Sánchez Fuentes, 2015; Forlin et al., 2011).

2.2. Inclusive Policies at the University

The number of diverse students in higher education has progressively increased (Lombardi et al., 2015), and universities are more and more aware every day of the need to make organisational changes focusing on the fight against systemic inequalities and marginalisation (Goldberg et al., 2019). Universities have the responsibility to respond to all sorts of diversities and ensure that the needs of the students are met, with inclusion functioning as a seal of quality. The development of educational policies to guarantee widespread access to education and contribute to ensuring the success of all students, and a satisfactory educational process, are

essential to combat the pervasive nature of exclusion. In addition, inclusive education and training are essential to guarantee social mobility and inclusion, and offer knowledge and skills to access the labour market, as well as to promote critical thinking competences and a deeper understanding of common values (European Commission, 2018). An inclusive university is based on diversity as a value, on empowerment, participation, and democracy; it is a place where the fight against exclusion, discrimination, and inequality must be apparent and everyone is accepted and supported, where differences between individuals enrich interpersonal relationships and the overall learning process (Moliner & Moliner, 2010). This is a great challenge, because the characteristics of higher education systems turn change management into a complex issue (O'Donnell, 2016).

Scientific literature makes it clear that, although some administrations are starting to propose inclusive university policies, the legal framework is still insufficient and does not guarantee (at least not on its own) quality, non-discriminatory education that can contribute to a more inclusive education (Langa-Rosado & Lubián-Graña, 2021; Moriña et al., 2017). The question is not whether inclusion should exist in education in general and higher education in particular, but rather what mechanisms we must implement to do this effectively and successfully. These mechanisms include the removal of obstacles, the implementation of prior guidance and advice, grants and scholarships, or the reservation of places for diverse students (Benet, 2020; Benet et al., 2019).

Proper teacher training is a critical and essential factor for the development of inclusive policies (Sharma & Mullick, 2020). Promoting more systematic inclusion policies and support elements is possible and fundamental to foster a more truly inclusive environment for educational practice.

2.3. Inclusive Practices of the Faculty from Universal Design for Learning

Inclusion-based educational practices promote the participation of all students and also take into account their experiences outside the university environment (Ainscow, 2015). The role of teachers is to arrange the support needed to achieve an active learning process and motivate the participation of all students.

For this reason, university faculty members need training so they can better implement their teaching practice according to the principles of UDL, a methodology that provides different possibilities for representation, expression, and participation in relation with educational inclusion (Alba et al., 2014; Díez-Villoria & Sánchez Fuentes, 2015; Meyer et al., 2014; Sharma & Mullick, 2020). In fact, the goal in UDL is to improve teaching and learning for all students based on how humans learn. The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), an organisation for research in education development, created the framework and guidelines to implement UDL in any educational context, with the aim to improve materials, methods, and assessments (CAST, 2019; Delaney & Hata, 2020).

The study conducted by Benet et al. (2019), with the participation of both faculty and students, highlighted the fact that classroom practice should cover three aspects: planning, development, and evaluation. In relation to planning, prior information regarding the characteristics of the student body can help to prepare teaching in a way that it better adapts to the diversity of each particular classroom. Regarding the development, the presentation of diverse materials and the use of new technologies is considered to improve accessibility for students. In addition, methodologies involving cooperative work, with heterogeneous groups, as well as those that enhance participation through the resolution of practical cases, are positively evaluated. This is also the case for practices making use of dialogical learning (Rapanta et al., 2021). Regarding the evaluation, several methods are considered, including self-assessment and peer evaluation. Feedback is essential in the students' learning process. In this way, educators obtain data with which they can guide and support their learning. To sum up, the general understanding is that inclusion-oriented practices are those where students can work together, those that promote participation and include feedback channels.

Other studies illustrate the results of implementing UDL, such as the one presented by Kennette and Wilson in 2019, where surveyed students and faculty members stated that the communication between them was one of the keys to improve learning and teaching. In fact, both students and teachers agreed on what they valued most about the methodology based on UDL: the presentation of materials in multiple ways, providing clear guidelines on assignments, answering questions outside of class time, and posting brochures and slides to their Learning Management System (Kennette & Wilson, 2019).

In this sense, Gibson (2015) points out the need for new pedagogical developments—similar to UDL and contributing to the implementation of inclusive principles—to enhance transformative education and ensure social justice and the rights of all students.

3. Empirical Method

3.1. Participants

The target population of this study was the faculty of Spanish universities participating in the InclUni Research Project I+D. More specifically, 880 responses were obtained from faculty members of the eight participating universities, in a simple random sampling process (see Table 1).

Among the respondents, 48.50% were men and 51% were women (age average 47 years old; SD = 10.9). The average seniority within their respective institutions was 15 years of service, with a standard deviation of 11.4. Regarding their areas, 20% worked in health, 19% in

Table 1. Participating universities.

Universities	N	%
Universidad de Cádiz	53	6.0
Universidad Complutense Madrid	391	44.4
Universidad de Córdoba	94	10.7
Universidad de Jaén	16	1.8
Universidad Pablo de Olavide	40	4.5
Universidad de Sevilla	101	11.5
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)	42	4.7
Universidad de Valencia	97	11.0
Lost	46	5.2
Total	880	100.0

humanities, 18% in social science, 14% in experimental science, 14% in education, and 7% in engineering and technology.

Seventeen interviews were conducted to learn more about the individual experiences, attitudes, and opinions of the faculty. To select the interviewees, a purposive sampling was applied in each university, according to age, gender, macro-area of knowledge, and seniority in the institution. The sample consisted of nine women, aged 31–64, and eight men, aged 37–68. The interviews were conducted by eight project researchers from each university, based on a semi-structured script and after receiving training from the principal investigators of the project. On average, the interviews were between 45 minutes and 75 minutes long. They were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.2. Working Methodology

The design of this investigation followed a mixed model. In particular, it was a non-experimental simultaneous survey design with no status distinction. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) defined mixed designs as "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study." This kind of design was chosen following the objective of our study, to address the current state of inclusion in higher education from the perspective of the faculty, since we need to understand the thoughts and ideas of the group we are dealing with through an integrative examination of the data. We must keep in mind that we are trying to answer a complex question connected to different theoretical perspectives and a with a wide range of dialoguing and inter-connected data (Mendizábal, 2018). Only this way will we be able to better understand the phenomenon of diversity in the university.

Therefore, the study design has a quantitative stage carried out with the questionnaire, whose analysis allows us to learn about the perceptions of the faculty on diversity, and a qualitative stage (with the interviews), which provides, on the one hand, validation of the information in the questionnaire and, on the other hand, an

identification of the meanings attributed to the concept of diversity. The quantitative and qualitative materials were analysed separately and integrated in the interpretation of the results. Because the interest of the study was not only to provide a quantitative 'overview' or panoramic view with which to observe the structure and stances of the faculty members regarding the concept or culture of diversity, policies and programs of the institution, and transformative practices carried out from teaching, we needed to rely on the ability of qualitative methods to delve into the content and nature of the relationships between all three dimensions analysed. This allowed us to capture details that standardisation tends to 'miss,' reinterpret some of the indicators and measurement indexes, and understand the context that fosters this specific way of understanding educational inclusion on the part of university professors. In the same line of thought, Creswell (2008) argues that mixed research goes beyond mere combination and allows the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to obtain a better understanding of the object of study. In the case of mixed designs, this aspect may explain their emergence and repeated use in sciences that are directly related to social behaviours.

3.3. Instrumentation

Two instruments were designed: a scale and an interview.

Regarding the scale, it would be an ad hoc instrument that respondents could take themselves (through a survey in the LimeSurvey platform). The initial list was created based on the review of many previous instruments used to evaluate ideas, attitudes, and practices related to the attention to diversity. More specifically, the items were obtained following the systematic review carried out by Lombardi et al. (2018) on 69 instruments in the field of higher education and disability. In addition, the elements included in the *NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education* (NERCHE, 2016) and *Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence: A Campus Guide for Self-Study and Planning* (American Association

of Colleges and Universities, 2015) were also considered, resulting in a starting list of 24 items separated in eight dimensions.

In the process of creating the CAPA scale (for the Spanish initials of Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices of Attention to Diversity), the method chosen for reviewing the validity of the content was the calculation of descriptors by determining the content validity index (Ramos et al., 2021). This index is obtained from the evaluation of 15 experts regarding the representativeness, relevance, and adequacy of each item, as well as their comprehensibility, ambiguity, and clarity. After confirming the agreement, the CAPA scale was formed and a pilot application was shared with the faculty of the Spanish universities collaborating in the InclUni project, in a starting sample of 214 educators (Ramos et al., 2019). The reliability analysis—internal consistency—offered a Crombach's alpha value of 0.89 and the factorial research—exploratory and confirmatory—carried out shows a well-adjusted model composed of 19 items and structured in five factors: (1) institutional diversity, (2) research, training, and teaching with attention to diversity, (3) teaching-learning practices, (4) commitment of the governing bodies, and (5) concept of diversity.

Regarding the interview, the following documents were used to determine the questions in the script: *Committing to Equity and Inclusive Excellence: A Campus Guide for Self-Study and Planning* (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2015), *the Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination through Education* (European Union, 2015), and the *NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education* (NERCHE, 2016).

Thus, a first section was created with identification data and a second group collected information about the respondent's concept of diversity, programmes, policies, and actions, and commitment and proposals (see the interview items in the Supplementary File).

3.4. Statistical Analysis

Different statistical tests were made using version 24 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the questionnaire responses. For the 17 interviews, the Maxqda 2018.2 software was used. Coding and analysis was performed by a single researcher using Maxqda software, following different phases: (1) open and inductive coding, (2) categorisation—consisting of grouping and reorganising codes to provide an interpretive and inferential analysis related to the concept of 'attention to diversity' in higher education, inclusive policies at university, and faculty inclusive practices such as collaborative learning, project-based learning, continuous assessment (all of them included in the UDL)—and (3) writing the final report after a critical review and the creation of semantic networks (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5. Results

First, we show the results of the 880 questionnaires; following that, the reader will find the results extracted from the interviews. In both cases, information was analysed based on diversity concept or culture, policies and programmes of the institution, and inclusive practices.

3.5.1. Quantitative Results

The global average of the 19 items in the scale is 3.65 (five-point scale), with a standard deviation of 0.64, which implies an overall satisfactory assessment of attention to diversity by the faculty. The five factors in the questionnaire have been synthesised in the topics covered in our article: diversity concept or culture (with five items), inclusive policies and programmes (6 items), and inclusive practices (8 items; see Table 2). The issue with the most agreement (average = 3.97) among faculty members was the concept of diversity. In general, they have similar diversity concepts or cultures. Regarding the policies and programmes proposed by the institution (average = 3.71), the perceptions also concentrate around the idea that the institutions are considering and promoting these aspects. Lastly, the topic educators seem to be less satisfied with their own inclusive practices (average = 3.41).

Regarding the concept of diversity, the different answers show that faculty members completely agree that diversity, inclusion, and equity are essential in education and must be addressed in every educational centre (item 4), both institutionally and individually (item 5), but there is less agreement on diversity referring to students with different educational level (item 3).

Concerning inclusive practices—and according to each item—the perception of the faculty is very positive regarding the need to train students to succeed in a diverse world (item 7) and, at the same time, develop specific actions to meet the diversity of the student body. There is less agreement on whether there is an ingrained culture of diversity, inclusion, and equity in curricular choices (item 10) and whether the institutions should offer specific material focusing on the role of women and minorities in university curricula (item 6). Gender differences and the attention to certain minorities continue to be overlooked and are not considered as part of the diversity that needs to be addressed. Only from a broader perspective is it possible to take them into account (Moriña, 2017).

Looking at inclusive educational practices, the most widespread agreement relates to the faculty's support to help students develop individualised plans so that they can learn better (item 16). Conversely, very few educators design innovative teaching projects with an attention to gender, age, culture, and religious diversity, among others (item 14).

Having mostly high scores in the responses shows a very positive trend among university faculty. It makes us

Table 2. Average, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of the beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to the attention to diversity.

Diversity concept or culture		Average (σ)	Sk.	Kur.
1	The concept of diversity means different ethnicity, race, nationality, or culture	3.99 (1.15)	−1.21	.73
2	… means people with different thoughts and ideas	3.92 (1.24)	−1.12	.27
3	… means different level of education	3.12 (1.44)	−.19	−1.29
4	Diversity, inclusion, and equity are essential in education and must be addressed in any university institution	4.42 (.93)	−1.79	2.88
5	… are an institutional matter, but also an individual one, for each member of the institution	4.44 (.88)	−1.99	4.44
Dimension average		**3.97** (.79)	−.87	1.17

Inclusive policies and programmes		Average (σ)	Sk.	Kur.
6	Specific subjects focusing on the role of women and minorities should be integrated into university curricula	3.43 (1.35)	−.38	−1.03
7	For universities, training people to succeed in a diverse world is as important as providing them with technical or academic skills	4.08 (1.04)	−1.16	.85
8	Universities should develop specific actions to address diversity in the student body	4.10 (1.07)	−1.25	1.06
9	In general, the management team of my university or centre promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity actions	3.64 (.95)	−.47	.20
10	My university or centre has a deep-rooted tradition in favour of diversity, inclusion, and equity in curricular choices	3.34 (.98)	−.23	−.16
11	My university offers training courses related to diversity, inclusion, and equity	3.68 (.98)	−.48	−.09
Dimension average		**3.71** (.68)	−.67	.83

Inclusive practices		Average (σ)	Sk.	Kur.
12	I develop research that reflects, in form and/or content, my commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity as an added value to the research project	3.23 (1.35)	−.27	−1.04
13	I incorporate into my research designs elements that favour the diversity, inclusion, and equity of cultures, gender, and age, among others	3.23 (1.34)	−.33	−.99
14	I design innovative teaching projects with an attention to gender, age, culture, and religious diversity, among others	2.62 (1.37)	.25	−1.15
15	I design and monitor the results of teaching goals focused on equity	3.35 (1.30)	−.42	−.84
16	I provide support to help my students develop individualised learning plans	3.85 (1.06)	−.84	.27
17	In my classes, I implement different teaching-learning methodologies to cater for the diversity of the students	3.64 (1.13)	−.64	−.20
18	I offer resources to respond to the needs of students and to address the development of inclusive education	3.68 (1.12)	−.79	−.09
19	In my subjects I include digital learning and/or cooperative activities to promote learning for students with different needs	3.66 (1.17)	−.70	−.25
Dimension average		**3.41** (.92)	−.34	−.29

think that they have a clear predisposition to get involved in a process of attention to diversity.

We must note that most items—with the exception of item 14—have a negative bias and a kurtosis with mostly negative values—11 of the total 19—with all but item 5 showing values under 3.0, which marks normality criteria, according to Chou and Bentler (1995) (see Table 2).

Regarding the correlation analysis, we must point out that the connection between different items in the questionnaire, according to De Vaus (2001), is between moderate (0.303) and high (0.846), in most cases with a significance level of p < 0.01. Even correlations under the moderate score show significance levels of p < 0.01. The highest correlations are found in items related to inclusive practices (items 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19) and items related to policies and programmes (items 5, 6, 7, and 8), as well as between the items of those two factors. This is indicative that there is a strong link between the implementation of inclusive policies in

higher education institutions and teaching practices that address the diversity of the university students.

3.5.2. Qualitative Results

The analysis and interpretation of qualitative data was carried out in an inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), that made it possible to choose the categories according to the main topics to be addressed in this document. A total of 1574 segments were coded, separated into 19 categories. The closest ones to our topics, which were also the most common, were analysed.

Results are presented combining academic commentary with diagrams and verbatim quotations from the participants. Each piece of evidence points to the document it can be found in and the paragraph number where it can be located, according to the quality criteria manifested in *Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research* (Tong et al., 2007).

Regarding the participants' diversity concept and culture, 239 segments were coded in the 17 interviews: 25.94% of them related to diversity in their work, 19.67% to evidence of diversity, and 16.74% about whether they feel prepared to work with diversity.

The perceptions of university faculty members regarding inclusion are quite homogeneous among the eight analysed universities. Most participants identify themselves with a definition of diversity understood as difference.

The balance found between two opposing perceptions is certainly striking: There are faculty members who are not prepared to address diversity in their university classroom (57.9%) and require specific training beyond the adaptations provided by existing university units, and then there are those who do feel capable to do it (42.1%). The following are some of the faculty's ideas extracted from the interviews:

> No, we are not prepared....There is a need for better faculty awareness, and... aids for the development of teaching materials. (4 UCM W, 71)

> We try, we do the best we can, but I don't... I don't... I am not sure that I am perfectly prepared, but we do what we can. (1 UCA M, 37)

In this section on inclusive policies and programmes, the vision of institutional diversity and the degree of coherence with the university's understanding of it are examined (there are a total of 410 segments on the subject). Regarding the principles that govern the university's approach to diversity, the principles of normalisation and inclusion were mentioned. As to whether inclusion is a priority principle, there are those who perceive it is, in contrast to critical views to the contrary.

The teaching staff's perception of the evolution of these policies has shown a quantitative and qualitative evolution; there is clear progress and sensitivity.

On university social responsibility as a specific university policy linked to diversity and inclusion, all the faculty members interviewed express their views on it. They explicitly define it as a social responsibility, even as a right and an obligation to interact with society and return the investment made on it:

> I think so, my understanding is that the policy of attention to diversity that is developed within universities is part of that commitment, of that social responsibility that the university should have towards society (forgive the repetition). (7 UJA M, 18)

As for university policies related to attention to diversity, there is evidence that it is considered to be fundamental and a priority. However, it is worth noting that many teachers say that they are unaware of the policies of their institution regarding the attention to diversity.

Concerning the topic of inclusive teaching practices, the participants paid particular attention to the motivation to carry out inclusive programmes and actions, and they have questions regarding methodological processes, resources, etc., as well as the actions to respond to diversity. More specifically, 254 segments were found related to this issue.

Some faculty members do not address diversity in any subject, although they do adapt them when necessary. Some consider that diversity is already present in some specific degrees or even in a transversal way. Others state that they integrate diversity in their subject, and one of the respondents mentioned the challenge to meet the needs of a student with Asperger's syndrome without the rest of the students noticing that he was receiving special attention.

Concerning the methodologies they use, there is, again, evidence of a variety of stances: some state that they do not use any particular methodology to work on diversity, and other do. Among the latter, some aspects that professors mention are:

- The usefulness of working in heterogeneous groups.
- The implementation of inclusion in the methodology of work projects, in cooperative work, etc.
- The possibility that the students themselves create activities for a subject.
- Methodologies based on Freinet or Freire.
- Service-learning methodology.

All of these methodologies are part of the UDL as different ways of applying actions aimed at learning for all, based on the inclusive perspective of Dyson (1999).

Finally, Figure 1 shows the main difficulties that the interviewed faculty members identify. They focus on the lack of training and strategies to address diversity, as well as the lack of awareness action (associated with excessive workload).
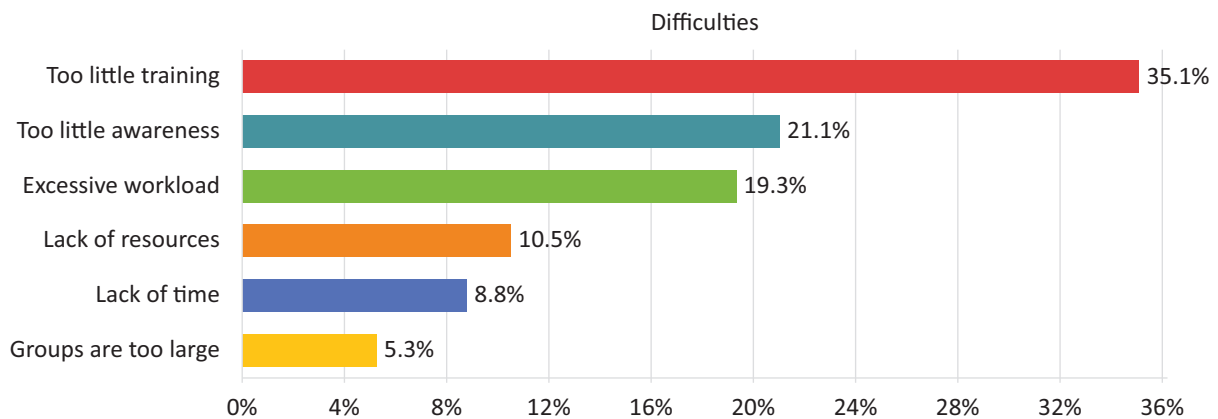
Figure 1. Main difficulties identified by the interviewed faculty members regarding the attention to diversity.

4. Discussion

As we indicated at the beginning of the article, our goal is to address the current state of inclusion in higher education from the perspective of the teaching staff with respect to three areas: diversity concept or culture, policies and programmes of the institution, and transformative practices carried out from teaching. The results allow us to reach the following conclusions:

University faculty members have a positive predisposition to become involved in the process of attention to diversity at the conceptual, practical, and policy levels. As indicated by Ainscow et al. (2013) and Díaz-Jiménez (2019), teachers believe that the university should participate in the overall process of inclusion, as evidenced by their perception of it.

Regarding the concept of diversity, most of the teaching staff who participated in the study understand it from the perspective of inclusion and equity. They think it is an essential part of education, both an institutional and an individual responsibility, and they identify to a greater extent with a definition based on functional and cognitive differences (Benet et al., 2019; Biewer et al., 2015; Díaz-Jiménez, 2019; Grant & Allweiss, 2014).

In terms of inclusive policies, at a quantitative level, there is a very positive perception of the support for the development of specific actions to address the diversity of the student body. Educators want universities to include curricular subjects that respond to the needs of protected groups (Benet et al., 2019; Moriña, 2017).

Regarding inclusive teaching practices, the teaching staff note that research and innovation are developed to a lesser extent from the commitment to diversity, highlighting that such commitment is greater at the individual level, as reflected in the teaching methodology and resources used. The educators under study do not feel well prepared to deal with diversity, nor do they feel sufficiently aware of everything it entails. Therefore, as Sharma and Mullick (2020) indicate, a fundamental pillar to be considered in the development of inclusive policies is the adequate training of university teaching staff.

5. Conclusion

The value of working with heterogeneous groups to enrich the classroom and, in general, the need to use cooperative methodologies that promote values such as solidarity and group cohesion is evident in the responses (Booth & Ainscow, 2015; Rapanta et al., 2021). All these methodologies used by faculty in the classroom are part of the UDL (Benet et al., 2019; Kennette & Wilson, 2019; Rapanta et al., 2021).

Therefore, the faculty's proposals for inclusive action in the university context revolve around the following ideas: on the one hand, overcoming the concept of diversity associated only with functional and cognitive aspects (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015), systematising policies that promote research, innovation, and teaching to continue promoting the commitment and social responsibility of higher education institutions and thus enhance the process of educational inclusion (Ainscow, 2015; Ainscow et al., 2013; Díaz-Jiménez, 2019). On the other, analysing and reflecting on the need for better teacher training, as teachers express an interest in learning more about methodologies for raising awareness and dealing with diversity (Sharma & Mullick, 2020). Several authors (Alba et al., 2014; Benet et al., 2019; Delaney & Hata, 2020; Kennette & Wilson, 2019; Meyer et al., 2014; Rapanta et al., 2021) indicate that UDL is one of the key methodologies that can help educators in their attention to student diversity, so it would be necessary to establish training plans in this regard. University faculty's UDL training is proposed as a universal learning approach for all students (Dyson, 1999). It will contribute to the development of inclusive principles through enhancing strategies to improve the learning process and, therefore, to promote social inclusion.

Clearly, governments must commit firmly through university policies to invest in teacher training in inclusive practices and contribute to create the resources necessary to make it possible.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

Digital Teaching, Inclusion and Students' Needs: Student Perspectives on Participation and Access in Higher Education

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Abstract
In this article we discuss the contribution of digitalisation for equal participation in higher education. Its potential is often postulated, but accessibility is seldom examined in this context. Despite the challenges and difficulties created in the summer term of 2020, this semester has provided a great opportunity to collect data on digital teaching, as face-to-face teaching needed to be transformed into digital teaching. Based on two surveys conducted in the summer of 2020, current practices and students' needs regarding accessibility are outlined. Despite the circumstances, it can be derived from the surveys that digital teaching generally provides a variety of advantages for students with disabilities, although some tools and platforms remain not fully accessible to them. Additionally, the results indicate that not only students with sensory impairments benefit from the principles of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (2018). In particular, the principles 'operable' and 'understandable' are beneficial for students with mental health difficulties. Regarding the assessment of accessibility features, the study shows that the perception of students with and without impairments is very similar.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Our contribution to this thematic issue deals with the following research question: To what extent do digital learning environments contribute to equal participation in higher education? Therefore, this article (1) aims to outline barriers in current practices, especially for students with disabilities, and (2) tries to figure out how principles of Universal Design (UD) and accessibility may contribute to equal participation for all students. Based on two recent surveys conducted during the summer of 2020, students' perspectives on digital teaching as well as their expectations and experiences concerning digital learning environments will be examined.

Conflating these two studies can thus be used to research the need for accessible digital media from two different angles. The first perspective is based on UD and examines how its principles in digital learning environments can be used to improve studying for all students (CAST, 2018). The second perspective focuses on the experiences of students with disabilities regarding the digital tools and platforms they had to use during the digital semester in summer 2020. Thus, particular challenges and opportunities of digital studying for this target group can be outlined.

Although digitisation is a task that German universities have assigned a high priority, it has only partially arrived in teaching. In a 2018 survey of university

administrators, not even one-third of the respondents estimated that the implementation of digitisation in teaching was well advanced (Gilch et al., 2019). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, digital teaching suddenly became indispensable and without alternative. Instructors who had previously used learning management systems (LMS) at most for filing presentations now had to organise all learning activities via LMS and other digital tools. Students were also new to many of the tools and features of LMSs. This transition, therefore, provided an opportunity to obtain more data on the accessibility and usability of existing platforms and tools. Additionally, the number of students with experiences using digital tools in various settings has increased.

At the same time, the current situation remains exceptional. Those who were inexperienced in digital teaching or studying were given hardly any time to familiarise themselves with the tools (Scott & Aquino, 2020; Wilson et al., 2020). In addition, the learning environment and social life at the university have changed dramatically (Traus et al., 2020). The university as a place of learning was closed to the students, who were henceforth entirely dependent on their own digital equipment. This was particularly challenging for students with disabilities if they rely on assistive technologies but are not adequately equipped at home (Breitenbach, 2021). They had to use various digital formats that were new to them but could not access the university's counselling services. Also, social distancing measures made it difficult to work with personal assistants (Zhang et al., 2020).

The pandemic situation has also affected many students' financial and housing situation (Arndt et al., 2020; Breitenbach, 2021; Traus et al., 2020). Especially for students with disabilities, this has also been associated with health concerns, as many of them belong to the Covid-19 risk group. These are not favourable conditions for the potential of digital media for equal participation to take effect in higher education, as attested by research. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the effects attributed to the pandemic and the positive or negative practical experiences of this 'forced digitisation' that can be meaningfully implemented in teaching practice under 'normal' circumstances.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Digitalisation

By now, every aspect of our everyday life is affected by digitalisation (Persike & Friedrich, 2016). Terms such as digital society or digital epoch (Kerres, 2020) illustrate how closely linked technological and social processes of change are and how far-reaching they are. Digitalisation primarily describes technical aspects, which have a profound impact on virtually every area of life. However, digitalisation is both part and driver of broader social change. Both developments—media change and social change—are mutually dependent (Krotz, 2014).

The university is assigned a dual function as "user of digital opportunities and at the same time driver of digital development" (Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz, 2016, p. 44). In higher education, digital media enables location- and time-independent studying, access to means of individual and lifelong learning. At the same time, digitalisation helps open higher education to target groups that cannot study exclusively at a face-to-face university due to their living conditions, such as care responsibilities, health issues, students with employment (Hochschulforum Digitalisierung, 2015). Digitalisation can expand learning spaces and promote improved access to knowledge and education individually and globally. Open education and open educational resources, among others, endorse this (Hofhues, 2020; Kerres, 2020).

In fact, digital teaching and learning formats can serve to promote equal participation for previously disadvantaged and marginalised groups. This is especially relevant for students with disabilities. Learning materials can be designed to be accessible for students with sensory impairment, time sovereignty allows working on material at one's own pace, and communication processes can also be restructured more inclusively, e.g., reducing attendance requirements or making different communication channels available (Zorn, 2018).

However, this requires adherence to the principles of UD and accessibility in the selection and design of digital platforms, programmes and tools.

But "new educational ICT services are seldom fully accessible" (Bühler et al., 2020, p. 129). Nevertheless, accessibility of digital learning environments is only the first step since learning materials and didactics must also be appropriately accessible and sensitive towards diverse learning conditions (Bühler et al., 2020; Emmerdinger et al., 2018).

In Germany, the discourse regarding the digitalisation of teaching is primarily conducted in terms of educational technology: Which set of tools and media can improve studying and learning as well as teaching? Expectations are usually high, often presuming that the digital tool's mere implementation will automatically resolve teaching problems. As a result, educational practices are not adjusted, but old practices are optimised using modern tools. Unsurprisingly, critical responses warn against such a technology-deterministic view: "Educational potential is wasted by focusing on the digital. Too little attention is paid, for example, to assumptions about the use and effects of media or frameworks and structures for teaching and learning, especially in educational institutions" (Schiefner-Rohs & Hofhues, 2018, p. 251). This perspective wants to emphasise an issue which is too often left unconsidered: namely, the question of whether teaching-learning practices are changing in this context, become more open, and to what extent the relationship between teachers and learners is affected by that (Schiefner-Rohs & Hofhues, 2018).

2.2. Universal Design and Accessibility in Higher Education

Higher education has changed in recent years. Through the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) in 2009, in which the participation of all people is stipulated in Art. 24, universities, as part of the education system (tertiary education), now bear the responsibility to enable participation for a heterogeneous student group (Dannenbeck et al., 2016). This responsibility is also enshrined in the fourth goal of the United Nations SDGs on quality education. A key factor towards achieving this goal is to conceive inclusive learning spaces—both physical and digital (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). Another step forward in the direction of accessible digital teaching is the EU Directive of 26 October 2016 (2016) "on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies." This directive is transposed into national law (e.g., BITV in Germany). It makes the deployment of accessible digital learning materials, tools, etc. for institutions of the public sector, including universities, mandatory.

UD is a much-cited model for inclusive (university) teaching (Bartz, 2020; Burgstahler et al., 2020; Dalton et al., 2019).

Today's understanding of UD is based on its conception by the Center for Universal Design. The architect Ronald Mace introduced the term to establish a concept that meets "the needs of as many users as possible" (Center for Universal Design, 1997). According to the UN-CRPD:

> 'Universal Design' means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. 'Universal design' shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. (United Nations, 2008, Article 2)

With an emphasis on diversity, inclusiveness and accessibility, UD comprises seven principles concerning the design of products and environments (Center for Universal Design, 1997):

- equitable use
- flexibility in use
- simple and intuitive use
- perceptible information
- tolerance for error
- low physical effort
- size and space for approach and use

There are different approaches to the use of UD in (higher) education. According to Fisseler and Markmann 2012), these seven principles can be adopted and applied in education as such, modified and expanded, or completely transformed into new ones.

Universities make use of UD mainly in the form of its following variations: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI). Both models are based on UD and are a proactive framework to support inclusive learning and teaching.

UDL emerged from UD and focuses on creating accessible learning environments to meet the individual needs of students with different conditions/backgrounds. It aims to create a learning atmosphere that reduces the obstacles experienced and supports individual learning strategies (Burgstahler et al., 2020). UDL offers specific tools and methods to integrate the UD principles into the respective learning and educational environment. UDL is defined as a "research-based set of principles that together form a practical framework for using technology to maximise learning opportunities for every student" (Rose & Meyer, 2002, p. 5). By including the nature of the user and their different educational needs, UDL established three core elements that make education accessible. According to the UDL, education should include different means of representation and offer learners various ways to acquire knowledge or skills. Learners should be provided with several options to perceive and comprehend information. Education should also include different means of action and expression, introducing alternatives for students, such as physical activity or different tools to express their knowledge. Finally, education should address differences by considering the learners' interests and specific challenges as well as offer multiple means of action and engagement. This idea aims at helping students to optimise their learning process by enhancing their range of individual choices and thus enabling them to develop a sufficient level of self-reflection (CAST, 2018).

Another approach in higher education based on UD is UDI, a tool for planning courses and recording learning outcomes against the background of the increasing hetereogeneity of the student body in higher education. To do so, Scott et al. (2003) modified the seven principles of UD and added two more. The principles of UDL and UDI can be implemented and promoted through digital media (Fisseler & Markmann, 2012). In particular, students with disabilities can benefit from the multimodality of digital media.

Digitalisation is seen as having a great potential for inclusion. Nevertheless, to make use of this potential, a variety of aspects need to be considered. That includes digital media, its accessibility and accessibility of the (digital) environment and the didactic concept. With its different modifications, UD is one recognised concept to design inclusive teaching. Additonally, when teaching with UD principles in mind, accessibility has to be considered. For example, when using a video without audio description and captions, the video itself may satisfy the first principle of UDL, i.e., "provide multiple means of representation" (CAST, 2018), while at the same time

excluding students who need audio description or captions. Only an accessible video fulfils the first principle of UDL for all students (Thompson, 2015). Thus, digitalisation and UD provide the context for research on accessibility issues, which can be seen as a success factor when aiming for an inclusive university.

3. State of the Art

In addition to socio-political discourses as outlined before, studies show that an increasing heterogeneity characterises students at universities. Globally, statistics indicate a growing number of students with disabilities enrolling in higher education (Fichten et al., 2020). To address this development, digital media and e-learning are closely linked to developing potentially equal opportunities for participation in higher education—they offer new possibilities for learning, access to information and communication. By now, Web 2.0 technologies and complementary learning technologies are omnipresent in higher education. Students engage in various forms of e-learning every day, e.g., course registration, library use and distributed online course materials (Kumar & Owston, 2016). Despite these potentials and the already existing media usage, new barriers to education may emerge and, in turn, exclude people. Therefore, Zorn (2018) criticises that the e-learning discourse often excludes aspects of inclusion and that the two perspectives, e-learning and inclusion, are rarely considered together. This dilemma clearly shows that digitalisation in higher education requires an appropriate and well-thought-out overall concept (Arnold et al., 2018). Edelmayer and Rauch (2018) state that even though fundamental knowledge concerning the technical principles of accessibility has been available for quite a long time, its realisation and implementation has indeed been very slow and remains incomplete until today.

Nevertheless, institutions of higher education are responsible for providing accessible ICTs. It is essential to include the needs of students with disabilities in development processes to ensure positive learning experiences for all students (Fichten et al., 2020). Students' impairments influence their use of technologies (Fichten et al., 2012), and their use of technologies, in turn, influences their studying processes: If students face difficulties using technologies, their studies will also prove to become increasingly difficult (Kumar & Owston, 2016). For an inclusion-oriented university, it cannot be emphasised enough that accessible technologies not only offer advantages to students with disabilities but that an accessible learning management system compensates for various (temporary) difficulties, such as a poorly lit workstation, a broken touchpad and no existing mouse (Kumar & Owston, 2016). Nevertheless, the question Burgstahler (2015a, p. 69) posed still stands: "Online learning opens doors to education for everyone who has access to the technology required to participate. Or does it?"

It is not enough to provide university teaching via digital media, and the abovementioned potentials will fulfil themselves. Instead, various efforts are necessary.

Fernandez (2019, p. 2) points out that, especially in tertiary education, "ableist dynamics and 'disabling' ideologies" still shape the spaces in which teaching and learning take place. Often, the technologies used are not holistically designed with accessibility in mind (Burgstahler, 2015a), and improvements are always costly and time-consuming (Bühler et al., 2020). Even though it is emphasised in various instances that accessibility is advantageous for all students, hardly any studies can be found which explicitly address accessibility when examining the use of digital media (Grosch, 2012; Schmid et al., 2017; Steffens et al., 2017). Scientific work in the higher education context that explicitly addresses media accessibility is often conceptual rather than empirical (Burgstahler, 2015b; Fichten et al., 2020) or focuses on singular types of impairment, such as autism (Adams et al., 2019), intellectual impairment (Arachchi et al., 2017) or visual impairment (Köhlmann, 2017). However, since accessibility and usability directly impact the pedagogical effectiveness of e-learning systems and resources for all learners, especially those with disabilities, both aspects should be considered in all e-learning projects equipollent (Cooper et al., 2007).

4. Methods

During the summer term of 2020, two student surveys on the accessibility of digital teaching were conducted at TU Dortmund: One was part of a research project concerned with the development of a video-based learning platform in teacher education (Degree survey). The second one dealt with the conversion to digital teaching due to the pandemic situation and aimed only at students with impairments (DoBuS survey).

TU Dortmund was founded 52 years ago and encompasses 16 faculties "ranging from science and engineering to social sciences and culture studies. The university has about 33,440 students and 6,500 employees, including 300 professors" (TU Dortmund, 2021a). It follows an inclusive strategy and runs a support and counselling service for people with disabilities (DoBuS). The staff unit at "Equal Opportunities, Family and Diversity," together with DoBuS, initiates various processes to compensate for structural disadvantages, such as the inclusion of disadvantaged compensation for students with disabilities/chronic illnesses and students with children in all examination regulations and the design of an accessible campus plan (Stabsstelle Chancengleichheit, Familie und Vielfalt, 2021). On the campus itself, DoBuS offers a workspace where students can work with assistive technology scientifically on PCs equipped specifically for people with disabilities. Disability-experienced staff counsel and instruct students to use appropriate assistive devices in coordination with the software used in their studies. Additionally, in the library, there are rooms

equipped with a PC adapted to the needs of students with visual impairment (DoBuS, 2021). Also, the Office of University Sports states on its webpage that they try to provide conditions so that everyone can participate instead of providing special courses, such as wheelchair sports (Hochschulsport Dortmund, 2021). Furthermore, DoBuS offers students counselling and support services to be used during their studying time (TU Dortmund, 2021c). During the pandemic, the university had to close the buildings and all teaching was transferred to distance teaching (TU Dortmund, 2021b).

In the context of the research project "Degree 4.0— Digital Reflexive Teacher Education 4.0: Video-Based— Accessible—Personalized," the subproject "Rehabilitation Sciences" developed a questionnaire addressing the assessments and needs of students with and without impairment regarding their desired components for a learning platform that was under development at the time. The questionnaire is partly based on questionnaires which have already been used to conduct study-related media use and disability, e-learning problems and solutions (Fichten et al., 2009; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2016). Questions and items consisting of accessibility aspects based on the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG; see World Wide Web Consortium [W3C], 2018) and sociodemographic questions, items regarding difficulties in studies and student-related impairment were added as well. The survey was sent to all student teachers at TU Dortmund. On the one hand, because the exact number of students with impairments is unknown, on the other hand, because accessibility can be advantageous to all students (Kumar & Owston, 2016). Additionally, a universally designed product can be used by a target group that is as heterogeneous as possible.

4.1. Degree Survey Sample

The questionnaire was sent to 6,411 student teachers at TU Dortmund via mail. The survey period was from June to August. In total, 507 students took part in the survey, with 408 finishing it. Fifty-eight students (11.4%) identified themselves as having a student-related impairment, a number that matches the 21st Social Survey by Middendorf et al. (2017), i.e., 11%.

4.2. DoBuS Survey Sample

The second survey was initiated by DoBuS. To find out how students with impairments or chronic illnesses evaluate the rapid transition towards digital teaching during the summer term of 2020, they conducted an online survey among students with an impairment who use their service. The questionnaire itself was developed to align these services with the needs of students with impairments and chronic illnesses and the challenges that arose from the cutover to digital teaching. It comprises 22 questions, which were recorded both in the form of a 4–6 digits Likert scale and in the form of open response for-

mats. The survey asked about the advantages and disadvantages of digital study to digital teaching during the pandemic and the transition to the relevant tools and study materials.

Twenty-one students participated in the survey, most of whom reported visual impairment or blindness (12 participants), 5 reported a mental impairment, 4 reported a chronic somatic illness, 3 reported a mobility impairment and 1 report other impairments. Four of the respondents reported multiple impairments, and seven stated their belonging to the Covid-19 risk group.

5. Results

To address the question raised in this thematic issue, on how accessible and barrier-free contemporary universities for students with disabilities are, it is important to research the question of who benefits from accessible universities.

Rather than surveying the number of students who had stated that they had a disability, we asked which specific difficulties they have encountered so far and continue to encounter while studying in the Degree survey. Thus, the assessments and needs of students with and without impairments were addressed. The results show that for 40% to 46% of all students, some difficulties impede their studies, such as organisational matters, assessments, study materials or participation in lectures.

For example, about one-fifth of the students cannot regularly attend classes: Some have to work (11%) or have family care responsibilities (5%). The external circumstances of many lectures also constitute barriers: For instance, for 54% of all students, noise and disturbances are severe problems, and every fourth respondent describes concentration problems during a 90-minute lecture. For about half of the students, another difficulty is the lack of study materials for follow-up studying.

Students with impairments are significantly more affected by conditions that complicate studying processes: Three-quarters report problems concerning study organisation, 36% are not able to attend classes regularly. Two-thirds report concentration problems during seminars, 72% have difficulties with noise and disturbance, and almost 90% lose pieces of information when it is presented in an exclusively verbal manner during lectures (Degree survey; see Figure 1).

By now, it has become widely known that most of these difficulties can be compensated or at least reduced through the implementation of digital media. When being asked about their perception of possible benefits of digital teaching at university, significantly more students with impairments indicated that they were better able to compensate for the lack of face-to-face teaching (CramersV [CrV] 0.176, p = 0.005), that they were able to both process recorded events at their own pace (CrV 0.158, p = 0.011; all impairment types except students with hearing impairment), and intercept timetable
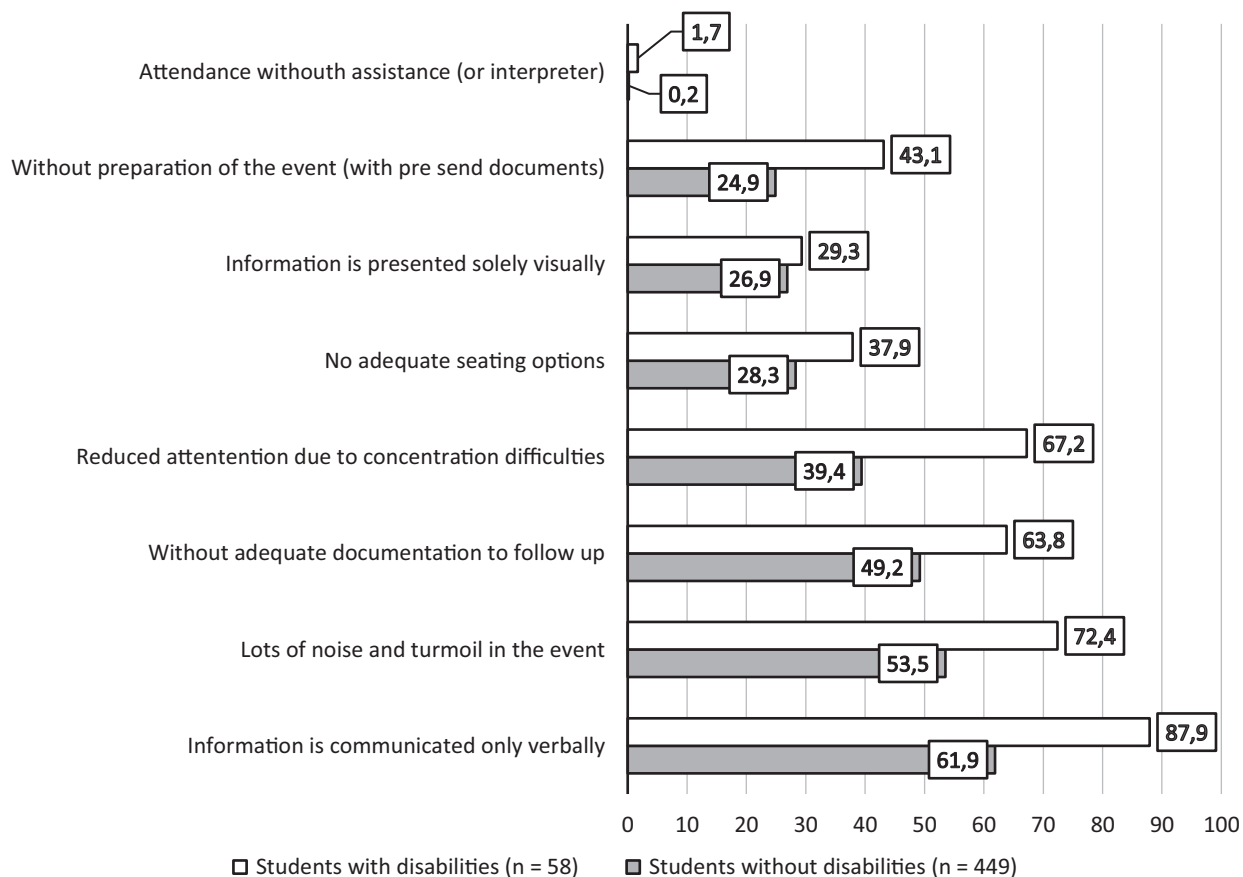
Figure 1. Information loss when participating (percentage; all students, multiple answers possible). Question: When participating in courses, I lose information if…

problems better (CrV 0,160, p = 0,008, if differentiated between different impairment types; Degree survey).

The DoBuS survey confirms the results. The majority of students with disabilities reported that they coped well with the transition to digital study (15 out of 21). Among the benefits of digital studying, nearly half of the students rank the item "many digital tools are more accessible than many face-to-face teaching situations" in second place behind location-independency of studying (two-thirds). Particularly those students who are blind or have visual impairments can benefit from this (8 out of 12); they also report improved access to literature (5 out of 12). For blind and visually impaired students, this means that most learning materials are accessible without time-consuming adaptations. Furthermore, the possibility of self-organising one's studies digitally is an advantage for them (DoBuS survey).

Despite these positive results, the DoBuS survey also revealed numerous barriers for students with impairments that continue to exist. That is partly due to the respective platforms and tools and partly due to the design of digital teaching by the lecturers. Recorded teaching formats, which were made available to students for time-sovereign processing, were for the most part considered unproblematic.

However, the learning platform Moodle, which is being used at TU Dortmund, was most frequently named

as having accessibility problems (7 out of 12 blind and visually impaired students, 3 out of 5 students with mental health difficulties). Many open answers provided in the survey and various experiences from training indicate that there are problems in the platform's usability (DoBuS survey). They include issues such as the findability of content, which in the current semester predominantly refers to assignments and deadlines, as well as technically more complex assignment formats like forum discussions or mutual assessments, which are important for all students as the Degree survey shows (see Figure 2).

Surprisingly, students without impairments find many accessibility issues similarly important as students with disabilities. Significant differences can be found, especially regarding functions that are important for operations using assistive technologies (Degree survey; see Table 1).

When using or developing an accessible platform, the WCAG must be considered. It aims to improve accessibility for people with "blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these, and some accommodation for learning disabilities and cognitive limitations" (W3C, 2018). Looking at students with impairments, it often becomes evident that the largest group of students with impairment is students with
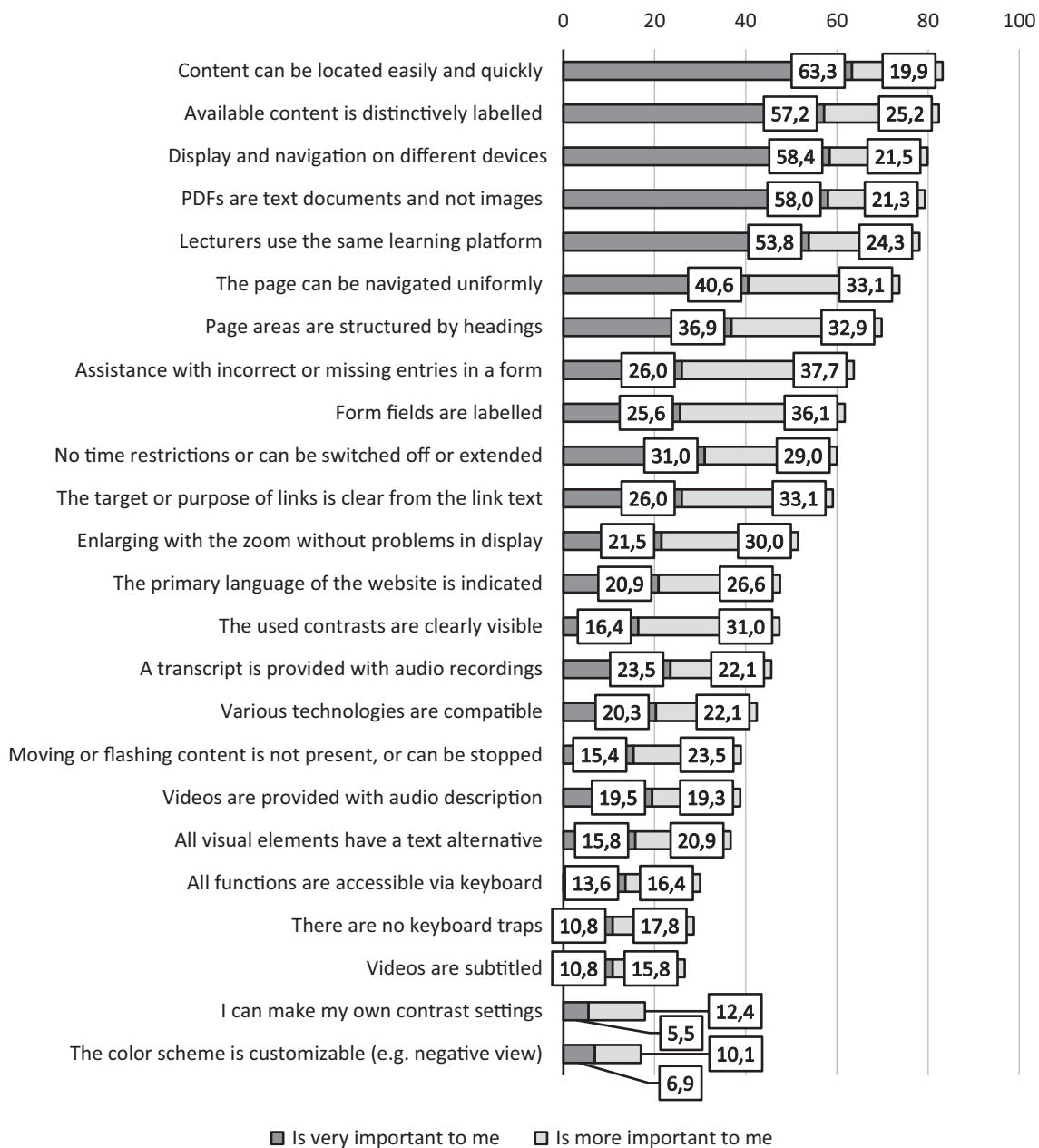
Figure 2. Importance of accessibility aspects (n = 507, in percent). Question: How would you rate the following statements in this context? When using e-learning offerings, the following aspects are important to me…

Table 1. Significant differences between students with and without impairments, differentiated between different impairment types (Degree survey).

Issue	CramersV	Significance (p)
Materials clearly labelled	0.176	0.002
No keyboard traps	0.172	0.004
Subtitles/Captions	0.171	0.005
Text alternatives	0.169	0.006
Adjustable colour scheme	0.162	0.018
Contrast adjustments possible	0.160	0.024
Accessible via keyboard	0.160	0.024

mental health difficulties (Middendorf et al., 2017). Thus, it is vital to take a closer look at these students' answers. In the Degree survey, many partial aspects of the dimensions 'understandable' and 'operable' were rated as particularly relevant (very important and rather important):
The dimension 'operable' encompasses:

- Time limits are not present (21 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)
- Page sections are divided by headings (24 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)
- Materials are clearly labelled (26 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)
- The goal or purpose of links is clear from link text (21 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)

The dimension 'understandable' encompasses:

- There is consistent navigation (22 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)
- Content is easy and quick to find (all students with mental health difficulties)
- Form fields are labelled (21 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)
- Incorrect or missing information in the form is displayed, and instructions to correct errors are displayed too (21 out of 27 students with mental health difficulties)

Regarding digital teaching, communication and interaction are of particular importance. When asked which specific features students wish for in a new platform, communicative and feedback tools were named frequently (95% name feedback from lecturers for assignments; 81% communication via text chat with fellow students; 79.5% communication via text chat with lecturers, Degree survey).

While a variety of tools offer advanced communication opportunities, problems emerge if the communicative process is being organised via learning platforms or in video conferencing systems: Students with visual impairment or blind users of assistive technology had difficulties keeping track in forums and chats. Screen reader or magnification software users are at a disadvantage in written live discussion, e.g., in chats, etherpads, etc. According to students with visual impairment, from the DoBuS survey:

> Especially, when the exchange is supposed to take place live during lecture time, and many posts are posted in a short time, I can hardly follow the process….The online interaction in my case takes mostly place via Moodle. There I find it very difficult to orient myself in the various forums and, e.g., to participate in live discussion.

6. Discussion

One can say the Covid-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for digitalisation efforts at universities, not least because, until last year, those efforts at universities were not as advanced as they are now. Therefore, it is noteworthy that even though accessibility has not been the main focus of the implementation of digital tools, the majority of the students with disabilities stated that they managed this transition well.

What is also noteworthy is that many students with disabilities experienced digital study as more accessible than face-to-face study in many aspects, which confirms the assumption that the principles of UDL and UDI can be implemented and promoted through digital media (Fisseler & Markmann, 2012). Location- and time-independent studying and studying at one's own pace is vital for students with disabilities because they are given more flexibility to match the needs and requirements of their studies with those of their disabilities. Nevertheless, the fact that the use of digital tools is associated with an increased (time) effort for students who use assistive technologies must be considered. This underlines the importance of counselling, training and reasonable accommodation offered by universities.

The results of the Degree survey show that many accessibility rules improve teaching for all, as intended in the UD, UDL and UDI concepts. The WCAG guidelines are assigned to the four principles: perceivable, operable, understandable and robust (W3C, 2018). For most students, the guidelines of the principles operable, understandable and robust are especially important: the easy findability (retrieval) of content, clear labelling, uniform navigation, accessible PDFs and usability with different devices. That is also reflected in the high level of approval for the statement that lecturers should use the same learning platform. Accessibility and usability are closely related. Consistency and clearness contribute to users being able to achieve their goals effectively, efficiently and satisfactorily. The high level of agreement with these statements also indicates that the accessibility of platforms and tools alone does not make for accessible teaching. It also depends on a didactic concept. The content and student activities need to be designed in an inclusion-sensitive way.

Furthermore, the data indicate that communication and feedback are rated as important, but how communication can be designed in an accessible manner requires careful examination. This can be outlined as exemplary for chats: while many chats are already accessible, problems arise when using a chat for synchronous communication or during video conferences: Employing a screen reader is time-consuming as it takes more time to read and follow up with response messages, in a video conference one has to decide whether to follow the speaker or his or her screen reader, reading the messages in the chat. The importance students place on feedback raises additional questions for lecturers, such as how to provide

every student with feedback on time (Wilkens et al., 2020). Thus, the need for an overall didactical concept in digital teaching becomes obvious. However, for this didactical concept, universal design and accessibility as guidelines to make spaces, media and learning materials that are usable for all have to be initially applied. UD and accessibility must be planned and addressed in advance. These concepts target groups and not yet the individual. For individuals, assistive technology and reasonable accommodations are important (Haage & Bühler, 2019). Nevertheless, if a learning environment is not designed with UD and accessibility in mind, assistive technology is more difficult or even impossible to use. Findings from surveys from the digital semester 2020, such as the DoBuS and Degree survey, can be used as a starting point to develop digital teaching in an accessible manner.

7. Conclusion

The article aimed to contribute to answering the question of to what extent digital learning environments support equal participation in higher education. Both surveys made it clear that digital teaching can indeed be more accessible than face-to-face teaching, assuming it is developed with accessibility and UDL/UDI in mind.

However, considering accessibility and UDL/UDI in developing learning platforms and teaching is still a work in progress, with much left to do. For example, learning platforms are not yet sufficiently accessible. Moodle is an example of a widely used open-access learning platform that is being developed by a community. Obviously, too little attention is paid to the aspect of accessibility. But it is not only the platforms and tools that need to be accessible. If the concepts of higher education didactics do not change, little will be achieved. This is outlined for media use in higher education: Digital media is often associated with 'better' learning, which indicates a deterministic technology approach. But to make use of the potential digital media can offer for learning, it is necessary also to consider exams, the physical learning environment and the whole course design, rather than just single tasks (Schiefner-Rohs & Hofhues, 2018). One can assume that this overall approach is also true for inclusive didactic. Instead of relying on the potential of digital media, this potential must be actively used.

Further research efforts on communication and collaboration via digital tools are needed. Functions and tools for communication and feedback are desired by students (Degree survey). If the communicative process is primarily organised via learning platforms (forums, chats) or video conferencing tools, problems arise for students with disabilities (DoBuS survey). Especially in collaborative tasks or in exclusively digital teaching scenarios, communication must be accessible for all. In the new research project K4D at TU Dortmund ("Collaborative Teaching and Learning with Digital Media in Teacher Education: Mobile—Professional—Inclusive"), collaborative tools and tasks are being examined for their accessibility. In the sense of UDL, concepts for collaborative learning with digital tools are to be developed.

Zorn (2018) postulates that in the discourse on digital teaching, the perspective on inclusion is often disregarded and vice versa. Although the potential of digital solutions for equal participation in higher education is high, these two perspectives are rarely considered together. In the research project Degree, both perspectives are considered, and the findings on accessibility from the survey influence the development of a new learning platform. The Degree survey showed once more that indeed the consideration of the principles and guidelines from the WCAG (W3C, 2018) is important for all students, not just for students with impairments. The presented findings illustrate the importance of accessible digital tools and an inclusion-sensitive didactic for equal participation in higher education. However, this requires adherence to the principles of universal design and accessibility in the selection and design of digital platforms, programs and tools.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

University Applicants from Refugee Backgrounds and the Intention to Drop Out from Pre-Study Programs: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

The mixed-methods project WeGe investigates key factors for refugees' integration into pre-study programs and conditions for successful transitions to higher education institutions (HEIs). In this article, we first examine the dropout intentions of international students and refugee students participating in formal pre-study programs at German HEIs to disclose both barriers and resources. We use insights from migration research to extend theoretical student dropout models and analyse novel data from a quantitative survey with international and refugee students in pre-study programs. Our findings show that refugee students intend to drop out from pre-study programs more often than other international students. This difference disappears when other characteristics are controlled for. Effect decomposition shows that financial problems and perceived exclusion are driving dropout intentions of refugee students, whereas German language use in everyday life and a strong connection to the prospective field of study function as a resource and reduce the dropout risk. Depending on the reference group, deficits or resources of refugee students become apparent. This result suggests that refugees should be addressed as a student group in their own right. As a second step, we analyse qualitative expert interviews to reconstruct the staff's perspectives on barriers and resources of refugee students to analyse how the driving factors of dropout intentions are represented in their knowledge. In particular, we show if and how this knowledge is used to address refugees and to develop inclusive educational concepts within pre-study programs.

1. Introduction

Many newcomers from regions in conflict arrived in Germany in 2015 and 2016. Around one-third of them hold a secondary school degree, had previously studied or already hold an academic degree (Brücker et al., 2016). Migrants' integration and adequate labour market participation depends largely on further educational pathways in host countries (Hartog & Zorlu, 2009) since skilled asylum seekers face barriers in the translation of their human capital from one country to another (Nohl et al., 2014) and are faced with the expectation to quickly integrate (or rather become assimilated) into a new education system. Foreign educational experiences and degrees are often devalued and misrecognised, and higher education institutions (HEIs) have

subject-related and linguistic access barriers for foreign applicants. In response to rising demand, the German federal government initiated a large funding program named Integra, administered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) that supports measures to prepare refugees for meeting admission criteria and studying (Fourier et al., 2020). Since 2016, around 10,000 refugees have participated in respective courses every year. Yet, little is known about the educational success and specific situation of refugees in pre-study programs at German HEI.

Germany has been a popular destination for international students for many years (Kondakci et al., 2018). International study applicants from outside the EU usually enter Germany with a student visa. Foreign applicants have to undergo a recognition process of their higher education (HE) entrance qualification based on the formal regulations of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, resulting in two distinct modes of HE access (Schröder et al., 2019): A recognition known as the direct HE entrance qualifications allows applicants to enter HE by proof of sufficient language skills. Applicants who are denied the equivalent qualifications (indirect HE entrance qualification) have to prove both their language level and the so-called subject-specific ability to study by passing an 'assessment test' before they can (re-)apply for studies. HEIs provide respective courses at their language centres or at so-called *Studienkollegs*. Only the latter offer subject-specific courses to prepare for the assessment test. Courses vary in intensity and length and run usually up to one (language courses) or two (*Studienkollegs*) semesters. Refugee students—those who have applied for asylum in Germany—are treated as a subgroup of non-EU international students in terms of HE application and admission (Berg, 2018). While pre-study programs have limited course places and established entrance examinations, almost all HEIs have limited capacity in popular subjects and select applicants by grades.

Internationally, various studies have dealt with the challenges of refugees in accessing HE (Lambrechts, 2020; Molla, 2019; Morrice, 2013). However, there is still a lack of research that takes a comparative perspective on foreign student applicants with and without a refugee background. Even though both international and refugee students have to meet the same admission criteria and pass the same formal pre-study programs, it remains unclear if they are comparable. From an intersectional perspective (McCall, 2005; Museus & Griffin, 2011), not only might migration experiences differ, but axes of inequality might intersect with belonging to one of the two student groups and institutional contexts and individual characteristics might be of different importance. By adopting an intersectional informed comparative view, our study can also contribute to the critical reflection on the still prevalent deficit perspectives on prospective refugee students. Another main research gap is the experiences of front-line actors working with

refugee students (Ramsay & Baker, 2019) concerning how they perceive differences between student groups as well as if and how they try to take this into account in their daily work. We build on research conducted at HEIs in Germany to address both research gaps. First, we analyse novel survey data from international and refugee students in pre-study programs. We use the dependent variable *intention to drop out of pre-study programs*. Regression analysis and effect decomposition show driving factors and resources that influence dropout risk. Beyond that, we show how explanatory factors intersect across student groups. Second, we triangulate (Flick, 2011) the quantitative results with insights from expert interviews into the understandings of refugee students' challenges and suitable responses of HEIs. In particular, we ask whether and how the experts' knowledge of driving factors for dropout intentions can be used to address refugees and develop inclusive concepts within pre-study programs.

2. Literature and Theoretical Considerations

2.1. Refugees in Higher Education from a Migration Channel Approach

HE for refugees is a long-neglected but increasingly important topic (Dryden-Peterson, 2012). While the state of international research is constantly growing, the majority of international literature is based on qualitative (case) studies that focus on challenges or barriers for refugee students within different HE environments or evaluate support programs for refugees at certain HEIs (Berg et al., 2018; Ramsay & Baker, 2019). Usually, they lack a comparative perspective. Following the migration channel approach (Findlay, 1990; Sandoz, 2018), we argue that asylum and student migration represent "mobility pathways structured by different actors... that create specific opportunities and constraints for migrants" (Sandoz, 2018, p. 224). The legal status and respective opportunity structures further shape migrants' pathways to HE due to an 'assemblage' (Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018) of specific intersections of legal, institutional and social contexts, dependencies and connected resources in the host country. Therefore, we analyse whether the risk of dropping out of pre-study programs differs between refugee students (those who have applied for asylum) and other international students (those who entered Germany with a student visa) and adopt an intersectional perspective by looking at interactions between explanatory variables and the respective migration channels (Museus & Griffin, 2011; Unangst & Crea, 2020).

2.2. Beyond Student Attrition Studies: Migration and Adaptation

Studies on student attrition or retention have a long tradition within HE research (Tinto, 1975). A process-based

and multi-dimensional understanding of student success and dropping out of traditional and non-traditional student groups emerged (Bean, 1985; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Suhlmann et al., 2018; Tieben, 2019). In HE research, Tinto's approach of social and academic integration is still widely used to explain dropout risk and is therefore our starting point and basis for the theoretical considerations. The concepts of social and academic integration, as well as financing and sociodemographic characteristics like age and gender remain relevant factors in explaining dropout risks and social inequalities in student attrition (Ciocca Eller & DiPrete, 2018; Isleib et al., 2019). For social and academic integration, identification with HEIs, and a sense of belonging to a subject or student group are as important as individual skills and the acquisition of knowledge during studies (Bean, 1985; Blüthmann et al., 2008; Walker-Gibbs et al., 2019). Also, opportunity structures and cost-benefit considerations affect educational decisions, social and academic integration and thus student attrition (Isleib et al., 2019; Roska, & Velez, 2012).

Even though Tinto's theoretical approach can be criticised as an assimilation model (Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012), it could be "highly informative" (White & Ali-Khan, 2013) in analysing the completion of pre-study programs concerning international and refugee study applicants. Muñoz and Maldonado (2012, p. 294) criticised that Tinto would assert "that for college students to succeed, they have to detach from their home communities, utilise campus resources and networks to assist them during the transition process, and incorporate new behaviours and memberships to fully fit into 'the college institutional culture.'" Within given institutional structures, social and academic integration could plausibly be important issues for migrants and refugee students (Grüttner et al., 2020; Rienties et al., 2012). Financing of living expenses, educational fees and immigration-related debt are key challenges for refugee students (Joyce et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2019) but could also be relevant for other international students (Thomas, 2017). Financial problems represent obstacles to learning success and are likely to have an impact on the cost-benefit considerations in the transition to university (Lenette, 2016; Sontag, 2019), thus making employment or vocational training for refugee students far more attractive than the arduous route of pre-study programs (Baker & Irwin, 2019; Molla, 2019). Gender aspects and older age, respectively educational disruptions and family obligations, can put a strain on refugee students' learning (Cin & Doğan, 2020; Harris et al., 2015; Joyce et al., 2010).

Beyond this general approach, the analysis of student success needs to take other relevant dimensions, as well as coping mechanisms, into account (Grüttner, 2019; Lenette, 2016): Overcoming language barriers to access HEIs or pursuing studies is as crucial for refugee students (Hirano, 2014; Kanno & Varghese, 2010) as it is for international students. Both groups are eventually burdened with experiences of social exclusion like

concerns about precarious residence status, xenophobia, racism and stigmatisation (Chacko, 2020; Morrice, 2013; Villegas & Aberman, 2019), which may hinder integration and educational careers. Experience of forced migration as well as student migration can be assumed to be associated with acculturation stress and risk of reduced mental well-being (Akhtar & Kröner-Herwig, 2015).

Despite several similar experiences and perspectives, the situation of refugees who intend to study differs from that of non-EU international students (Stevenson & Willott, 2009). These differences are related to the lasting impact of the migration channel (Sandoz, 2018). Refugee students are involved in a complex interplay of various dependencies, resulting from intersections of legal frameworks and private and public actors (Berg, 2018; Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018; Sontag, 2019) and face institutional assumptions of applicants and students which often disregard their specific situation (Baker & Irwin, 2019; Berg, 2020). Therefore, barriers that are, in principle, also relevant for international students, can be amplified for refugee students and contribute to particular disadvantages (Lambrechts, 2020). Moreover, the opportunity structures of refugee students tend to guide their engagement towards vocational training or employment. Therefore, we assume that (1) refugee students report a higher dropout risk from pre-study programs compared to other international students and (2) there is a need for HEIs to address the specific situation of refugees (Earnest et al., 2010; Lenette, 2016).

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Quantitative Data and Methods

3.1.1. Quantitative Data and Measurements

Our quantitative analysis is based on a survey with refugee students and international students in pre-study programs. The data was collected in the 2018–2019 winter semester at 18 HEIs in Germany. Our research team conducted a study preparation survey and used self-administered paper and pencil questionnaires. As HEIs sometimes offer language courses (direct HE entrance qualification) and subject-specific courses (indirect HE entrance qualification), a total of 74 courses nested in 21 organisational units can be distinguished. The HEIs were selected across different federal states in the east, west, north and south of Germany to cover regional and administrative variety.

Data from a total of 1,019 participants were collected. We asked whether an asylum application was made in Germany and its current status (e.g., still on-going or recognised refugee/asylum seeker). People without an asylum application could choose from a list of other legal statuses (e.g., visa to study, residence permit). 998 participants provided usable information on their residence status: 332 prospective students who applied for asylum in Germany and 666 international students who came to

Germany by other means—usually a visa to study or prepare for a degree.

To measure our dependent variable, *intention to drop out*, we asked whether serious consideration had already been given to cancelling the preparatory course, following a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 ("does not apply at all") to 5 ("fully applies"). The variable was dichotomised (0/1) by recoding values of 3 "partly/partly" or higher to 1.

To measure language integration, we used a scale for subjective language competencies including self-evaluations in reading, speaking, listening and writing (for more information on used scales see Table 1 in Supplementary File 1). We asked whether participants more often use German or another language in four different everyday dimensions (reading newspapers and books, watching videos, and watching TV) to take informal learning opportunities as well as acculturation modes oriented towards the host society or ethnic groups into account (Berry, 1997; Miyamoto et al., 2018).

We used two short scales to collect concerns about social exclusion: A short scale regarding worries about insecure residence status and potential expulsion and a short scale on worries about xenophobia in the host society. We use social exclusion as an overarching concept that includes racialised or ethnicized discrimination, xenophobia and precarious legal status, especially concerning migrants and refugees (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2009; MacDonald, 2017; Richmond, 2002).

To measure mental adaptation, we used the WHO 5 short scale for psychological well-being and created an index that can take values between one and one hundred (Topp et al., 2015). A cut-off at ≤ 28 is used to identify problematic mental well-being. Beyond that, we measured the ability to cope with adaptation processes by the brief resilient coping scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004).

HE social integration is measured on the one hand via the feeling of belonging (Janke & Dickhäuser, 2018) to the preparatory course and on the other hand by a single item on existing social connections with people who have university study experience in Germany. We measured the performance component of academic integration through the competence experience (Janke & Dickhäuser, 2018) in the preparatory course and the identification component by a single item on student self-identification (Janke et al., 2017). In addition, we focus on the fit between subject interest and subject choice. We collected the idealistic subject aspiration ("If you had all options: Which subject would you choose?") and the realistic subject aspiration ("If you think about your current situation: Which subject will you probably study?") and coded answers according to the UNESCO ISCED 2013 classification (two-digit code; UNESCO, 2015). For the present analysis, dummies are used indicating whether there is a convergence between idealistic and realistic subject aspiration and if no encodable information for the desired subject or prospective subject was given. We also use a dummy variable indicating whether studies have already been started abroad.

We consider sociodemographic characteristics like age (in years) and gender (0 = male/1 = female) and social origin into account—the latter through a questioning of the highest educational qualification of mother and father. A high social origin is defined as having at least one parent with a university degree (reference category is "no parent with a university degree"). We have also taken the financial situation into account. Immigration-related debt is measured by a single item: "Did you or your family have to go into debt to be able to come to Germany?" The item is linked to a question on problems regarding the financing of living expenses with a 5-point Likert-scale from "no problems at all" (1) to "very strong problems" (5).

Due to the survey mode, we know the composition of the group of surveyed participants of each course and the type of course (0 = language course/1 = subject-specific course). We use this information to correct for selection into different courses. Missing information on variables is addressed by the multiple imputation (20 imputed data sets) of all variables with 1 percent or more missing values. Thus, we reach a total of 954 valid cases for our analysing sample (without multiple imputation, the sample would shrink to 760 cases).

3.1.2. Quantitative Methods of Analysis

We use logistic regression models and calculate marginal effects (Average Marginal Effects [AME]) and present four hierarchical models including control variables for the type of pre-study course and the composition of the course participants: Model 1 (M1) 'baseline' only shows the effect of the dummy variable for refugee students and three models in which groups of further variables are subsequently added (M2 to M4). We report robust standard errors that should be interpreted carefully due to our non-random sample.

We use a Fairlie (2005) decomposition of the effect of belonging on the group of refugee students. Decomposition techniques are widely used to quantify the separate contributions of group differences in measurable characteristics such as age, education and experiences to racial or gender gaps in outcomes. We model decompositions using both groups of students (refugee students and international students) as a reference group. This leads to two separate models of decomposition: The ones asking what if refugee students had the same distribution of characteristics as other international students regarding the effects of the corresponding variables among refugees, and the second asking what if refugee students had the same distribution of characteristics like other international students regarding the effects of the corresponding variables among other international students. The results show the role different groups of variables play as mechanisms that increase or decrease dropout risks. In addition, the modelling indicates whether these mechanisms intersect with the belonging to one of the two student groups under study.

3.2. Qualitative Data and Methods

As transitions to HE not only depend on individual but also institutional factors, we shift our attention to the organisational context. Our qualitative analysis is based on 14 expert interviews (Gläser & Laudel, 2010) conducted in late 2019. We reached out to our contact partners of the pre-study programs where we collected our quantitative data and asked them to support us in contacting experts matching our sampling criteria. We focussed on experts with comprehensive professional experience in teaching or managing pre-study programs for international study applicants with and without a refugee background, in order to map different positions in the organisational hierarchy. Further sampling criteria were to cover organisational variance in offered course types. We were able to realise seven interviews with experts working in language courses of HEIs (direct HE access mode) and seven with experts working in *Studienkollegs* (indirect HE access mode).

We used a pre-structured interview guideline (Gläser & Laudel, 2010) which aims to generate ex-post narrations with a focus on professional experience in managing and teaching within the context of study preparation. Among further issues, the first part of the interview guideline addresses the experts' experience with the course participants at the level of day-to-day interactions. The second part of the interview guideline was focused on their experiences with the increasing proportion of refugees in the courses as well as on organisational changes concerning the teaching of refugees. Interviews were fully transcribed according to standard scientific transcription (Fuß & Karbach, 2019).

We used qualitative content analysis as described by Mayring (2004) to summarise and structure the content of the interview material. This approach combines structuring through predefined codes with openness to unexpected findings in the material. The qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA® supported our coding process. As a first step, one of the authors coded the expert interviews based on a categorical scheme using the key questions presented in Supplementary File 1, Table 2: (1) How are the driving factors of dropout intentions—financial problems, experiences of social exclusion, German language use in everyday life and connection to the field of study represented in the knowledge of the experts? (2) How do the experts view refugees concerning these factors? (3) How do they evaluate their opportunities to contribute to developing inclusive concepts in pre-study programs? As a second step, memos were written and discussed to condense the most relevant information concerning our analytical questions.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

In the following section, we first present our quantitative findings based on regression analysis as well as effect decomposition.

4.1.1. Regression Analysis

We first show the AME of the migration channel asylum based on hierarchical logistic regression models (Figure 1). Controlling only for characteristics of attended courses in our baseline model M1, refugee students show a nine-percentage-point increased probability for reporting dropout intentions. Including variables on migration- and adaptation-specific factors in M2, we
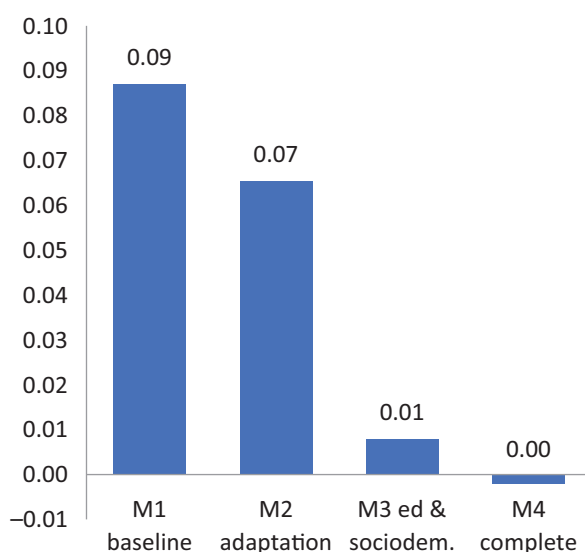
Figure 1. Dropout intentions of refugee students vs. international students (percentage-point difference based on hierarchical regression models). Source: Own calculation based on the study preparation survey (WeGe). Notes: AMEs are reported. Only the effect in M1 and M2 is statistically significant; N = 954 for all models (M1–M4) with multiple imputed data; for more information on the specified models see Table 1 in Supplementary File 2.

observe a small reduction of this effect (seven percentage points). If we add information on educational factors (HE social and academic integration) and sociodemographics (age, gender, and social origin) instead, the effect drops to one percentage point (M3). The probability of reporting dropout intentions is almost similar for both student groups if we control for all model variables in our complete model (M4).

4.1.2. Decomposition

The decomposition of effects leads to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms explaining the changes in the migration channel effect between M1 and M4. First, we look at a decomposition model that uses refugee students as a reference group (Figure 2, left). Here we observe a mixture of strengths and deficits. The model shows that language integration as a resource is of crucial importance. If the language integration of refugee students was on the same level as that of international students, the migration channel effect on dropout risk would increase about 35 percent. This is driven by German language use in everyday life reflecting informal learning opportunities as well as integration processes (for further details see Supplementary File 2, Table 2, left column). Also, aspects of perceived exclusion, e.g., worries about expulsion, are of some impor-

tance. If refugee students perceived exclusion on the same level as international students, the group difference regarding dropout intentions would decrease about 9 percent.

The state of mental adjustment is not of general importance because difficulties with mental health compensate with resilient coping, which is to some extent stronger in refugee students than in international students. This means refugee students can benefit from their resilience. HE social integration explains 5 percent of the group difference in dropout intentions, whereas academic integration is obviously of more importance: It determines 15 percent of the group difference, with an emphasis on study experiences abroad, from which refugee students much more often benefit from compared to international students. Not only do refugee students have study experiences from abroad more often, these study experiences also have a more pronounced influence. If refugees did not have this educational resource, their intention to drop out would be even stronger compared to international applicants. Going into detail, we see the following: If refugee students were to report convergence of idealistic and realistic study subject aspirations as often as international students, their dropout risk would decrease (see also Supplementary File 2, Table 2, left column). Sociodemographics account for only 2 percent of the group difference in dropout
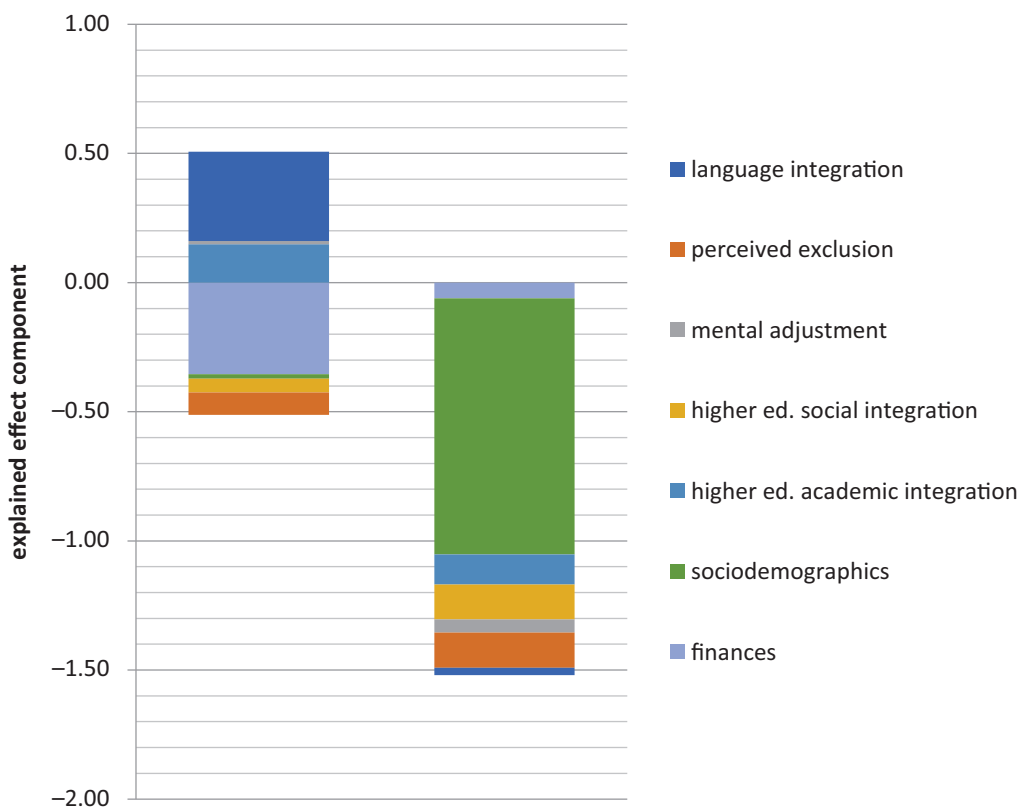

Figure 2. Decomposition of the migration channel effect conditional on the reference group (Fairlie decomposition). Source: Own calculation based on the study preparation survey (WeGe). Notes: Ratios of the effect of the migration channel explained by groups of variables (percent) using complete model M4 with all covariates; N = 954 with multiple imputed data; for more information on the specified models see Table 2 in the Supplementary File 2.

intentions. If as many refugee students as international students were female (23 percent vs. 45 percent), the group difference would increase largely (see effect component in Supplementary File 2, Table 2, left column). If refugee students were as young as international students, the group difference would decrease. The two characteristics mentioned largely outweigh each other. Social origin plays hardly any role. Another 35 percent of the group difference is explained by students' financial situation. Yet, the most significant factor is immigration-related debt, which is more often reported by refugee students than by international students.

A different picture emerges when we take international students as a reference group (Figure 2, right). In this case, we see exclusively deficits. Language integration, e.g., German language use in everyday life and finances are of less or almost no importance. Perceived exclusion (14 percent) and mental adjustment (five percent) seem to be of more importance, which is partially due to no effect of resilient coping for international students (Supplementary File 2, Table 2, right column). This means that international students are less likely to develop resilience in the face of these adversities compared to refugee students. Both HE social and academic integration seem to be barriers for refugee students and explains 14 percent and 12 percent of the group difference respectively, indicating that dropout risks of refugee students would decrease if they were integrated into HE as well as international students are. To generalise from the experience of international students to refugee students would therefore overlook the resources in the field of academic integration. The role of gender seems to be different when looking at international students as a reference group. Due to reduced dropout risk for female international students as well as a very important role of age, it seems that refugee students' dropout intentions would decrease about 99 percent if gender, age, and social origin distributions of both student groups were similar (see effect component in Supplementary File 2, table 2, right column). Therefore, it would be misguided to generalise from the experience of international students to refugee students concerning age and gender.

4.2. Qualitative Results

In the following, we present the results of the qualitative analysis oriented to the core issues we used to guide and structure the coding of our expert interviews.

4.2.1. Knowledge of Driving Factors

The experts identify financial problems due to living expenses and educational fees as well as migration-related financial burden as prevalent obstacles to learning success. However, in the case of international students without refugee status, they tend to assume that problems in terms of finances have to be clari-

fied as far as possible before the students arrive in Germany. Refugees, on the other hand, are confronted with an administrative jungle after their arrival and during their pre-study programs (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 1). Furthermore, the experts are deeply concerned about their students' experiences of social exclusion and highlight racism and stigmatisation as crucial barriers for social and academic integration in pre-study programs. In addition, feelings of exclusion are closely intertwined with individual and institutional capabilities to overcome language barriers. The experts emphasise the significance of developing social bonds between the students, within the course context and beyond, and they interpret facilitating social integration processes as a professional obligation (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 2). From the perspective of the experts, social inclusion processes additionally function as a resource for German language learning and vice versa (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 3). Last but not least, the expert interviews reveal the significance of a strong connection to the desired field of study for social and academic integration. Having similar goals and interests strengthens not only social ties but motivation as well. Since in pre-study programs the learners have to achieve high performance levels in terms of language skills and subject-specific competencies, this factor is viewed as a crucial resource for developing coping strategies (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 4). However, some experts frame the students' successful study preparation as a justified selection by performance and tend to neglect individual living conditions assuming high performance standards to be inevitable for quality language learning (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 5).

4.2.2. Refugees as a Target Group

The experts' understanding of refugees as a target group is anchored in their long-term experiences in study preparation for international applicants with and without refugee status and the way they compare the groups reveals similarities and differences. Their knowledge of the factors that jeopardise success or increase the intention to drop out is built up accordingly. This can be exemplified by examining their knowledge of students' financial conditions: Whereas international students without refugee status often rely on low-paid part-time jobs and their employment permit depends on visa regulations, refugees' financial problems are exacerbated by their complex integration into other areas of asylum law and social policy. From the perspective of unemployment and welfare agencies, getting a job is prioritised over funding for study preparation, so it often takes lengthy negotiations for refugees to get support during pre-study programs. Also, their financial situation is more heavily burdened by family obligations, since childcare responsibilities are prevalent and their financial leeway is further restricted by migration-related debt or financial support of other family members. Moreover, from the

perspective of the experts, uncertain residence permits, social exclusion and traumatisation are particular issues. These problems are specifically linked to living conditions that are likely to induce mental burden and jeopardise refugees' successful study preparation (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 6).

The experts describe a range of support measures that are already established within the pre-study programs for which they are responsible. Particularly within the framework of the federal funding scheme, they use the opportunity to raise additional funds to re-design course concepts and developed new targeted support measures for refugees. Those complementary offers include, for example, study competence courses (techniques of scientific work and writing, time and stress management, etc.), offers to assist students in acquiring intercultural skills, excursions and visits to exhibitions, social and cultural events as well as study and social counselling or thematic information events (e.g., student financing and scholarship schemes or psychological counselling centres). These accompanying measures are on the one hand designed to address refugees concerning language and subject-specific competencies that are required to pass the final exam. On the other hand, the local knowledge is used to offer support by reaching out to other relevant areas and organisations and thus aims at taking the additional prerequisites for successful learning, the needs and resources of the learners—driving factors for dropout intentions—into account.

4.3. Opportunities to Develop Inclusive Concepts

Based on the interviews, we can ascertain that teachers as well as coordination staff are committed to a significant engagement for individual support of refugees struggling with the required performance level in terms of German language and subject-specific competencies. However, the teachers perceive their scopes for action to be restricted for example by organisational conditions (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 7).

Generally, the experts express concern that there are too few opportunities to adequately address the specific needs of learners with a refugee background. Since, as a rule, only the actual teaching time is paid in HEI language courses, individual support is mostly provided based on the voluntary engagement of staff members. What is more, in the opinion of all experts, the opportunities for teachers' further education and training are still inadequate. This is inextricably linked with the political and economic conditions of pre-study programs resulting in the prevalent precarious employment of teachers as well as poor wages (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 8). Therefore, the teachers often give several courses and this situation leads to a lack of time and limited motivation to engage in further education and training.

The experts especially criticise that a professional discourse on how to design inclusive concepts and responsive supports for refugees in pre-study programs has only

just begun and anticipate their engagement to be unsustainable. Local developments are crucially dependent on funding and financing by state and federal state temporary programs. Although the motivation for improving refugees' access to HE chances is omnipresent in the expert interviews, impulses for designing and implementing new support offers are also counteracted by given legal and political regulations. In the case of refugees participating in pre-study programs, there are still labour market and asylum policy restrictions going far beyond the experts' options for action (Table 3, Supplementary File 1, quote 9).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on quantitative panel data from refugee and international students in pre-study courses and qualitative interview data with practitioners at German HEIs, we have looked into the specific situation of refugee students and factors influencing their dropout risk. Our study exclusively undertook a quantitative comparison between the situation of international and refugee students. We extended classical theoretical dropout models by demonstrating the intrinsic importance of additional migration-related variables. Alongside financing problems, social and academic integration, language integration, psychological adaptation and structural aspects of social exclusion such as concerns about the threat of deportation, can also explain the intention to drop out. Further, the triangulation of students' and experts' perspectives provides insights into the needs and potentials of refugee students, as well as professionals' awareness about and means to address their situation. After the panel data allows us a comparative analysis of the situation of refugee students and international students, the qualitative expert interviews provide insights into how practitioners assess the situation, needs and potentials of refugee students and to what extend refugee students are understood as a distinct target group regarding the development of inclusive concepts.

Our quantitative findings indicate some structural differences between refugee students and international students in pre-study programmes. Refugee students more often intend to drop out of pre-study programs due to financing problems, experiences of social exclusion and inequalities by age and gender. However, in contrast to the prevalent deficit perspective, students can develop agency and strategies to deal with those challenges. Resilient coping, everyday German language use and academic integration (e.g., existing study experience from abroad) reduce the dropout risk for refugee students and thus serve as resources. Our data reveal group-specific differences in the importance of explanatory variables such as resilient coping, finances, language integration or gender. These results point to group characteristics that should be taken into account by HEIs.

The interview analysis indicates that the development of offers for refugee students was often based on

experiences with international students. However, our findings imply that an inference based on a comparison of refugee students with international students to some extent would fail. This result points to the importance of an intersectional perspective that takes into account internal differences of social groups and their connection with structural conditions. Nevertheless, HEI staffs' understandings of prerequisites for study preparation and driving factors for dropout intentions partly reflect perceptions of similarities and differences between course participants with and without a refugee background. Yet, although practitioners recognise refugees as a new target group and highlight the amplification of barriers resulting from intersections of legal frameworks and various private and public actors as a particular issue for refugee students (Détourbe & Goastellec, 2018; Unangst & Crea, 2020), they see limited opportunities to develop inclusive concepts and refer to institutional expectations towards international applicants. As Baker and Irwin (2019) have pointed out, unfitting institutional presumptions about students' needs, resources and proper ways to address them, can complicate and even inhibit educational transitions. Refugee students and their reality of life often do not fit stereotypical ideas of HE applicants and students (Berg, 2020). In line with this, our interview analysis implies that it would benefit refugee students to be offered support that comprehensively takes their situation into account.

Further research should concentrate on refugee students' pathways within degree programs and more comparative approaches between countries and HE systems as well as formative and summative evaluations of different pre-study programs and support structures. Further studies may also try to distinguish between different countries or regions of origin, as well as between different linguistic backgrounds. There is still a lack of suitable data that helps all responsible actors to formulate evidence-based policy measures. Longitudinal data would be very welcome to study processes of inclusion and exclusion on the transition to and through the degree programme. In-depth analyses should be carried out to better understand the influence of educational institutions and staff in compensating or enforcing educational and social inequalities.

Studies of the situation of refugee students have often constituted them as a student group of their own by pointing out their specific needs (Lambrechts, 2020). Our results indicate that a deficit perspective on refugees is inappropriate since they bring a specific range of needs and resources (Harvey & Mallman, 2019; Ramsay & Baker, 2019; Shapiro, 2018), whereby resources tend to be overlooked compared to other international students. Considering not only refugees' needs and resources concerning successful study preparation, but also suitable conditions for implementing inclusive concepts and responsive support at the HEI level, a sustainable discourse between the relevant actors is urgently needed. Refugees' successful educational path-

ways rely on cooperative organisational learning encompassing institutions throughout the entire assemblage of policy areas (Berg et al., 2021). This holds particularly true when it comes to finances. Based on our quantitative and qualitative insights, we recommend creating sustainable financial conditions for building communities of practice between front-line actors in pre-study programs and for teachers' training strategies. Last but not least, re-designing and developing responsive supports needs to be organised by giving a voice to the experiences not only of HEI staff but refugee students as well.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

Coloniality in the German Higher Education System: Implications for Policy and Institutional Practice

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Abstract
This article focuses on the public German higher education sector as a site upon and through which coloniality is enacted. This status quo indicates exclusionary effects and merits interrogation. We briefly discuss the history of German colonialism to understand how coloniality pervades higher educational structures in the German context today. Two proposals addressing coloniality in German higher education are made: the development of structures centering diverse faculty and the support of ethnic and identity studies.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Coloniality has been described by Grosfoguel (2007, p. 219) as "the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, [which] produced colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system." That is to say, coloniality is an ongoing and pervasive system of hierarchy that persists worldwide, and whose antecedent is the physical occupation of colonialism. Mechanisms of coloniality impact educational structures. Clifford and Montgomery (2017, p. 1149) illustrate that "coloniality still pervades many countries and education systems, and institutional inertia and investment in the status quo fuel resistance to change."

Coloniality lingers not only in sites of colonization, but in colonizing contexts as well (Asher, 2009; Collective People's Knowledge Editorial, 2016). As Migliarini (2018, p. 439) has written of the Italian case, terms and concepts related to race and racism are made prob-

lematic by Italy's colonial history, thereby "foreclosing any discussions of race and white privilege in public space." This reflects a relationship between coloniality's structures and institutionalized, nationally specific racism (Friedrich, 2011), as well as European taboos around race-based discourses (Grigolo et al., 2011). As Erel et al. (2016, p. 1341) have noted, "recognition of racism as a structuring feature of European societies is needed to address how Europe's migration regimes articulate and are articulated by racialization and coloniality" (see also Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al., 2010; Lentin, 2014; Mignolo, 2012; Möschel, 2011). These discourses extend to the tertiary education sector as well. Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2016) has addressed this point in her work on the German setting, writing that racial stratification has evolved to reinforce racism and coloniality. She writes that:

> Subtle institutional practices [favor] the access of the
> White national affluent population….Further, as we

will see in regard to the implementation of migration control policies in universities, while not explicitly operating within a racial matrix, the logic of differentiation that they establish reproduces social hierarchies reflecting and reinforcing processes of racialization. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2016, p. 169)

This article focuses on the largely public German tertiary education sector as a site upon and through which coloniality is enacted, a status quo indicating exclusionary effects and one which merits interrogation. As Pusser and Marginson (2013, p. 552) have written, distinct, nationally specific ideologies frame "creation myths, sagas, and beliefs about national culture that motivate postsecondary policies and assure legitimacy" (see also Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In the German setting, this also refers to the myth of white German racial and ethnic superiority, which in the context of colonial fantasy can be traced to at least the 18th century as discussed by Susanne Zantop (1997). Indeed, mechanisms for higher education access and student support in Germany are frequently couched in language emphasizing excellence and meritocracy, which are discursive proxies for racial and ethnic hierarchy (Hüther & Krücken, 2018; Klein, 2016). This argumentation is also familiar in other national contexts (Chong, 2014; Morgan, 2006; Pilz & Alexander, 2011; Warikoo, 2016; Yao et al., 2018).

In short, we conceive of German public higher education institutions (HEIs) as social institutions of the state—funded by the nation, the federal states and the public—in which the discourse of racial and ethnic superiority (racism) and its discursive expression through curricula and meritocracy circulate to limit educational access and opportunity for disenfranchised racial and ethnic minorities including, but not limited to, migrant groups. The discourse of racism produces the principle of meritocracy and supplies the application of meritocratic systems with discursive power. Consequently, the principle of meritocracy becomes discursive itself, and its systems or mechanisms—e.g., faculty hiring practices, curricular restrictions—distribute power and reify racist regimes. Here, discourse is understood as encompassing systems and structures that, in the case of higher education, frame knowledge exchange and creation. This draws from Bohman's (1999) depiction of research as social process (see also Martínez Alemán, 2014).

We outline how a postcolonial or decolonial lens might be productively applied to the German higher education context and focus on two specific areas. We begin by briefly discussing how coloniality and tertiary education have been considered transnationally, then summarize relevant German colonial history, thereby elucidating how and why Germany is a colonial context. A summary of the German higher education system follows, before we turn to discussion of the barriers to inclusion faced by minoritized faculty in German research universities and *Fachhochschulen* (universities of applied sciences) alike and posit that the development of degree

programs in ethnic and identity studies to help subvert racist curricular discourses is essential. In other words, establishing race and ethnic studies courses and programs can disrupt the racist coloniality of the curriculum, as well as improve access to faculty positions for racially minoritized scholars.

2. Framing the Interrogation of Coloniality in German Higher Education

Our consideration of coloniality in German higher education is framed by the work of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Decolonial theorists including Quijano, among others, also offer important insights into the practice and contestation of coloniality; both postcolonial and decolonial perspectives "challenge… the insularity of historical narratives and historiographical traditions emanating from Europe" (Bhambra, 2014, p. 115). Despite their relevance, neither postcolonial nor decolonial scholars have been applied extensively to analyses of German education, let alone German tertiary education. For example, in March 2021, a search in the Web of Science database for topics "Edward Said AND German*" produced 27 results, none of which were relevant to higher education. Similarly, a search for "Bhabha AND German*" resulted in 36 matches and a search for "Quijano AND German*" produced one match only, none of which were focused on higher education. This paucity of education scholarship contrasts with the work of activists, historians, and German Studies scholars, who have addressed racist/racialized discourse and its connection to educational practice in Germany. For instance, Peggy Piesche's (2015, p. 224) discussion of Audre Lorde's engagement with "Black antiracist interventions in Germany that were from the start premised on transnationalism" and the benchmark publication *Showing our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* (Opitz et al., 1992).

Edward Said famously made clear the constructed duality of the Orient/Occident. Said (1978, p. 13) asserted that the "Orient" is but a Western idea in which "tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West." While his work did not focus on Germany or Germans per se, Said noted an equivalency of that country with other colonial powers, writing that that "what German Orientalism had in common with Anglo, French and later American Orientalism was a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture" (Said, 1978, p. 27).

Homi Bhabha (1994, pp. 19, 21) has written that "exclusionary imperialist ideologies of self and other" create existential and real-life marginalization, but also produce an opportunity for "cultural and historical hybridity." Further, Bhabha "conceives of Otherness as not only a construction of individuals and groups but a dialogue, a constant navigation of self and other. Hybridity, then, represents a dialectical space for translation of identity, and is fundamentally temporal, a

'discursive temporality'" (Unangst, 2020, p. 61; see also Bhabha, 1994, p. 25).

This postcolonial perspective makes clear that we ought not to think of individual identity as a binary construct (colonizer: colonized; citizen: alien), but rather changeable hybrids. University constituents, by extension and example, may not be easily categorized as, for example, 'refugee' or 'migrant' in terms of their identities and experiences, though indeed their legal status and attributed social role as such may influence lived experience. Rather, as we see in these cases, identity and its discursive power are fluid. Similarly, ethnic and identity studies program consider hybridity and negotiation as key concepts. Minoritized faculty members and students also encounter hybridity in their experiences of belonging to an academy and yet being excluded from it (in different ways and in different forms; see Avraamidou, 2020).

Bhabha's (1994, p. 22) work also references Foucault's discussion of "repeatable materiality," or the process in which discourse from one entity or institution may be "transcribed in the discourse of another." In the context of tertiary education, this clearly applies to a decentralized system such as Germany's, which is indirectly influenced by national politics and policy, but depends largely on the 'translation' of state-level initiatives and implementation at the institutional level. That is to say that the discourse (or systems and structures) of tertiary education is informed by the discourse of politics. "Similarly, the structures of one university may be adapted by another higher education institution, thereby mimicking power structures and hierarchies" (Unangst, 2020, p. 62). In fact, Foucault (1982, p. 787) refers to educational institutions as a discursive "block of capacity-communication-power." Effectively engaging in mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), universities may be seen to communicate power structures through their discourses that frequently echo each other.

In the German setting, and with particular reference to the support of marginalized populations, it is recognized that institutional mimetic isomorphism may be accelerated by law. In particular this includes anti-discrimination laws with regard to gender. A common response of German tertiary organizations has been to establish structures within the institution to comply with legal mandates (Hüther & Krücken, 2018, p. 145). These institutional structures or units include the Gleichstellungsbüro, present at all public HEIs, which were instituted to support women in the academy (Blome et al., 2013; Löther & Vollmer, 2014; Schroeter, 2009). Other forms of oppression associated with coloniality, specifically racism and racialization, are addressed in the broadest terms by legislation (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1949). However, elaborated regulation targeting entrenched racism and racialization is not as visible at the federal, state, or institutional levels. In fact, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2014, p. 10)

observed that "the notion of racism is often interpreted too narrowly in Germany and is linked to organised groups. The racist, and particularly xenophobic, character of some public discourse is still not established clearly enough in public debates."

3. German Colonialism and Coloniality

How is the German nation state understood as colonial or vehicle for coloniality? German principalities and Imperial Germany pursued colonial territory throughout the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and by the mid-19th century Germany acquired the fourth largest colonial empire behind Britain, France, and the Netherlands (Conrad, 2013). Outposts were established in Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Berman et al., 2014), and German Imperial troops were responsible for the genocide of the Herero and Nama peoples in present-day Namibia. However, as Kurthen (1995, p. 916) has noted of the former West Germany, the "notion of national homogeneity was not challenged by massive postcolonial remigration movements of persons from former overseas colonies" in the post-1945 period. Instead, Schilling (2015, p. 429) observes of this post-war period that the influence of "former colonialists" in essence "ensured that a positive memory of colonialism was upheld [and] established a near seamless link from colonial paternalism to postwar "development." Both the former East and West engaged in what may be seen as colonial acts (Verber, 2010). In 1972, the former West reached a "cultural agreement" with Senegal to ensure that German would be the first foreign language taught in its public school system (Witte, 2011). Colonial policies affected minoritized groups within Germany as well; writing of the former East, Piesche (2018, p. 229) observes that:

> In the GDR's relatively homogeneous and closed society, Blacks were presumed to be exotic, foreign, and different—patterns of attribution similar to those occurring in other countries. To be associated with such attributes meant also to be regarded as part of 'another' society, definitely not part of the GDR but rather foreigners whose stay was limited.

In present day Germany, despite increasing acknowledgment of profound colonial violence, issues around coloniality persist in education and external to it. We now move to discuss the structure of higher education system in that country in order to preface our proposals for change.

4. German Tertiary Education

4.1. System Structure

In order to understand the function of coloniality in the German higher education sector, it is important to briefly outline the system's present structure. The higher

education system is both primarily public and decentralized, ceding the direction of higher education to the 16 federal states. Most students in Germany attend university within their state of residence (Spiess & Wrohlich, 2010), which is important given that the demographics (particularly related to residents of migrant background) vary quite dramatically across the former border of East and West Germany. Consequently, the student bodies at the HEIs in question are distinct.

The German system is binary, with universities of applied sciences offering a clear technical or vocational orientation, and research universities including disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, and natural and physical sciences, as well as some professional fields including law (other professional fields associated with the civil service are offered at alternate, specialized institutions; art and musical performance are offered at distinct institutions). Admissions practices differ by both institutional type and field of study; a 'restricted qualification' may be gained by a graduate of certain vocational upper secondary schools to a specific track at universities of applied sciences aligned with their work and study experience (Schindler, 2016). The numerus clausus, an enrollment management technique that admits students to university based on the secondary school leaving exam score (*Abitur*), applies to almost half of all disciplinary fields in Germany (Finger, 2016).

Historically a relatively 'flat' higher education system in that German research universities were of comparable quality, these institutions are now being intentionally differentiated under the auspices of the German Excellence Initiative, into which billions of Euro continue to be invested in order to facilitate increased competition in terms of admissions, faculty recruitment, and public-private collaboration (Bloch et al., 2014; Wolter, 2017). There is concern that the robust support of more 'prestigious' institutions will result in access and equity issues becoming even more urgent (Hüther & Krücken, 2018). While German universities enrolled a higher proportion of 'non-traditional' students in 2018 than in decades prior, including students with children, part-time students, and others (Middendorff et al., 2013), only 2.4 percent of all enrolled first-year students were classified as part-time in 2013, a signal that there is much progress to be made (Brändle & Häuberer, 2014). Further, first generation immigrant students display on average a longer time to degree, as well as a higher risk of attrition (Kerst & Wolter, 2017). In sum, the German tertiary sector may be characterized as highly dynamic and decentralized though increasingly hierarchical, and displaying persistent gaps in terms of student access and success (Unangst, 2020).

5. Supporting a Diverse Faculty

Faculty have historically played a powerful role within German HEIs. German faculty have been "the heart of the university," and were at one time "all-powerful fig- ures" (Anderson, 2017, p. 3), resulting in a post-1945 system of promotion being established to dissolve relevant forms of exclusion, elitism, and isolation. The current promotion system compels prospective academics to apply for positions at institutions other than where they completed their study. Further, with limited positions at each step of the academic ladder (assistant professor, etc.) competition is fierce for senior positions. While the system purports to rid hiring practices of preferential treatment of internal (and by default, mostly white German) candidates and responds to historical problems of German faculty isolation and elitism, the policy effectively invalidates professional networks built by marginalized groups that would be utilized in the academic job search process. By forcing academic job market candidates to leave the institutions at which they have developed networks, the current system ultimately divests racialized/ethnicized faculty of professional power. A recent German University PhD graduate who self-identified as being from the Global South noted of the academic track that though "in theory" universities had to comply with various hiring laws, "in practice no one can question the institutions which do not implement these guidelines. The white professors can always justify hiring white Germans as their assistants or Habilitanden" (post-docs; Arghavan, 2019, p. 187). Thus, it seems that this structure is unlikely to facilitate the hiring of faculty whose racial/ethnic/migrant identities challenge the norms of the academic profession.

However, the representation of (mostly white) women in the professoriate has risen: The proportion in "Grade A" positions has "more than doubled" over the past 11 years, the period in which equal opportunity offices and support programs centering women have been most active (Hüther & Krücken, 2018). Additionally, the proportion of women holding chancellorships at public research universities rose from 13 percent to 30 percent between 2008 and 2015, and from 17 to 41 percent at public universities of applied sciences over the same period (Hüther & Krücken, 2018). These results may be understood as facilitated by the substantial federal and state level support provided to university (Gleichstellungsbüro) for a program referred to as the PWP (*Professorinnenprogramm*). The PWP that has provided women better access to faculty positions by allocating "substantial funds (150 million euros for its 2008–2012 first phase and another 150 million for 2013–2017)" to support professorships for female faculty members at "universities that submit acceptable gender equality plans to an expert committee" (Zippel et al., 2016, p. 877) appointed by the Ministry of Education (BMBF). Further, junior professorships have also been established with the goal of welcoming women to faculty ranks. However, these professorships are still rare and most are non-tenure track (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, 2018, p. 23).

Reflecting coloniality and the tensions around data collection on ethnicity and race in the German case,

no authoritative data are available on the racial/ ethnic/migration background of faculty, as national faculty surveys query only gender and no other 'background' questions (Hüther & Krücken, 2018). However, relatively small-scale surveys have indicated that somewhere between 6 and 9 percent of all German professors (of any level) self-identify a migration background (Neusel & Wolter, 2016). At present, women comprise less than 20 percent of full professors in Germany (Hüther & Krücken, 2018), suggesting that German HEIs follow the trend in the West in which diversification of the faculty begins with (white) women followed by minoritized men and women (Farrokhzad, 2008; Gasman et al., 2015).

Effectively, structural changes imposed on HEIs by federal and state entities have improved the composition of the faculty in terms of gender. By dedicating funds to improve women's opportunities to enter the academic profession, the German government proactively challenged gender discourse. It can be argued, then, that funding can serve as one driver for institutional change; in this example, dulling the edge of discursive sexism. In contrast, targeted and well-funded state and federal programs supporting and improving faculty racial and ethnic diversity are few and far between. As Leichsenring (2011, p. 53) has observed, "at the moment," without state and federal mandates and funding for structural change to improve racial/ethnic diversity, German universities "are very much on their own" in this area. Recently, though some faculty jobs have been posted noting a preference for applicants from migration backgrounds, this appears to be a decentralized, institution-specific effort. Given that the vast majority of tertiary programs in Germany are public and conducted through only a few hundred HEIs (German Rectors' Conference, 2021; Salmi, 2000), system-wide initiatives to promote a more diverse faculty are achievable and necessary (Langholz, 2013). Existing efforts to support an increase in the number of female faculty can serve as a model for funding and program development to recruit and promote faculty of migration and other minoritized backgrounds.

It should be noted that programming for increasing the number of women faculty is fueled by social, cultural and political forces that challenge mainstream consciousness. For example, the integration of feminist consciousness and epistemologies into scholarship and the curriculum is often a reflection of discursive challenges to societal norms. A notable example is the case of women's and gender studies in the curriculum of US HEIs that served to alter academic epistemologies/knowledge paradigms and challenge disciplinary canons. Fueled by the rise in feminist consciousness in the 1970s, the development of gender and women's studies programs' 'new knowledges' quickened institutional change to address gender inequities in faculty recruitment, hiring, and promotion (Glazer-Raymo, 2001; Martínez Alemán, 2014). In turn, academic departments can serve as incubators

for action, participatory, emancipatory, or decolonial research (Weber, 2016). However, it is important to note that affirmative action in the US setting has tended to benefit white women; there is increasing recognition within US higher education that an intersectional lens is indicated in order to contest continued and pervasive exclusionary hierarchies and support, in particular, Women of Color (Crenshaw, 1991).

6. University Curricula: Ethnic and Identity Studies Departments

Coloniality imbues a primarily public tertiary education sector such as Germany's with exclusionary practices consistent with racist and ethnocentric discourses. In this context, identity and power take on important relevance to the institution and for individuals. 'Identity' here refers not only to the fluid self-conceptions of tertiary faculty, staff, and students, but also to identity as social construct and indicator of (possible) lived experiences of discrimination (Nasser, 2019; Wilkins, 2014). Further, it refers to national and institutional identity, which combine in unique and ever-changing ways to influence institutional discourses.

The case for the decolonization of the university curriculum has been made across many national contexts, at the heart of which is an argument for an acknowledgment that curricula are discourses. As discourses, curricula are (as Foucault asserted) "procedures of exclusion" (Peters & Jandrić, 2018, p. 166) that are marked by the absence of knowledge and subjectivities, and that serve to maintain dominant power relations. Language and practices are expressions linked to knowledge in this scheme, suggesting that what is known and not known, who is known and not known, is an expression of value and validity. As discourse, the university curriculum is a codified expression of knowledge that is valued (if not revered) in society, and by extension, should be reproduced.

A reflection of dominant expressions, beliefs, prevailing norms, and sanctioned politics, a university's curriculum is an expression of the coaction of the accepted narratives of historical context and their sanctioned interpretations. For example, Coate's (2006) diagnosis of the UK's gendered discourse in university curriculum reveals how academic knowledge is an interplay of socio-political power relations and the organization and history of the higher education system. The decolonization of the university curricula is not uncommon. Scholars have argued for the decolonization of African university curricula (e.g., Knight, 2018; Winberg & Winberg, 2017), and have made the case for a decolonization of the Australian university curriculum based on the exclusion and erasure of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives (e.g., McLaughlin & Whatman, 2011). Lewis (2018) broadens the call by considering the epistemological challenges brought to the university curriculum when we engage the fact of Black diaspora through colonization. In the

US, ethnic and cultural studies as well as women's and gender studies in the university served to contest the discourse of exclusion and hegemony in university curricula. While there is a nascent literature on the topic in the German sphere, this remains an emerging area of research not only in Germany but in other former colonial states of Western Europe (Colak et al., 2020).

The need for the decolonization of the university curriculum is perhaps especially apparent in the German setting given that the research university has historically occupied a position of power within German society as a whole (Euros, 2016; Phillips, 2016; Tsvetkova, 2014). In the post-1945 period, for example, the German "university was still a 'centre of national identification,' especially for the educated middle class that dominated public life" (Östling, 2016, p. 388). However, that esteemed status belied the purging of racialized students only years before: "By 1937, there were only 500 Chinese students nation-wide, though Berlin alone had registered 1000 Chinese students in 1923….Further, this group was subject to the 'Central Office for Chinese' founded in 1938 by Richard Heydrich to sharply control visas" (Unangst, 2020, p. 30; see also Ha et al., 2007).

Based on the 2012 census of families with a migration history living in Germany, 17 percent have an Asian background and 4 percent an African background (Henkel et al., 2016). These figures do not include foreign nationals who may identify as Afro- or Asian-German. Given Germany's colonial history in most regions worldwide, attention within the university's academic units to the epistemologies that enable the examination of colonial identities and knowledges seems urgently called for. As Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 4) has noted, ethnic and women's studies departments have enabled "necessary explorations and experimentations that go beyond the strict and largely self-imposed disciplinary and Eurocentric limits" of the Western curriculum that relate to nativist logic of colonial identity.

Using the German Rectors' Conference (2021) database, which is an authoritative source allowing prospective students to search study courses across private, public, and religious institutions and spanning all federal states, we conducted a keyword search to discern to what extent current academic offerings relate to identity studies and diversity in the German context (see Table 1). Of the 20,732 programs included in the database, we found that while there are regional studies programs focused on Asia and Africa (German Rectors' Conference, 2021), there are no programs in place focused on Afro-German Studies or Asian-German Studies at German HEIs. Here, we refer to interdisciplinary programs (comparable to African American Studies or Native American Studies) that draw from history, culture, political science, literature, and sociology, among other fields. This relative inattention to Afro-German and Asian-German literature and culture in curricula occurs in spite of a colonial history on the continents. Further, the incorporation of Afro-German

literature into German Studies curricula has been identified as slow and insufficient (Johnson, 2001). Calls to include works by Afro-German authors are largely ignored and most HEI curricula lack a systematic incorporation of texts by Afro-Germans (Schenker & Munro, 2013). In addition, a search for "mobilität" (mobility) resulted in 143 program matches, though the vast majority were engineering and technology-related. Searches for "intercultural" and "interkulturell" also pointed to many programs related to business rather than ethnic or identity studies. All to suggest that coloniality continues to guide German HEI curricula.

Stein (2018, p. 150) has suggested that an epistemologically orienting question for educationalists might be "whose voices are centered in curriculum, and whose are absent?" Such an interrogation indicates (among other things) the importance of identity studies departments within existing Western HEIs. Much like women's and gender studies has done, these units may approach "reform from within" in pursuit of a decolonized university (Tamdgidi, 2012). Their curricula may center absent voices of the marginalized or subaltern, and simultaneously explore the epistemology of difference supported by the university. Further, these units may serve as catalysts and coactive forces for political advocacy and action, though indeed there is also danger that the formation of identity studies departments may redirect energy towards normative academic goals and away from such advocacy (Glass et al., 2018). Finally, ethnic and identity studies units may serve as generators of new methods and methodologies and as multipliers of related work. Germany's contemporary HEIs manifest their own hierarchies of privilege that inevitably relate to temporally-bound discourses of 'equal opportunity' and 'diversity' in their curriculum.

7. Conclusion

Critique of coloniality is emergent in the German sphere. To this point, referencing the work of Dietze et al. (2007), Boatca (2012, p. 27) has written that:

> For Germany's critical intellectuals, having (virtually) no academic curricula dealing with social differences from the perspective of the subalterns' emancipatory claims, represents not only a regrettable German Sonderweg, or special path, in comparison to other Western European settings such as the British or Scandinavian context, but also, and especially, a temporal and financial lag with respect to US American academia.

The decomposition of coloniality in higher education is particularly urgent given the increasing differentiation of the higher education sector in Germany, facilitated by the German Excellence Initiative and implementation of Bologna reforms. Increased differentiation indicates increased selectivity at more prestigious HEIs, which is

Table 1. Existing degree courses related to identity studies at public universities in Germany.

Searched Term	No. Results	Sample Program Titles
Afro	1	Cultural and Social Anthropology
Afrika	34	African Languages and Cultures; African Studies; German as a Second Language in German-African Contexts; Art History of Africa; History; International Area Studies; Linguistics
Asiatisch (Asian)	32	Archeology, Buddhist Studies, International Area Studies
Black	0	
Diversity	41	Biodiversity and Conservation; Gender and Diversity; Leading Diversity (in-service training at Helmut-Schmidt-University/University of the Army Hamburg); Intercultural Conflict Management; International Business Administration
Diversität (diversity)	68	Biodiversity and Ecology; Diversity and Inclusion; Diversity Management, Religion and Education; Empowerment Studies; Physical Geography; Sociology: Diversity and Society; Sustainable Agriculture
Ethnische (Ethnic)	2	Education; International Migration and Intercultural Relations
Ethnizität (Ethnicity)	2	Health and Diversity; Social-Cultural Studies
Frauen (women)	13	Mechanical Engineering (women's degree course); International women's degree course in Computer Science
Gender	67	Advanced Anglophone Studies; Gender Studies; Business Psychology; Health and Society; Gender and Diversity Studies
Identity	4	Communication Design; Visual and Experience Design
Identität (identity)	4	Religion and Politics; Spanish Culture and European Identity
Intercultural	42	Engineering Management; Intercultural Anglophone Studies; Intercultural Business Psychology; International Agribusiness; Software Engineering and Management
Interkulturell	214	European Studies; French Cultural Studies and Intercultural Communication; Globalization, Governance, and Law; New Media and Intercultural Communication; Translation
Migranten (Migrants)	3	Intercultural Conflict Management; Flight, Migration, Society; Social Work
Mobilität (Mobility)	143	Automobile and Mobility Management; Logistics, Infrastructure, and Mobility; Electrical Power and Machine Engineering; International Tourism and Event Management; Cultural Anthropoligy and European Ethnology; Trans-cultural Studies
Queer	3	Gender and Queer Studies
Rassismus (racism)	1	Social Work
Schwarz (Black)	0	
Vielfalt (diversity)	17	Health and Diversity; Pedagogy of Diversity *(certificate program for teachers in training);* Linguistic Diversity: Linguistics of anglophone, Baltic, Finnish, Scandinavian and Slavic cultures

Source: Assembled by the authors based on German Rectors' Conference (2021).

very likely to further marginalize students less favored by coloniality's hierarchies (Hüther & Krücken, 2018) that include women, migrants, refugees, LGBTQ+ students and others (Grosfoguel et al., 2015).

By no means does this article present an exhaustive catalog of equity issues in German higher education to which postcolonial attention is indicated. We propose here initial steps towards applying a postcolonial frame to Germany's tertiary sphere, acknowledging that various bureaucratic and institutional specificities will inevitably challenge the implementation of interventions suggested in these pages.

However, as we have sought to demonstrate, there is clear evidence that comprehensive, nationally-scoped programs supporting diversity measures (specifically, the equal opportunity of women in academia) have had success in the German setting. Indeed, they represent accepted practice, and it is upon these initiatives that we propose expanding. In order to move towards a liberation of German higher education from coloniality and to effect equitable policies and practice, stakeholders should engage in focused attention to relevant research and policy work in the public and private domains alike. At stake is no less than the equitable support of present and future scholars in an increasingly diverse national context—one which may offer lessons to similar cases worldwide.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Diversity is not the Enemy: Promoting Encounters between University Students and Newcomers

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Abstract
In today's globalized world with dynamic processes of political, social, and societal change (Mergner et al., 2019) the university should be a place of encounter between people with different (cultural) backgrounds. The learning arrangement presented here therefore initiates intercultural exchange and aims to help students see diversity as an asset rather than a challenge (Roos, 2019). To this end, an intercultural project was initiated at TU Dortmund in Germany in 2017. In the context of different learning environments future teachers were invited to have encounters with young newcomers through a nearly completely self-managed learning arrangement. The students were prepared for the encounters in focused courses dealing with theoretical backgrounds and didactic concepts. They would then prepare the lessons with the newcomers. In the context of this learning arrangement the following questions were important: What did the university students expect with regard to the encounter with newcomer students from schools? How did they prepare the lessons? What did students and newcomers think about the encounters later? What have they learned? And what do these reflections mean for inclusive and intercultural teacher education at universities? In the project we could observe that the didactic approach supports the students' level of sensitivity towards differences and encourages future teachers to train the education of newcomers in a non-judgmental framework (Bartz & Bartz, 2018). Based on a selection of qualitative empirical findings (ethnographic approach during six lessons in a period of two years and 147 interviews including the students' and newcomers' points of view about their learning encounters at TU Dortmund), this article discusses opportunities to create more innovative spaces for inclusive practices and cultures under the restricted terms of a mass university.

1. Introduction

In Germany, as in many other parts of the world, globalization and migration have led to an increasing influx of students from different (cultural) backgrounds in schools and universities. The student body is very diverse, with students speaking different languages and having different religious or ethnical backgrounds (Florian, 2017, p. 11). Particularly in the context of teacher training, it is important to help future teachers to use this diversity as an opportunity. Research conducted in this field shows that many teachers already have positive attitudes

towards heterogeneous student groups (Ruberg & Porsch, 2017) but are struggling with the practical tasks in school (Grimm & Schlupp, 2019). So, there is still a big gap between the theoretical idea of seeing a heterogeneous student body as an educational resource rather than an excessive burden and the practical implementation of this idea. Particularly in the case of teaching newcomers, this well-known gap becomes highly relevant. Recent studies call attention to the fact that teachers feel unprepared to teach newcomers, have many insecurities about teaching them and are struggling with increased learning demands like language support (e.g., Bačáková & Closs, 2013; Kipouropoulou, 2019; Lechner & Huber, 2017). To put it in a nutshell, teaching refugee students is often perceived as a challenge for teachers (Kleina & Ruberg, 2020). Apart from that, many refugee students face discrimination and experience racism in school systems (e.g., Block et al., 2014; Correa-Velez et al., 2016; Uptin et al., 2016). Thus, both educational systems and teachers must learn to adapt to the needs of newcomers. Consequently, teacher education programs in universities should offer possibilities to reflect on the fixed idea of newcomers as extraordinary students who are an additional burden in the classroom (Grimm & Schlupp, 2019). Results of previous studies indicate that personal encounters with disadvantaged or marginalized learners can support teachers in having a more positive attitude towards them and encourage them to teach in more inclusive ways (Fichten et al., 2005; Seifried, 2015). Following the contact hypothesis formulated by Allport (1954), the facilitation of accompanied learning processes where students experience real learners, including their needs, and can see for themselves that there is no such thing as one homogenous group of newcomers with a single story to tell about them, entails a great opportunity for educational settings. It is quite important to underline that this experience works in both ways: Newcomers, for their part, get the opportunity to become more familiar with higher education settings, are invited to a new learning arrangement and can speak their own truth, if they like, instead of being addressed as passive and as people being in need (Brewer, 2016, p. 136).

These research findings encourage programs that provide teachers and refugees with appropriate insightful encounters and learning. So far, there has been insufficient research on how such programs can be designed in terms of content, didactics, and organization, and what outcomes can be expected (Bartz et al., 2018). This research gap is to be closed with this work. For this purpose, an explorative, qualitative research design was chosen in order to create the preconditions for larger-scale, hypothesis-testing studies in the future.

This article provides insights into an experimental seminar project at TU Dortmund in Germany that intends to help future teachers experience and reflect on cultural diversity in the context of higher education. In our research project, the future teachers and the newcomers are both included as target groups. The seminar project has an innovative approach to open the university towards the community and is connected to the local meeting center TU@Adam's Corner. Based on the concept of reflective inclusion and the use of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) method, the seminar project contributes to reflective and difference-sensitive teacher education. By using the concept of reflective inclusion, we also try to think about stereotypes. We encourage students to talk about their thoughts honestly and reflect them together in the group. Thereby we try to avoid the possibility of participants remembering only the information that fits their existing views or stereotypes from the encounters.

The cooperation project introduced in this article is associated with the DoProfiL program (*Dortmunder Profil für inklusionsorientierte LehrerInnenbildung*), which focusses on inclusive teacher education at TU Dortmund. This project is part of the *Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung*, a joint initiative of the Federal Government and the Länder which aims to improve the quality of teacher training. The program is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The authors are responsible for the content of this publication.

1.1. About Migration in Germany and First Intercultural Projects in Dortmund

Germany has a long tradition of migration and therefore the topic of immigration is not new, but since 2015 the intensity and extent of migration have reached a different level. In that year, Germany recorded the highest rate of immigration in its history. One-third of the refugees coming to Germany were children and young adults (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016). The city of Dortmund, the setting for the activities and methodological reflections presented here, is a place of encounter between different cultures. Like the entire region known since the 1920s as the Ruhr area, it has always and fundamentally been shaped by migration. The migration movements of recent years have brought many unaccompanied, underage refugees to the region and to Dortmund. For this reason, TU@Adam's Corner has been created in the city to facilitate the arrival of these young people. TU@Adam's Corner is a meeting place where learners and teachers jointly design a learning space for the international classes at Dortmund's vocational colleges. In these international classes, young refugees learn German together with other students who are new to Dortmund. Since February 2016, the project has been supplemented by TU@Adam's Corner: Scientists from TU Dortmund share their knowledge with young refugees and immigrants, and in this way open up perspectives of belonging, arriving and shaping the future. The main goal of this attached university organization is to take an active stance towards working with refugee students and help them getting to know their new surroundings, including local educational institutions.

2. Requirements for Teacher Education and Reflective Inclusion as the Main Concept

Schools and universities play a significant role in facilitating the human right of education for all newcomers. In Germany, however, many universities are only just beginning to find appropriate ways to prepare students for teaching newcomers. Related topics like migration and critical race theories are still not part of the mainstream curriculum for teacher education (Karakaşoğlu et al., 2017). Nevertheless, future teachers should be prepared for the situation of diversity in German schools as early as possible. This is "a matter of social justice and equity in education" (Florian, 2017, p. 9) and should be addressed as a permanent task for educational systems. Particularly with the worldwide agenda of inclusive education there is an ongoing discussion about how teachers can learn to fully address the needs of all learners and how teacher education programs can support this goal. In this respect, the concept of (self)reflection is one of the most widely discussed ideas (Watkins, 2012). There is a broad agreement that it is the universities' task to create learning settings in which students can experience irritation, new ground, deal with possible misperceptions while being guided, and learn to frame their experiences with the help of scientific theory and by communicative exchange with peers and training staff. Inclusive education succeeds above all through reflection by all those involved in teaching processes (Beutel & Pant, 2020). In particular, this is underpinned by the approach of reflective inclusion, which understands difference as a product of social interactions in which (dis)advantages are inscribed. Such an understanding requires a specific mode of reflection that comprises a permanent reflection on the individual consequences and structural conditions of one's own actions (Dannenbeck & Dorrance, 2009). Being already a subject of general discussion as an important dimension of professionalism for teacher education, (self-)reflection is thus of significant importance for difference-sensitive teacher education as well. Such an approach involves the challenge of reflecting on school practice with regard to the (re-)production and processing of differences concerning cultural diversity as well as illuminating processes of stereotyping and othering (Ashcroft et al., 2000).

2.1. Universal Design for Learning as a Method for Difference-Sensitive Higher Education

One of the most promising methods for managing diversity in the classroom and for education in universities is the UDL (Powell & Pfahl, 2018). This concept developed in the US can provide orientation in the planning and implementation of inclusive and difference-sensitive teaching. Based on the design concept of the same name, it highlights key points of a learning environment with as few barriers as possible, an environment that considers a variety of learning strategies and levels. Three basic principles ensure that learners can acquire knowledge and skills according to their individual requirements:

1. Offering various options for task processing (representation)
2. Design of active learning and expression possibilities (action and expression)
3. Enabling motivated learning (commitment)

One major main benefit of UDL is the fact that it provides a systematic guide for creating didactic settings. Given the documented insecurities about teaching newcomers who are still learning German, it seems to be especially important that future teachers feel capable of planning the didactic setting and use this highly structured method to gain confidence. The basic principles of UDL allow the students to anticipate difficulties in learning and find new creative ways of working with them. For instance, UDL gives a lot of inspiration to use easy language and different visualization methods.

2.2. What We Do: Acknowledging Diversity through Guided Encounters between Future Teachers and Newcomers

The basic idea of the seminar concept is to help students to prepare for the task of teaching newcomers. This includes reducing uncertainties, sensitizing the students towards different backgrounds of learners and creating a safe space for exchanges between future teachers and newcomers. These goals result in a two-pillar agenda with support in didactic techniques and guided (self-)reflection.

The 65 students involved in this project are studying to obtain a master's degree in special needs education. At the time of the encounters, they were in their first, second or third semester.

Over the last two years, 82 young newcomers have taken part in this project. Some of them came from Iraq, Syria, Eritrea or Afghanistan, others from Europe, e.g., from Poland or Albania. The participants had been in Germany for an average of ten months, and their language level at the time was between A1 and A2.

Prior to the encounters, the university students developed a teaching concept for a period of 90 minutes using UDL to deal well with the linguistic, cognitive and cultural diversity of the newcomers. They focused on the following:

1. The students decide on teaching topics on which the newcomers are motivated to work.
2. Both the students and the newcomers work in an action-oriented and product-oriented way.
3. After welcoming the group of 15 to 20 newcomers, the students divide them into small groups of up to 5 to allow for more intensive encounters.
4. The learning material used in class is clearly structured and explains German terms with the additional help of pictures.

5. The newcomers receive a product that they can take home.

The following topics were worked on in our project: celebrations, happiness, school, healthy eating, leisure activities and games. They are very general and intended to invite the newcomers to share their experiences.

We always take an advisory and supportive role in creating the materials and preparing the lesson. As a rule, all lessons observed followed a similar schedule: Welcome and introduction of all participants (10 minutes), information about the respective topic and the structure of the lesson (5 minutes), work at different group tables (60 minutes) and discussion of the results (15 minutes). Small groups of 5 newcomers worked at a topic table at a time. This was supervised by 3–4 university students to ensure that a close and, if desired, personal exchange could take place. It is important to us that all participants meet with acknowledgment and allow personal conversations. In this way, people get to know each other more intensively and can exchange ideas more easily.

3. Empirical Design: Research Questions, Materials and Methods

For the accompanying research, we selected four guiding research questions to highlight different aspects of the seminar setting and to receive multi-perspective insights from students and newcomers (Table 1).

In order to gain differentiated insights into the learning processes, we chose to use a complex qualitative research design with different survey times (pre-post-design). The research sample includes all participants in the program a total of 147 individuals (65 students, 82 newcomers). The data was collected through ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews. Thus, it was possible to obtain differentiated answers to our research questions by systematic observation, collecting materials in the field and subsequent documentation of the experiences through the participants (Flick, 2014, p. 302). The semi-structured interviews identified students' expectations and didactic considerations for the planned learning arrangement in combination with assumptions about the newcomers. In addition, the newcomers were asked about their expectations and wishes with regard to the upcoming encounter with the university students. Both groups of individuals were asked about their experiences during the post-encounter interviews. A special focus was placed on the learning processes that the subjects observed themselves going through. To document the encounters, observation protocols were used by the students and by us who observed the study. The following were central points of observation:

1. The manner of opening the encounter
2. The involvement of the newcomers during the first round of introductions
3. The type and intensity of the newcomers' involvement during the group work
4. Didactic success and failures of the students during the group work
5. Non-verbal communication
6. Changes in behavior or involvement of all individuals

An argument for using the ethnographic method was the uniqueness of the encounters. Although encounters between newcomers and students are organized every semester (usually one or two times), the participants and teaching concepts change every time. Thus, from the point of view of ethnographic research, it makes sense to be methodologically pragmatic and to document information and impressions comprehensively (Flick, 2014, p. 302).

The ethnographic data collected were analyzed deductively according to Mayring (2015) using three categories. These are for both target groups: (1) expectations, (2) arrangements, (3) learning experiences. The semi-structured interviews conducted before and after the encounters were evaluated using a qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2015). This procedure serves the purpose of reduction by systematically creating inductive and deductive categories from the given data. The main categories developed in this process are the basis for a typification of the observed results. Findings from the ethnographic data and the interviews are treated equally in the formation of categories.

Table 1. Research overview.

Focus	Method	Guiding research questions
Expectation	Ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews	What do university students expect with regard to the encounter with newcomer students from schools?
Didactic arrangement	Ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews	How do they prepare the lessons for newcomers with the help of UDL?
Learning experience on both sides	Semi-structured interviews	What do students and newcomers think about the encounters later? What have they learned?

4. Results

As pointed out before, the research questions were divided into three categories: (1) expectations, (2) didactic arrangement and (3) learning experiences on both sides. Along these categories, the collected data from the ethnographic observations and the interviews is summarized.

4.1. Expectations

The expectations of the students prior to the encounters varied greatly and related to a wide range of feelings. Based on the evaluation of the interviews conducted with 65 students, three different types of student expectations were identified. There were students with no objections who seemed to be very open-minded in relation to teaching newcomers (5 = type 1), students with mixed feelings (35 = type 2), and students who had major concerns (25 = type 3). This is rather surprising, because Dortmund is located in a region of Germany that is very multicultural. The chance of university students meeting newcomers at schools is rather high. Upon closer examination, it turned out that many students came from a section of society that can be described as affluent and not very intercultural. This could explain why many of them had intense feelings and concerns in the run-up to the encounter.

Only a minority of the students (5 out of 65) had had previous experiences with refugees in general. These students made a conscious decision to get involved in refugee work. A 21-year-old student, Laura, explained this in her interview:

> I grew up very privileged. I am doing very well. I don't know what hunger, war or displacement means. But I know that as a teacher I will later encounter many children and young people who have had these hard experiences.… I don't want to do that unprepared. I want to get in touch with people like that while I'm still at university, which is why I help out in a school. I help [refugee] children with their homework and it gives me great pleasure.… That's why I'm looking forward to meeting the newcomers at our university.

Within the type 1 group, there is also a different kind of reasoning. For example, 20-year-old Luke said in the interview: "I am looking forward to meeting the newcomers. They are people who have had special experiences. But apart from that, they are people like you and me. If I approach them with an open heart, it will work out." So, he was very optimistic and open to new experiences. The latter also applied to the students from group type 2. However, it also became clear in the interviews that even students who had had good experiences or were open-minded used forms of othering: They often referred to newcomers as "these people" and displayed a very distant attitude. This dissociation may be due to a lack of personal encounters with refugees in their leisure time and in school settings. One student, Maria, explained it as follows:

> I have little experience [as a teacher] and many questions. Especially, I have no experience with newcomers. The only thing I know is all the bad reports in the media. There is often talk on TV about Muslim boys not accepting women, even assaulting them. So I wonder how to protect myself from that.

This statement shows how the media have negatively influenced Maria's perceptions. This phenomenon was particularly evident among the type 3 students, who clearly expressed their fears and insecurities. For example, Markus said:

> I don't know if we can do it. We all have no experience in school teaching. And many of us have no experience with newcomers. That's totally difficult. What do you do as a teacher if the newcomers don't respect you? Or what do I do if they don't understand me? I just can't imagine that it will be that easy.

Both students clearly pointed out fears associated with negative stereotyping of refugees, such as men being disrespectful towards women or refugee students lacking respect for authority figures. However, as said before, these students had not experienced this kind of behavior themselves; they seemed to have taken on these concepts from the media or from general public discourses. German media reports often create the impression of new immigration as a topos of danger (Geier & Mecheril, 2021) and refugees are often marked as people who are unfamiliar with democratic values. This may be one reason why some of the students were so concerned about being respected by the newcomers. In addition to that, many students expected to hear stories of flight and very drastic accounts of war and conflict. However, the newcomers had very different backgrounds; some were from neighboring European countries, others from far away countries like Iraq; they all had different (flight) stories to tell and these were above all stories of resilience. What also became apparent were stereotype ideas of restricted gender roles, as Markus' statement points out:

> We have chosen the theme of celebrations, and at my group table it'll be weddings. I really don't know how I'll react when young girls with headscarves tell me that they really want to get married when they are 16 or 17.

Other students expected the female newcomers to be "very shy" and to "need help from the students to be confident." They seemed to think of female newcomers as persons who are not confident and needy. This refers to a common discourse of refugees who are often seen as people in need and not as active participants (Brewer,

2016). Other students also expressed prejudices towards newcomers, the most common being: a lack of German language skills, that their bad experiences in the past would affect them in teaching contexts and that they would be unfamiliar with regular school settings given their long absence from school.

It was important to us that the students had the opportunity to freely express their doubts and prejudices during the interviews and seminars and reflect on them with each other. In this exchange, it became apparent that type 1 students critically questioned many of the prejudices named by their peers. In some cases, we intervened to contradict prejudices that the newcomers should be protected from. For instance, many students thought that the newcomers did not want to know much about Germany at all because they would be going back home after the war. We used studies and official data to underline that these were misperceptions and that the schooling of newcomers is a task that goes beyond a short-term emergency (UNHCR, 2016). Otherwise, the students discussed their concerns, let some of them stand, and waited for the encounter with the newcomers.

4.1.1. Didactic Arrangement

We examined the didactic arrangement both ethnographically and through interviews. First, the results of our ethnographic observation: As mentioned before, the students worked with the inclusive method of UDL. They created different learning materials, formulated tasks, researched information, used pictures and symbols and did a lot of crafting. Besides, the students researched information from the newcomers' countries of origin and presented some of it in different languages. During the preparation, the students talked about how they would act in case of problems and gave each other hints. Didactically relevant questions asked by the students, such as "how good are the language skills?" and "can the newcomers read?" as well as decisions they had to make before the encounters indicate that they expected teaching newcomers to be a challenge. These questions can be explained by the uncertainty of the students. On the one hand, they had little experience of teaching schoolchildren and on the other, they had little or no experience with language learners or newcomers. The interviews revealed, however, that with the detailed preparation of the material according to the UDL guidelines the students' uncertainty diminished and they felt well prepared. All of them pointed out that the preparation involved an enormous amount of time, which they had not expected. However, they agreed that this would make the meeting all the better. From our experience, these lessons generally run very well in all semesters and the good preparation allows the lessons to proceed in a structured way. According to our observations, everyone involved in the situation feels comfortable, and inspired conversations arise. Furthermore, it turns out that the newcomers are not the only ones who learn something.

4.1.2. Learning Experiences on Both Sides

From the ethnographic perspective, it can be stated that the students reacted mainly with surprise, pleasure in teaching and relief about well-functioning processes. Only two participants in the sample were not surprised or not satisfied with the results. This is also evident in the interviews. For example, Maria told us:

> I have learned so much. I am so happy that there were no problems at all….Honestly, I feel ashamed that I thought so badly about male Muslim newcomers. We were talking about school, and they explained to me that in Islam you treat every teacher respectfully. It doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman. They were so polite and kind to me. I was really pleased, and now I find it really embarrassing that I was so unreflective before. But precisely because I had such prejudices, this encounter is so precious to me.

Like Maria, Mark also had an unexpected experience:

> I was at the group table on the topic of marriage. And I told them that Germans often marry later than people in other cultures. Then a girl comes forward and says that she doesn't want to get married until she's 30 or so. Definitely not earlier. I was totally surprised and asked her why that was so important to her….She said that in her home country women are oppressed and she doesn't want that. She is now in Germany and wants to graduate from high school and go to university. She wants to take care of herself and only then look for a handsome man….When she said that, I realized that I hadn't expected her to be so self-confident and take her life into her own hands like that….This experience showed me that I'd had pretty strong prejudices. But it is important to get involved with people individually. That's what I've learned.

We also interviewed the newcomers who met Mark and Maria. Sahid said about his meeting with Maria:

> Maria will be a very good teacher. She was very friendly to us….We talked about school in Syria and about teachers. Then we told her that we Muslims pay special attention to teachers because they put a lot of effort into teaching us. She was very happy about that. After that it was really good. We laughed a lot and talked about our school days….And I got to know the university. I would like to become a teacher one day and I have already met some nice colleagues. Now I really feel like doing my Abitur and studying.

We also asked Lilas about her encounter with Mark. She said:

> It was so much fun to learn about German weddings. I didn't know all the traditions. But there are also

things we all have in common: good food, friends and relatives….It was funny when I told him that I would never get married before I was 30. I think Mark was very surprised. I find that funny, because why should a woman marry early and have children? I think he watched too much television. But it's good if a teacher knows that we girls want to study and not get married right away. I think he also learned something important.

These statements from Lilas and Sahid reflect the overall perceptions of the newcomers. The interviews show that they have learned a lot about German festivities and focused on the similarities to their own traditions. It was a lot of fun and encouraging for them to see the university is reachable, both through the regional proximity, but also through the shared learning experience. Most of them showed self-confidence and saw themselves as people who have enriched the teaching processes. This is especially evident in their joyful realization that the students have also learned something from them. They find this eye-to-eye encounter very important, because in their everyday lives, their experiences are different, especially with public authorities and administrations. Sadly, and shockingly, their reports have in common that they often encounter people who are prejudiced towards them. One newcomer summed it up: "Finally I am being treated as an intelligent person and not like a stupid animal. The students have done a really good job and I feel welcome."

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results can be summarized in five main points:

1. Even though the future teachers are studying in a multicultural city, only five of them have reached out to newcomers before.
2. 60 of the 65 students interviewed expressed (major) worries, fears and even prejudices before the encounter.
3. The encounter itself was evaluated as fruitful and educative by nearly all participants.
4. The 82 newcomers interviewed had a positive view of the past encounter, 45 of them feel motivated to study in Germany and all interviewed newcomers felt very welcome and liked the open dialogue.
5. Type 2 and type 3 students pointed out that the encounter with the newcomers was very meaningful for them and that their previously negative perspective has changed significantly.

Looking at these results, the importance of guided encounters in the context of inclusive and intercultural educational processes becomes clear. Learning and reflection processes among the university students were only initiated by real encounters with newcomers. The project revealed that the majority of the students had had no contact points with refugees before, but many negative assumptions. In part, the students' monocultural social environment and the predominantly negative media reports on migration may explain these findings (Geier & Mecheril, 2021). After meeting the newcomers many students questioned their views and learned to see the individual instead of an imagined group. Therefore, this encounter is not only instructive in terms of the content imparted, but above all through the personal interaction. The basis of this interaction is simple but important: strengthening commonalities and understanding particularities. For teacher education, these findings imply the need to regularly examine the extent to which students have had intercultural experiences. In our view, for the students' future work in inclusive German schools it is imperative for them to have already made and reflected on first experiences during their studies.

Regarding the newcomers interviewed, our project has also shown some interesting and disturbing findings. Obviously, a large proportion (45 of 82) have had mainly bad experiences in interactions with public authorities and administrations. In contrast, they describe the encounter with the students as enriching and consider this special, because it took place in a public institution as well. It is rather alarming that the majority of the newcomers regarded it as exceptional to be welcomed and to be treated as equals, but certainly this is no isolated case (Brewer, 2016; Seukwa, 2007).

A relevant encounter also needs to be well prepared methodically. Studies underline that not the encounter itself is of importance but rather the quality of the experience (Urton et al., 2015). Based on the ethnographically collected data, we were able to determine that the differentiated preparation with UDL supported lively discussions and made the active participation of all newcomers possible. These controlled conditions give the students greater confidence in their actions, which is particularly important when they first come into contact with teaching (newcomers). Of course, the concept does not guarantee success, but the students learn how to deal more competently with heterogeneous learning requirements. They learn not only at the personal, but also at the methodical level: Diversity is not the enemy. In fact, from the results it is clear for us that one encounter alone has made a major difference for the students involved. Nevertheless, it is essential that such encounters are well accompanied. There is a need for reflection spaces in order to critically question one's own (professional) actions (self-reflection) and to learn new skills (didactic competence).

However, the results should also be viewed in light of the limitations of our research. We did not conduct a representative study that would allow for generalizations, and we cannot say anything about long-term effects. Our focus was on the individual experiences and encounters and the accompanying reflective processes that the interviewees went through. Our research is understood

as an exploratory design, which invites further (quantitative) research. This is especially important if meaningful results on changes of students' attitudes towards newcomers are to be collected. For future studies, we would recommend the objective measurement of attitude changes.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Segmentation of the Academic Labour Market and Gender, Field, and Institutional Inequalities

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Abstract
Using data from a 2017 survey of Czech academics this article examines the casualisation of working conditions in the Czech academic labour market (ALM) and explores gender, sectoral, and institutional inequalities through the lens of the theory of labour market segmentation. A hierarchical cluster analysis reveals three segments in the Czech ALM: core (40%), periphery (28%), and semi-periphery (32%), which roughly align with work positions in the early, middle, and senior stages of an academic career. In the semi-periphery gender is found to be a key factor in in determining working conditions, while in the periphery working conditions are most affected by the type of institution. In the core, gender differences are mainly reflected in the gender wage gap. The effects of casualisation on working conditions are found to be more pronounced in STEM fields than in the social sciences and humanities across the ALM, but wages are generally higher in STEM fields.

1. Introduction

Academic labour markets (ALM) in most countries have become more dynamic and competitive in recent decades but have simultaneously seen working conditions deteriorate (see, e.g., Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015; Musselin, 2005). These trends mainly impacted early-career academics in the past, but senior academics are increasingly affected as well (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015; O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019). The casualisation of working conditions in academia amidst the neoliberal transformation of ALM has thus become an important topic of research (e.g., Bauder, 2006; Fumasoli et al., 2015; Ivancheva, 2015; Kimber, 2003; Ylijoki, 2010).

Research on the ALM's transformation and the working conditions of academia has shown that the casualisation of academic work negatively affects women more than men (e.g., Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2017; Fox et al., 2017; Ivancheva et al., 2019; Vohlídalová & Linková, 2017; Zheng, 2018). But there has been less research on the gender-specific effects of the ALM's

transformation on working conditions in different fields and types of academic institutions. Field and institution are both factors that affect ALM conditions (see, e.g., Fumasoli & Goastellec, 2015; Passaretta et al., 2019; Ylijoki et al., 2011) and compound gender inequalities (Cidlinská, 2019; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2014).

My analysis draws on segmentation theory (Bauder, 2006; Leontaridi, 1998). The theory distinguishes between the more and less privileged segments of the labour market, which are exposed to the negative effects of the transformation of ALM to differing degrees. I focus on the 'horizontal dimension' of the casualisation of work conditions and examine, first, how gender, field, and institution affect working conditions in different ALM segments and, second, how ALM segments differ from each other.

The article contributes to current research on the ALM's transformation and casualisation in several ways. First, it compares how gender, field, and institutional inequalities are manifested in different segments of the ALM instead of focusing on one ALM segment

(e.g., early-career women academics or seniors are common focus topics in the current literature; see, e.g., Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Bataille et al., 2017; Bozzon et al., 2017; Cidlinská, 2019; O'Connor, 2010). Second, it provides insight into ALM segmentation beyond the traditional core–periphery division defined by type of employment contract, full- vs part-time work, or tenured vs non-tenured staff. It proposes an innovative methodology for studying the ALM's structure that considers the cultural specifics and differences between institutions, fields and career systems. Third, since it is based on the Czech case, it contributes to the scant body of research in this area devoted to a CEE country, as most studies are based on the Anglosphere or Western Europe (exceptions include, e.g., Fumasoli et al., 2015; Luczaj, 2020; Vohlídalová & Linková, 2017).

My analysis is based on a representative survey of 1710 Czech academics conducted in 2017. The sample included people employed in academic research or teaching positions (or both) at public universities (HEIs) and at the public research institute Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS).

There are several reasons why a study focusing on the Czech Republic may be of broader interest. The Czech academic landscape is diverse in terms of its institutions and is thus an excellent case for exploring how the casualisation of work conditions impact different types of institutions. It does not have a 'tenure-track' career system like that in the Anglosphere. It has multiple career systems, which make it hard to define the boundaries between different ALM segments. My proposed methodology may therefore be useful for research on other countries where it may be difficult to distinguish between different ALM segments.

The Czech academic landscape also offers an excellent opportunity to study gender inequalities. According to European comparative data, the Czech Republic is one of the worst countries for gender equality in academia: while 42.7% of PhD graduates in 2017 were women, only 26.9% of researchers were women (the number has not changed since 2001; European Commission, 2019). Women occupy 14.6% of A-grade positions (full-professors), compared to 23% in the EU-28 (European Commission, 2019). There is also no governmental policy to support women in academia.

Although an outlier in some respects, what we see in the Czech Republic is consistent with global trends in the transformation of the ALM. Czech academia has been undergoing a neoliberal transformation since 2008, when R&D reforms introduced a focus on competition (Linková, 2017). The long-term block grants that used to be awarded to research institutions have since been significantly reduced and institutions have become dependent on competitive grant funding (Linková & Stöckelová, 2012), which is common in most academic environments today (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015). Czech academia is now exceptional for the central role played by competitive grant funding (up to 70% of all funding in the case

of some institutions; see Cidlinská, 2019). Stable independent research jobs have been replaced with project-based positions that require extreme mobility (geographical, temporal) and offer short-term work contracts and financial insecurity (Linková, 2017). Data suggest that early-career researchers and women especially are increasingly being left in precarious academic positions (Vohlídalová, 2018), while the system reinforces the privileged job status of the older generation (Cidlinská, 2019).

Below I focus first on presenting segmentation theory and its benefits for ALM research and then discuss current research into the quality of employment and the casualisation of ALM by field, institution, and gender. In the methodological section, I describe the data and methods used to define and analyse segments of the ALM, and I conclude the article with a discussion of the findings and conclusions.

2. Segmentation Theory and the Academic Labour Market

The deterioration of working conditions in the ALM is linked to the massification of university education. The number of PhD graduates is growing much faster than the supply of jobs in R&D, which makes the ALM extremely competitive, especially in the early-career stage (European Commission and Eurydice Network, 2017; Fumasoli et al., 2015). The ALM relies on there being a large stock of highly skilled, gifted, and motivated people willing to perform academic work as a 'labour of love' and to work a lot for little money (Cidlinská & Linková, 2013). They perform the various tasks that are essential for academic institutions to operate smoothly and for tenured core staff to advance their careers.

The rise of neoliberalism in academia has exacerbated the decline in working conditions. The neoliberal transformation of academia under the influence of managerialism and New Public Management has spread from the Anglosphere to most other academic communities, which are then collectively characterised by the pressure to perform, an audit culture, and increased competition for funding (Leišytė, 2016; Linková, 2017; Shore, 2008; Shore & Wright, 2015). The increasing instability of public funding in academia had led to a sharp decline in working conditions (Linková, 2017).

The theory of labour-market segmentation (Leontaridi, 1998) is a useful tool for explaining growing inequalities in the ALM and the fact that different types of academics are affected by the aforementioned trends to different degrees. It distinguishes between the centre of ALM (the 'tenured core') and its 'casualised periphery.' The centre is shielded from the risks caused by the new working conditions, but the growing periphery is fully exposed (e.g., Bauder, 2006; Finnegan, 1993; Kimber, 2003; May et al., 2013). Academics on the 'casualised periphery' face permanent job insecurity, poor career prospects, short-term employment contracts, heavy workloads, low wages and social benefits, and little

opportunity to participate in decision-making and thus address their negative job conditions (Bauder, 2006).

The purpose of labour-market segmentation generally is to protect firms from insecurity: The 'core' consists of permanent staff, who are key to the firm's operation, while the 'periphery' is peopled with workers whose numbers can be flexibly changed as needed (Atkinson, 1984). This labour structure is common in industries that face high levels of instability (Leontaridi, 1998), which is the case of academia today. Casualisation has traditionally affected low-skilled workers in jobs where they can be easily replaced (Leontaridi, 1998). In academia, where most employees have a PhD or at least an MA, the 'easy-replacement-system' is sustained by an influx of large numbers of PhD candidates and graduates (Bauder, 2006; European Commission and Eurydice Network, 2017; Finnegan, 1993; Fumasoli et al., 2015). The casualisation of work does not just affect recent PhD holders and graduates only, as a UK study found that many women academics over 40, long after they obtained their doctorate, are in casualised positions as well (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019).

An important factor in the ALM system is that the segmentation of the labour market is not determined so much by a worker's performance but by the institutional barriers that hinder or block the mobility of academics into a more privileged segment (Leontaridi, 1998). The entire system draws its legitimacy from the ideology of 'research excellence,' a concept associated with meritocratic principles but found in most literature to be highly selective and gender-biased (Linková, 2017; van den Brink & Benschop, 2011, 2012). It systematically devalues the tasks performed by academics in lower-ranking positions (e.g., teaching, academic housework, research execution), while these tasks are what prevent them from concentrating on research and publishing (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019; Shore, 2008).

The boundary between the core and the periphery based on the division between tenured faculty and non-tenured staff is used in the Anglosphere. The periphery tends to be characterised by part-time and temporary work (see, e.g., Kimber, 2003; May et al., 2013, both studies based on Australia). May et al. (2013, p. 259) define 'casuals' as "hourly paid staff who teach in universities." The core includes permanent academic staff, who receive a regular salary and have access to leave benefits, regardless of what type of work contract they have. Other definitions include Bauder's (2006, Canada) and focused mostly on part-time and fixed-term contracts, and Kimber's (2003), who also considers job content (teaching-only functions). Ivancheva (UK and Ireland) speaks about the "reserve army of workers with ever shorter, lower paid, hyper-flexible contracts" (Ivancheva, 2015, p. 39). Estimates of the size of the casual periphery thus differ by the criteria used to define it. What is undisputed, however, is that it is growing at the expense of stable academic jobs with career prospects (Bauder,

2006; Ivancheva, 2015; Ivancheva et al., 2019; Kimber, 2003; May et al., 2013).

Only 35% of Czech academics have permanent contracts, while 58% have fixed-term contracts (compared to just 8% of non-academic workers), and the rest have various short-term contracts. Around 26% of respondents work part-time (Vohlídalová, 2018), but not all of them are equally precarious. Some academics with fixed-term contracts are not part of the casualised periphery, as their contracts are regularly renewed. Some well-established scholars also voluntarily combine part-time work at an HEI with research work at the CAS. Consequently, the core–periphery distinction based only on type of contract, working hours, or job content is thus not universally applicable.

3. ALM Casualisation in Relation to Gender, Field and Type of Institution

3.1. Gender Inequalities

Despite the growing numbers of women PhD graduates in recent decades, they are significantly underrepresented in academic positions (European Commission, 2019). This is changing in some countries and the representation of women in academic positions is increasing, but women remain mostly in disadvantaged positions (European Commission and Eurydice Network, 2017). There are also comparatively few women in higher-ranking academic posts and in decision-making bodies (European Commission, 2019). Their career-progress conditions are also worse: They are more often than men found working part time, on short-term contracts, in non-tenure track jobs, and in teaching-intensive positions (Fox et al., 2011; González Ramos et al., 2015; Wilson & Nutley, 2003; Wolfinger et al., 2009). Women are more often burdened with teaching duties and academic 'housework' (Macfarlane & Burg, 2019), which disadvantages them in a competitive labour market where career progress is based mostly on research performance, publications, and getting external funding (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015). Women receive less mentoring support from senior tutors, which is especially important for career advancement today (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

Despite the increasing share of women academics, academia is still a very male-oriented organisational environment that favours the traditional male biography, free from care duties, and favours people who can devote all their time to the job (Acker, 1990). Women (and many men as well) have difficulty conforming to the favoured career path of steady, upward progress achieved through competition and flexibility, which often clashes with family and private life (Fox et al., 2011, 2017; Mason & Goulden, 2004; Wolfinger et al., 2009). Women also face discrimination and stereotypes (Wennerås & Wold, 1997) and are disadvantaged by the gendered division of work in the family

(Mason & Goulden, 2004). The work-life conflict can even be reinforced by social and institutional policy settings (Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2017; Fox et al., 2017; Vohlídalová, 2020).

3.2. Field

The norms, culture, and expectations that define the ideal career path and work performance differ between disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Fumasoli & Goastellec, 2015). The neoliberal transformation has also unsurprisingly advanced to different degrees in different disciplines (and institutions), with the effects more pronounced in STEM fields than in the social sciences and humanities (SSH; see, e.g., Fumasoli & Goastellec, 2015; Ylijoki et al., 2011).

STEM fields tend to be dominated by a work model that can be described as a 'dynamic laboratory,' where the lab-leader is the only long-term member of a research team, and doctoral students and postdocs occupy short-term positions, which used to be held by more senior independent researchers. SSH fields are dominated by the 'dynastic laboratory' model, where senior researchers are still long-term members of a research teams (Linková & Červinková, 2013).

This does not mean that career prospects and professional satisfaction are worse in STEM. Jackson et al. (2017) found in the UK that academics in STEM are happier with the promotion process than those in SSH. An Italian study exploring the effects of government budgetary cuts on the academic careers of fresh PhD holders revealed that STEM graduates have a better chance of staying in academia than those in SSH (Passaretta et al., 2019).

The intersection between gender and academic field is particularly important. STEM fields are the most challenging environment for women academics (Durodoye et al., 2020; Rhoton, 2011), a fact illustrated by the small share of women in this sector (European Commission, 2019). The gender gap in STEM can be attributed to its strongly masculine work culture, the ethics of total self-dedication to science, and the lack of women role models among other factors (see, e.g., Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Rhoton, 2011).

In the Czech Republic, STEM fields are favoured over SSH, so we can assume that field has an important effect on work conditions. SSH fields account for 11.5% of all academic employees but only 6.3% of total research expenditures (Czech Statistical Office, 2020). SSH fields are also much less prestigious than STEM fields for historical reasons in the Czech Republic (Oates-Indruchová, 2008), and because its research is popularly considered more useful given its practical applications.

3.3. Type of Institution

Working conditions are affected by the organisational context, which refers to funding and an organisation's culture and climate (Fumasoli & Goastellec, 2015). Although all academic institutions have witnessed the casualisation of work, its effects may vary between organisations. Ylijoki et al. (2011), in a study on Finland, showed that the scale of the effects of marketisation and the neoliberal transformation depends on the type of institution, with teaching-oriented and SSH institutions being more resistant to these tendencies than STEM research-oriented institutions.

The Czech academic landscape is diverse and alongside public HEIs, devoted to teaching and research, there are also public research institutes (PRIs) that do only research—the CAS is the umbrella organisation of the country's most significant PRIs. The CAS is funded by the government, but this funding mainly covers basic operational and some personnel costs ('core' and administrative staff salaries). The CAS's institutes get much of their funding (about 45%) from competitive grants and other sources (CAS, 2020). The basic salaries in the CAS and in HEIs are low but can be supplemented with grant funding. HEIs have two sources of governmental funding: per-student subsidies and research assessment-based subsidies. In HEIs a key funding role is played by competitive grants (Šima & Pabian, 2017).

At Czech HEIs careers are built and job security attained not through tenure but through the 'habilitation' procedure, which requires that academics teach and do research uninterruptedly for several years and then publicly defend their habilitation thesis (Mudrák et al., 2018; Šima & Pabian, 2017). Associate and full professors occupy a privileged and secure position at Czech universities because the universities need them so that the study programmes fulfil the accreditation requirements (Šima & Pabian, 2017). They are thus in a very different position from other university academics, who have precarious career prospects, low wages, and a gruelling workload (Mudrák et al., 2018).

4. Data, Methods, and Variables

The analysis is based on the results of a questionnaire survey "Academics 2017" fielded in 2017 among 1710 academic (teaching or research) staff in the public academic sector (HEIs and the CAS). The Lime Survey platform was used to administer the survey; respondents were invited to participate in the survey by email and completed the questionnaire online.

Altogether 11,316 academics (5757 from the CAS and other PRIs and 5559 from HEIs) were contacted by email based on information about staff publicly available on institutional websites. The sample also included PhD candidates working at an HEI or PRI and listed among staff members on department websites (the sample did not include 'ordinary' PhD candidates with the status of students). The stratified random sampling copied the sector's structure. Sample representativeness was ensured in terms of gender, field, institution, and seniority.

The questionnaire was completed by 2089 respondents. Because of the low representation in our sample

of academics working in PRIs outside the CAS, only academics from the CAS and HEIs (N = 1881) were included in the analysis, and of them only those who provided complete information on their work conditions (n = 1710). The survey response rate was 18.5%.

Along with socio-demographics, institution, and field of study, the survey examined 'objective' working conditions (e.g., employment contract, job description, wages, teaching/research workload, etc.) and 'subjective' conditions (e.g., self-assessment of various aspects of work—leadership, social climate, work–life balance, remuneration, gender equality, job security, etc.). The questionnaire was piloted.

The analysis first sought to identify similarities across academic positions in the ALM, that is, what working conditions and casualisation effects were more generally shared. A hierarchical cluster analysis helped determine which positions form the core and which are part of the casualised periphery. After assigning each position to an ALM segment, I focused on the gender, field, and institutional differences in work conditions within the individual ALM segments. I modelled a series of regressions (linear and binomial logistic) for each segment. The goal was to model the net effect of gender, field, and institution on the work-quality indicators used in the hierarchical cluster analysis (see Supplementary File for the results). SPSS software was used.

The different academic positions compared were based on the official career ladders used in different organisations. Positions at the CAS, in hierarchical order, are: (1) senior researchers and principal investigators, (2) research associates/postdocs, and (3) PhD candidates (with employee status). Positions at HEIs are: (1) full/associate professors, (2) assistant professors, (3) postdocs/researchers, (4) lecturers/instructors, and (5) PhD candidates. I worked with 16 categories (some low-populated positions were merged in order to provide robust analysis), defined by combining seniority on the official career ladder, field, and type of institution (see Figure 1).

Similarities between positions were determined on the basis of employment quality characteristics. I partly adopted the UN's operationalisation, which encompasses 'objective' job characteristics (wage, type of contract) and variables based on employees' perceptions (United Nations, 2015). This then captures how two employees with objectively identical contracts or workloads may in fact have very different working conditions.

The hierarchical cluster analysis of dis/similarities between the 16 categories worked with the following variables (standardised in the analysis by z-scores; for details see Supplementary File, Table 1):

- Income: a position's average monthly wage.
- Job security: 'objective' characteristics (contract duration and stability, contract type) and a variable on respondents' 'subjective' perceptions of job security. Indicators included in the compara-

tive analysis of job positions were the share of respondents in each position who (1) perceived their position as unstable, (2) had at least a three-year employment contract, (3) were hired for a specific project only (contract research staff [CRS]).
- Time: the average number of hours usually worked during academic year per week in the position and the share of respondents in each position who (1) stated they often or very often had felt exhausted over the past 14 days and (2) had a full-time work contract (i.e., 40h/week).
- Organisational citizenship: refers to an individual's integration within the organisation and his/her employee status, which lies outside such indicators as contract type or wage. Research (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019) indicates that people in the casualised periphery often feel like outsiders in their academic setting; they lack support from those around them and feel alienated and stuck in a position with no potential career growth. They often feel frustrated and dissatisfied, and that they are unfairly treated or lack job autonomy (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019). In the analysis I included the average ratings for each position that were assigned to (1) collegial support, (2) level of job autonomy, and (3) ability to put one's skills to use at work under the package of variables designed to determine 'organisational citizenship' (see Supplementary File, Table 1).

5. The Core, the Periphery, and those in Between

From the results of the hierarchical cluster analysis, we can clearly identify the positions that belong to the core and to the periphery, but many positions figured somewhere between the two (see Figure 1)—in a semi-periphery. The typology that emerged from the cluster analysis seems to reflect, with one exception, the career ladder: The core consists of senior academics, the periphery is formed mainly by PhD candidates, and middle-career positions are in the semi-periphery. All the differences discussed below in the analytical part were tested statistically significant on the $\alpha = 5\%$, unless stated otherwise. Statistical significance was tested with the use of $\chi 2$ tests—in the case of contingency tables—and with T-tests/ANOVA—in the case of testing differences in mean values, unless stated otherwise. For details on statistical significances based on the regression models see Tables 1 and 2 in the Supplementary File.

5.1. The Core

Privileged positions in the core include full professors and associate professors in HEIs and senior researchers at the CAS (the mean age of people in these positions was 49.7 for women, 52.2 for men).

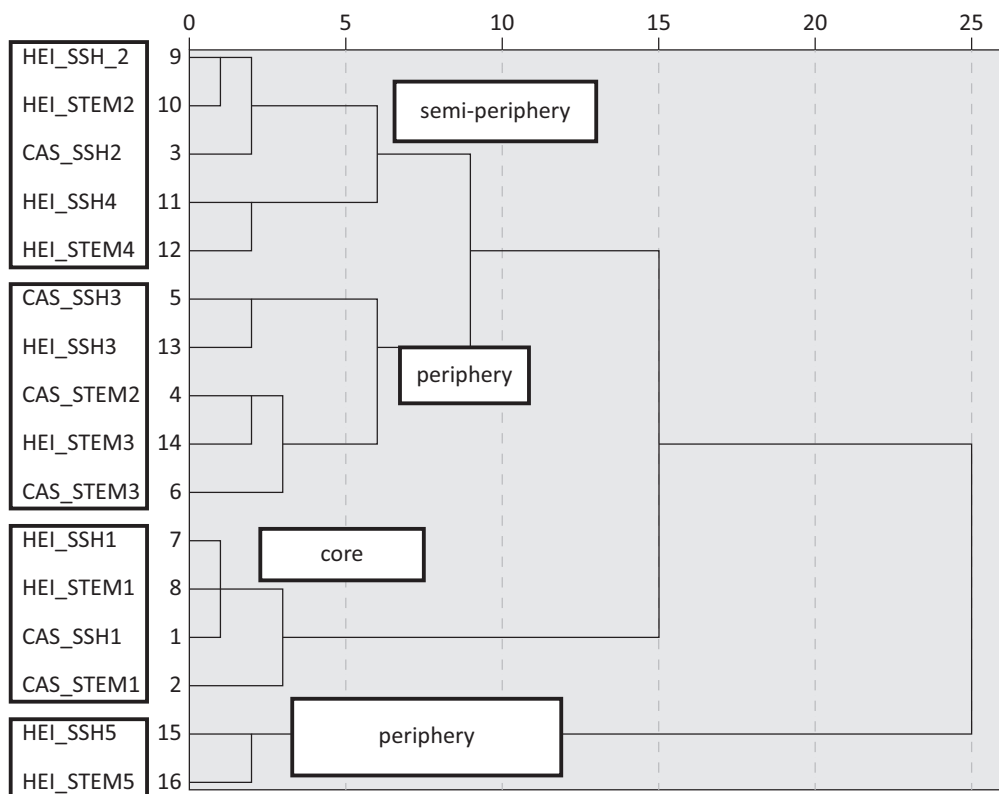This segment typically has the highest wages and few part-timers (17.2%), and its part-time employment

Figure 1. Dendrogram (ALM segments). Data from the "Academics 2017" survey.

is often the result of some factor other than not being offered a longer-hours contract (the latter reason was cited by 36.5% of part-timers in the core, compared to over 50% of those in the semi-periphery and over 66% in the periphery). The core has the highest level of job security, as most academics have at least a three-year employment contract, and a small share of CRS (24.1%). Workers in the core have the most job autonomy and express the most satisfaction with how their skills are used at work. These positions form the privileged core of the ALM, where heavy job demands (on average 46 working hours per week; 42 h/week in the semi-periphery, 39 h/week in the periphery) are compensated with higher income, high autonomy, and high job stability. Less than 40% of our sample occupied these core positions, and most of them are men, who make up 68.8% of the core.

The regression analysis on the core segment (for details see Supplementary File, Table 2) revealed no gender differences in objective or subjective job security indicators. These differences were mainly determined by field and type of institution. HEI workers in core positions (i.e., HEI core academics) had much higher job security scores than the CAS-based senior researchers (CAS core academics). HEI core academics are 82% less likely than CAS core academics to be working as a CRS, twice as likely to have at least a 3-year employment contract, and 73% less likely to be worried about losing their job (after controlling for the effect of gender and field). As for differences between fields, CRS positions, even if they are in the core, are much more common in STEM than in SSH: Core academics in STEM are 5.4 times more likely

to be CRS than core academics in SSH fields. This suggests that in STEM fields and CAS in particular increasing competitiveness even affects senior staff (Kwiek & Antonowicz, 2015).

Women in the core earn less than their male counterparts; descriptive statistics indicate that men score on average 7.6 and women score on average 6.8 on a scale of 1 (lowest income level) to 11 (highest level). This remains true after controlling for the effects of field and institution. The gender differences in income were observed in STEM fields at both HEIs and the CAS. Wages are generally higher in STEM than SSH fields, except in the periphery (average income levels in the core segment are 7.26 for STEM and 6.8 for SSH).

Women in the core have a lower official workload than men (the average 'official' workload was 35.6 h/week for women and 37.2h/week for men) and lower wages, but this does not mean that they actually work fewer hours than men. When we focus on hours actually worked, the statistical significance of gender differences disappears. One reason for women's lower wages could be the fact that they more often occupy teaching-intensive positions (about 14.4% of women but only 6.7% of men in the core declared they were mainly or only engaged in teaching), which generally pay much less than research in the Czech Republic.

5.2. The Semi-Periphery

This segment is mainly made up of HEI-based assistant professors and CAS-based postdocs and research

associates in SSH. HEI-based lecturers and instructors accounted for a small portion of semi-periphery academics (4.7% of our sample). Semi-periphery academics account for 32% of our sample and women slightly dominated in this group (53.9%). The semi-periphery tends to provide higher income and job security than the periphery but is characterised by a heavy workload and the highest levels of reported exhaustion. Semi-periphery positions are rarely occupied by CRS (who make up just 11% of this segment), except at the CAS. There are more academics in the semi-periphery with long-term (3+ years) or permanent contracts than in the periphery. The semi-periphery has fewer part-timers than the periphery (24.6%), but 50.4% of them stated they had never been offered a longer-hours contract. Many others, however, indicated other reasons for working part-time: a main job outside academia (25%) or childcare (25.2%).

The greatest gender-based inequalities are observed in the semi-periphery out of all the ALM segments and are found across a wide range of characteristics such as income, job security, and organisational citizenship. Like in the core, women in the semi-periphery earn statistically significantly lower wages than men. Gender differences were observed in both SSH and STEM fields and mainly at HEIs, and not at the CAS. Like in the core, gender wage inequalities could not be attributed to differences in the hours actually worked or stated in the work contract, as no statistically significant differences by gender were observed in either case. This again may relate to the teaching workload in positions women occupy (about 50% of women but only 35% of men in the semi-periphery declared they were mostly or only engaged in teaching). This is particularly true for STEM fields, while in the SSH these differences are not statistically significant.

As in the core, STEM fields in the semi-periphery pay more than SSH, but institution type has the opposite effect than in the core—CAS academics reported higher earnings than HEIs academics (see Supplementary File, Table 1).

Gender exhibits a significant effect on job security characteristics in the semi-periphery. It doesn't affect the objective characteristics of job security (i.e., work contract, CRS), which are influenced mainly by field (there are more CRSs in STEM fields than SSH fields), but it does significantly affect the subjective perception of job security. Women were less satisfied with their job prospects; they had stronger concerns about losing their job and being able to find a new one. When we control other covariates, women are about 60% more likely than men to fear that they will not find a job and almost twice as likely to have strong concerns about losing their job (see Supplementary File, Table 2).

Gender plays a key role with respect to various aspects of job well-being and organisational citizenship. Women in the semi-periphery feel less autonomy at work than men. When we control for the effect of covariates, women are about 40% less likely than men to

have control over an important aspect of their work (see Supplementary File, Table 2). They are also more likely to suffer from physical and mental exhaustion. If we control for the effect of field, institution, and PhD, women are 1.8 times more likely than men to report feeling of physical and mental exhaustion (see Supplementary File, Table 2). These differences might be linked to the stage in the life cycle that semi-periphery academics are: The mean age is 41.2 years for women and 40.3 years for men, the age when people are often also caring for children. The semi-periphery also exhibits the biggest gender differences in terms of time spent on housework and childcare: women spend 12.3 hours more per week than men on care/housework (8.9 hours/week more in the core and 6 hours/week more in the periphery).

My data also suggest that in the semi-periphery segment men are more often childless/free than women (35.4% of women but 41.1% men), in contrast to the core, where the opposite is true (24.3% of women, but 17% of men were childless/free). This finding supports research (e.g., Hall, 2010) claiming that women in academia are more often childless/free than men and that this is most apparent at the senior academic level.

5.3. The Periphery

The casualised 'periphery' is largely made up of early-career academics: CAS- and HEI-based PhD candidates, HEI-based postdocs and researchers (regardless of the field), CAS-based research associates, and postdoc researchers in STEM.

In SSH fields, unlike in STEM, most CAS-based research associates and postdocs were found in the semi-periphery. This is probably because there is more autonomy and job security during the postdoc stage in SSH fields than in STEM. Among CAS-based research associates and postdocs in STEM there were more part-timers (19% STEM vs 10% SSH), more CRS academics (over 55% in STEM and 30% in SSH), fewer opportunities to influence important features of work, and less satisfaction among staff with the use of their skills than what was observed among their counterparts in SSH fields.

A total of 28% of respondents worked in the periphery. This segment consists predominantly of men (58.8%) and young people (31.6y on average). A special subcategory of the periphery was made up of HEI-based PhD candidates with employee status, who rank lowest in terms of job quality and stability. The overwhelming majority of periphery employees were working part-time (about 70%) and very few had a long-term or permanent contract (8%). More than 54% of these positions are occupied by CRS. The least job satisfaction and job autonomy is observed in the periphery (see Supplementary File, Table 1).

Many of these findings are not surprising given the junior status of PhD candidates. What is disturbing is that periphery academics scores high on mental and physical exhaustion and stress (see also, e.g., Waaijer et al.,

2018) and receive little collegial support, especially at HEIs, according to our data.

The smallest gender differences in working conditions are in the periphery, where they can be attributed mainly to the type of institution and to the field. Nevertheless, it is important to note that even if this segment consists mainly of PhD candidates, there are still far more women PhD graduates in the periphery than men PhD graduates (16.6% of all women PhD graduates are here, compared to 8.3% of men PhD graduates).

Institutional differences show that working conditions in the periphery are much better in the CAS than in HEIs. This is true in terms of job security, wages, and organisational citizenship. Periphery academics at the CAS have higher wages, in most cases at least a 3-year contract, and heavier workloads than periphery academics at HEIs. This means that they are paid for most of the time that they spend working—the data show that the smaller the official workload, the more non-paid overtime an academic was performing (Vohlídalová, 2018). Conversely, more CAS-based researchers, especially in STEM fields, were found to be a CRS.

Important differences were observed in the organizational citizenship. CAS-based periphery academics reported receiving a higher level of support from colleagues and higher satisfaction with the use of their skills at work. HEI-based periphery academics were 38% less likely to feel supported by colleagues and 48% less likely to be satisfied with the use of their skills at work than their CAS counterparts (see Supplementary File, Table 2).

The field affects mostly the number of hours worked (people in STEM fields work on average 5.6 hours/week more than people in SSH). However, there were no statistically significant differences in the workload officially stated in the work contract, suggesting that STEM academics work more overtime than SSH academics. This is especially true for PhD candidates.

6. Discussion

Hierarchical cluster analysis yielded three main labour-market segments differentiated by working conditions and job security, which generally correspond to the early, middle, and senior stages of an academic career. Just under 40% of Czech academics work in the core segment of the academic market, and they include CAS-based senior researchers and HEI-based full/associate professors. The periphery contained 28% of respondents, who were in positions with unfavourable working conditions (PhD candidates at the CAS and HEIs, CAS-based research associates, postdoc researchers in STEM, and HEI-based postdocs and researchers). Finally, 32% of respondents worked in positions in the semi-periphery (HEI-based assistant professors, CAS-based postdocs and research associates in SSH, HEI-based lecturers/instructors). The semi-periphery provided higher pay and better career prospects than the casualised periphery, but working conditions were much worse than in the core.

The smallest gender differences across the ALM were found in the periphery, suggesting that the gender gap in working conditions is not as pronounced at the start of an academic career as it becomes later. The working conditions in the periphery appeared to be equally unfavourable for men and women. This changes noticeably at the mid-career level in the semi-periphery, where gender becomes a key factor affecting inequalities in working conditions.

Women in the semi-periphery declare less favourable working conditions than men and, like women in the core, lower wages. Although there were no significant gender differences in objective indicators of job security (i.e., type of contract), women in the semi-periphery scored much worse than men on subjective indicators of job security. They also declare less work autonomy and more stress and exhaustion than men. This explains why it is at this stage of an academic career that women leave academia at the highest rates (Cidlinská, 2019). One key reason for this, well addressed in current research, is the incompatibility of an academic career with private life demands, because this career stage usually coincides with the most childcare-intensive period of life (Dubois-Shaik & Fusulier, 2017; González Ramos et al., 2015). This is a particularly topical issue for Czech academics (see, e.g., Linková, 2017; Vohlídalová, 2020; Zábrodská et al., 2017). The semi-periphery is thus the key segment that needs to be targeted by any policies seeking to address the leaky-pipeline problem. Analysis suggests that academic institutions should play more attention to gender inequalities in the distribution of teaching loads among staff in semi-periphery positions, especially in STEM fields.

In the core, the effect of gender on working conditions is barely visible in our data, with one important exception—wage differences. Even when controlling for the effect of field and institution, women in the core had lower wages than men. Given the lack of statistical data on gender inequalities in wages in Czech academia, the gender wage gap in academia should be researched in more detail in the future, focusing particularly on the role of seniority, field, and institution.

The academic institutions involved in the analysis represent two types: a purely competitive research-oriented institution (CAS) and HEIs with a hybrid system. HEIs are combining (1) the competitive approach that applied mostly to junior and mid-level academics with a 'feudal' model that supports and protects senior academics regardless of their work performance (see Mudrák et al., 2018), and (2) teaching and research. Our findings suggest that at HEIs the privileged position enjoyed by full/associate professors is 'offset' by the disadvantaged working conditions experienced by lower-ranking academics. In the CAS, conversely, a degree of casualisation applies even to senior academics in the core segment, and at the same time it offers much better working conditions at the start of an academic career than the HEIs do. This is the case in terms of both work contract and

organisational citizenship indicators (support from colleagues particularly). This suggests the hypothesis that in the more 'egalitarian' (i.e., there is no highly privileged group) and purely research-oriented institutions, lower-ranking academics may benefit more from their work environment than they do at teaching-oriented institutions. As Fumasoli and Goastellec (2015) note, research-oriented institutions are better at integrating young academics into the academic environment. Our data suggest that they also provide them with better support and working conditions. However, this may be unique to Czech academia and further research is needed to better understand the link between the type of institution and working conditions.

The biggest differences in working conditions by field are seen in wages (except in the periphery), with significantly higher wages in STEM fields than SSH, and in work casualisation. The data show that STEM academics (even within the core segment) are more often employed as CRS and have short-term work contracts than SSH academics. This suggests differences in the expectations and meanings associated with individual career stages in STEM and SSH. While for STEM the postdoc positions at the CAS were mainly clustered in the periphery (mainly because of short-terms contracts), for SSH the same positions were clustered in the semi-periphery. This could mean that in SSH fields a postdoc position is associated with greater autonomy and independence, and if a person finds a job in SSH it is likely to be a more stable (but worse paid) than is the case in STEM fields. To conclude, my findings support the thesis that the neoliberal transformation of the ALM is more visible in STEM than in SSH fields (Ylijoki et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that the labour market in STEMs field is much larger, because disproportionately more money goes to these fields (at least in the Czech Republic), which probably makes it easier to find a job and earn better wages than in SSH.

7. Conclusion

My article proposes an innovative methodology for studying the structure of the ALM that identifies different ALM segments. It is based on a complex operationalisation of job quality, which can be easily adapted to any academic environment. This approach could be particularly useful for studying environments where no clear divisions exist between the core and periphery segments and for comparative studies of countries with variability in the R&D systems. This methodology goes beyond the core–periphery division to attain a more nuanced analysis of inequalities in the ALM.

My study contributes to the large body of research on ALM inequalities that has focused on inequalities and working conditions in specific stages of an academic career (e.g., Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Bataille et al., 2017; Bozzon et al., 2017; Cidlinská, 2019; O'Connor, 2010) with a comparative perspective. It demonstrates

that (1) gender, field, and institutional inequalities manifest differently in different segments of the ALM and (2) the impact of these characteristics on working conditions also varies between segments of the ALM. This finding can help in designing and targeting effective tailor-made policies in support of fair working conditions and gender equality across different career stages.

Bauder (2006) believes that the casualisation of working conditions in academia will continue and that the core will eventually be absorbed by the periphery. Based on my findings, this may particularly be the case of research institutes (such as the CAS) in the Czech Republic, where a certain level of the casualisation is already evident even in the core. While some form of tenured core should continue to exist at HEIs, but we can expect stronger institutional barriers that will prevent mobility between the periphery and the core. In recent years, this trend has taken the form of increasingly stringent conditions being applied to the habilitation process that academics must go through to obtain a core position at a HEIs (Šima & Pabian, 2017).

Furthermore, in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, a general decline of government expenditure is expected in the Czech Republic, along with austerity measures in the R&D and HEI sectors. My analysis suggests that the trend of ALM casualisation can be expected to affect different segments, fields, types of institution, and men and women in different ALM segments in different ways.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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