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# **Social Agents, National States and International Institutions: Educational policies of Europeanisation and the restructuring of higher education in Turkey through the Bologna Process**

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## **Abstract**

The ongoing processes of political, economic, and social globalisation have yielded a shift from government to governance, leading to increasingly transnationalised networks among public and private actors. Closely related to this emergent form of governing, the nature and functioning of the nation state have undergone a transformation in its conventional rhetoric of rule making, requiring a deeper analysis of the fundamental administrative and economic issues such as regulation, financing, or coordination in policy-making and steering processes in a wide range of policy fields, including education and training.

In the light of its theoretical background upon transnational governance, the present paper argues that the efforts to build a European higher education area (EHEA) through the Bologna Process, aimed to converge higher education structures across as well as beyond Europe, could pose remarkable implications for a closer study into the (neo)institutional dynamics of governance concerning the educational policies of Europeanisation. Hence, such a conceptual and organisational framework of European integration initiatives in view of the restructuring of higher education systems as a response to the transformation processes in the nature and/or interactions of the national and international organisations could provide a more thorough understanding into the roles of the key actors involved in the Bologna implementations with particular reference to social agents, national states and international institutions. In this context, the study aims to address the architecture of transnational governance in the restructuring process of higher education in Turkey, which has been engaged in the Bologna objectives as a signatory country since 2001. Particular attention will be drawn to the changing dynamics and if any, new challenges of multilayered governance sites in the transformation of higher education institutions as far as the Bologna implementations are concerned.

**Key words:** global knowledge economy, Bologna Process, higher education policies, (neo-)institutionalism, Turkey,

## **1. Initial reflections on the social and economic dynamics**

The contemporary society witnesses intense social change among the multi-faceted dynamics of globalisation of economic activities. Accelerated transformations in the governance of social and economic fields feature the question of 'state', rendering the nature of governance mechanisms a major field of interest as it may provide crucial implications on the Europeanisation initiatives in the contemporary policy studies. Also, the burgeoning discourse on the expansion of global knowledge economy is characterised central to the recontextualisation of higher education, mostly attributed to the surging demand for comparative information and a functional integration of national services into the international dimension of university systems. Then, it becomes evident that higher education has key importance in today's advanced economies due to its major role in developing the skilled labour force.

Efforts for university restructuring have been shaped by multi-agent processes and relations among the national, transnational and local scales (Maassen and Musselin 2009, 3-14). One of their major artifacts in the the recent decades is reflected by policies of Europeanisation on higher education institutions<sup>1</sup>, i.e. the Bologna Process (Bologna Declaration 1999). Built on an intergovernmental agreement by the EU and facilitated by various stakeholders, the Process has sought to generate university restructuring so as to achieve European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in all the signatory countries across Europe and beyond (Corbett 2005, 201-203). Such a Europeanised dimension in learning, teaching and research has yielded a transformative development in the parameters of higher education given the changing nature and dynamics of national systems which have yielded a multi-scale governance structure.

The paper aims to deal with the European policy on development of higher education through an investigation into the restructuring of higher education system (HES) in Turkey, and to thus question the autonomy of the national state institutions. More particularly, the study dwells on the relationship among the domestic social agents acting, i.e. business, labour, and the academic community; the Council of Higher Education of Turkey (CoHE), the major central governmental body for higher education, and the international institutions of the Process. At this point, one may raise different assumptions on the dynamics promoting the Process in Turkey:

1. The Process may be considered a form of hegemony of the European dynamics upon the HES in Turkey.
2. The Process may be perceived as the outcome of state-centred driving mechanisms for university restructuring.
3. Imperatives of the Process may be closely associated with the needs and demands of the social agents in Turkey.

## 1.1. Argument and methodology

The argument could be considered twofold. First, the paper suggests that the domestic social agents have a remarkable say in the restructuring of higher education in Turkey, and their demands, albeit conflicting in various respects, are reflected in the restructuring processes. The study regards the agents as parts of the global networks of economic activity, through which the contexts of these agents are (re)shaped within the international environment of economic competition, and the Council of Higher Education in Turkey also mediates the impacts of these international contexts on the social agents. Secondly, the study suggests that the CoHE has enhanced its policy-making capacity via the Bologna imperatives, first, as well-developed, readily-available tools to underly university restructuring, second, as a means to legitimise the restructuring process, and impose it on the opposing parties as irreversible global processes.

In line with these arguments, the paper draws on a number of documentary sources: government development plans, reports by business and labour organisations on the restructuring of higher education in Turkey and the relevant academic literature. The others include semi-structured, original interviews, originally with academics who have occupied major positions in the institutions related to the Bologna Process. The interviews were aimed at examining the problematic of the study, i.e. the relationship among the social agents, national state organisations and the Bologna institutions, by studying the experiences of the people at the very centre of the construction of the Process in Turkey.

## 2. Theoretical implications

This account reflects on the interactions of different Bologna actors that constitute multilayered governance networks in the scope of institutional and organisational change through the lenses of new institutionalism.

### 2.1. Institutional emphasis on organisations

The new institutionalism, pioneered by North (1990, 1998) revisits the impact of institutional changes on economic performance throughout history (*cf.* Nee 1998; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). North (1998, 248) considers institutions liable for the performance of economies as institutions “define the incentive structure of societies and, specifically, economies. Accordingly, North (1990) argues that the basic institutions including those of the market are constituted by the state. However, institutional change characterised by reforms (gradual change) or radical transformations (non-gradual change) and mainly caused by the transitions in technological, economic and political domains as adaptive processes, results in different forms of interactions between the institutions and organisations under the dynamics in the changing political, economic and social contexts. Also, depending on the nature of formal and informal constraints, patterns of divergence and convergence are likely among the agents of change (*ibid.*, 3-10).

This convergence of new institutionalism in the economic and social realms may be analysed to frame the architecture of governance among the multi-level agents and the Bologna institutions. Considering the restructuring of higher education in the context of the Bologna Process from North’s perspective, the basic mechanism shaping the national HES reform can be seen as the state’s capacity to restructure the society through its “political (and judicial) rules, economic rules and contracts” (North *ibid.*, 47). All these arrangements constitute a regulatory (formal) and cultural (informal) network of interactions. When the nature of national HESs is considered as basic institutions intertwined with other institutional constraints, it is also seen that they are grounded in close relations with international networks of social and economic agents. Institutional change is shaped by the agents in higher education policies, the organisational structures of which are, in response to the institutional dynamics correspondingly shaped by the HESs with which they maintain interactions throughout technological, economic-political transformation processes.

### 2.2. Organisational emphasis on institutions

According to Scott (2003), the key elements of institutions involve technical (normative and regulative) and cultural features, through which organisations are formed, modified, and supported by certain goals for their participants, who combine technology with their knowledge and skills, and form a shared network with a social structure. Such an institutionalised setting of technical rules and behavioural patterns shapes the organisational change for the construction of governance mechanisms between organisational and institutional processes as “products of professional groups, the state and nongovernmental associations” (*ibid.*, 119).

Another theoretical frame on the role of organisations through diversity is articulated by Weiss (2003), who draws on the nature of relationships between the state and non-state powers under the economic pressures by pointing to social agents, converging on mutually dependent forms of exchange through negotiations with state bodies. By doing so, the state not only defines its strategic development goals, but also observes the economic performance of the market forces while both can maintain their autonomies. Also, it ensures the legitimation of social actors’ power, in return for their supply of information and collaboration. Thus, what Weiss defines as “governed interdependence” (*ibid.*, 297) at this point illustrates an embodiment of the state’s efforts to transform domestic and international pressures into renewed policies as a response to the demands for social protection and competitive innovation in line with the global market conditions. In this line of thought, this study analyses Weiss’ emphasis on the ‘enabling’ role of institutional change and assumes that national state institutions, provided with the basic tools of transformation, mediate the

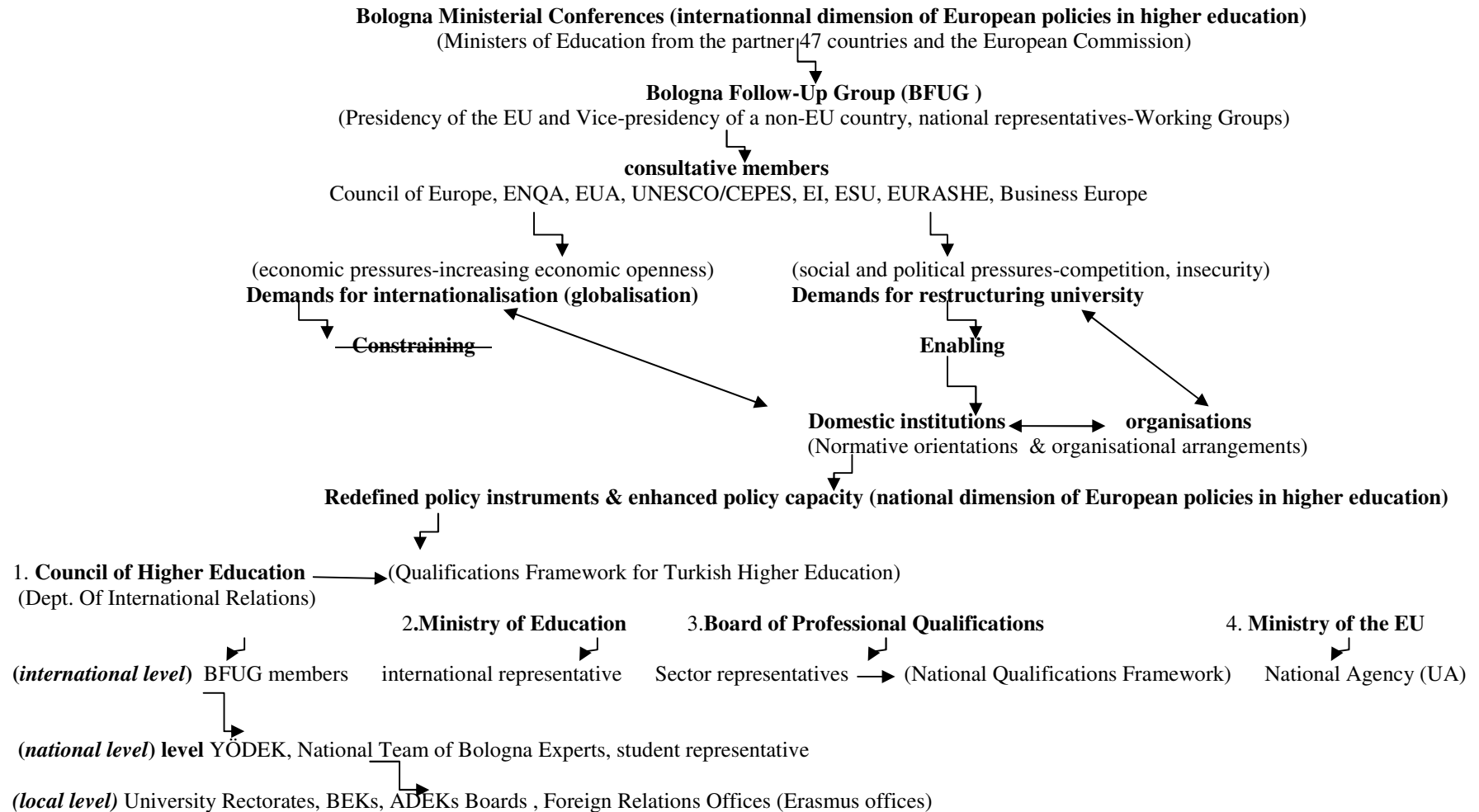
impacts of globalisation on domestic agents while also restructuring the social agents and the relationships among them (*ibid*, 1-37). Two essential constituents under the state's capacity, "normative orientations" and "organisational arrangements" (*ibid*, 6) are considered essential to account for diversities in national policy outcomes, which involve significant sources of difference with their diverging regulatory policies as well as organisational structures. Therefore, regeneration of policy capacity through integration into international networks reflects national diversities.

The organisational frame featuring the architecture of international governance of the Bologna-level actors involves the Ministerial Conferences of national ministers of education at the highest level. At the second level stands the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) with national representatives from each country in coordination with the European Commission, and these BFUG representatives form working groups in consultation with several external stakeholders (ENQA-The European Network for Quality Assurance, ESU-The European Students' Union, EUA- The European University Association, EURASHE- The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES- The European Center for Higher Education)<sup>2</sup> (YÖK 2010, 68-69).

For the national structuring in Turkey, three levels refer to the categories of the related bodies (YÖK *ibid*, 56):

1. Bodies under the CoHE as the nationally central institution: Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) representatives at the international level, members of the International Relations Department, Academic Evaluation and Quality Development Commission (YÖDEK), National Team of the Bologna Experts, student representative.
2. Other intermediary national institutions and organisations in cooperation with the CoHE: Ministry of Education (MEB), the National Agency (UA) and Vocational Qualifications Authority (MYK).
3. University community: Bologna Coordination Committees (BCCs/BEKs), Academic Evaluation and Quality Development Boards (ADEKs), rectors and vice rectors, international relations offices, student representatives.

The table below may also provide a more concrete understanding into the overall forms of relationships of the multi-scale Bologna actors in the context of.



**Fig. 1** Multi-layered networks of governance of the Bologna Process in the context of global impacts on domestic institutions and organisations. *Source:* Own depiction (Information adapted from Weiss 2003)

### 3. Higher education in economic context

The fundamental imperatives of the Bologna Process constitute a close relationship with the changing economic implications of the globalising markets, as the Process is aimed to adjust the HES in line with the increasingly competitive demands and needs of the market trends. Considering the key elements of restructuring, the account below reviews the economic conditions shaping the current demands by social agents on the HES reflecting on the *Ninth Development Plan of Turkey (2007-2013)*.

#### 3.1. Structural challenges and the Ninth Development Plan of Turkey

The burgeoning environment of technology-intensive production in the early 2000s implied a shift from the productivity-based strategy to a higher value-added structure, which required upgrading in the economy particularly for the developing economies (Donner and Ramsay 2003, 122). Triggered by this structural need, industries of chemical products, electronics, machinery and equipment created new areas of comparative advantage as the primary sectors with the largest proportion of higher value in Turkey (Ministry of Industry and Trade 2010). Thanks to the increasing performance in these sectors, there have been significant increases in the production and export value of domestic investments in the manufacturing industry since 2002. However, this sectoral shift has generated high levels of dependency on imported intermediate goods and technology, hindering a successful shift to value-added production in Turkey. These initiatives on the effective use of scientific and technological capacity have also raised the significance of human capital in business, triggering the efforts for the training of skilled workforce (SPT 2006).

In this economic context, *flexibility and life-long learning* are considered the vital components of the skilled labour market as the shift in production has generated a competitive squeeze. Along with this challenge, high technology and innovativeness have reduced the half-life of knowledge, necessitating a new type of workforce with smooth adaptability and transfer of skills to the requirements of the developing economy and workforce market by enhancing the required know-how through professional life (*ibid*, 84). Still, a lack of these basic skills has posed a significant challenge for the productivity of the labour market in Turkey, (generally characterised by knowledge- and technology-intensive industries incorporating specialisation) requiring increasingly advanced technological processes in production and development of innovation capacities as they are considered at the core of integration into the economic dynamics of globalisation. (*ibid*, 5). To this end, the vision of the 9th Development Plan (2007-2013) for the Turkish economy is specified as “Turkey, a country of information society, growing in stability, sharing more equitably, globally competitive and fully completed her harmonization with the European Union” (*ibid*, 1). Through such a vision of improved quality, and bridging the gap between university education and labour market has been closely associated with the extent to which this level of quality responds to the current challenges with the value-added productivity growth (YÖK 2007). Also, steered under the principles of *transparency and accountability*, this transformation in the national HES has been adopted as an essential concern within the development programmes of the State Planning Organisation (SPT, *op.cit.*). Therefore, active involvement into the Bologna reforms has been regarded as substantial for a convergence between the qualifications of university graduates and the needs of industry.

#### 3.2. Shortcomings with higher education system in Turkey

The 9th Development Plan (SPT *op.cit.*) regards the shift from the low-skilled work force in the traditional sectors with the basic requirements to the skilled work force with *flexible qualifications* in decision-making and adaptation to rapidly changing technologies as crucial to the increasing demand for improving the quality of education system (*ibid*, 84-86). Hence, many related parties have defined the Turkish education system as inadequate to meet the demands of the global business setting. A more efficient system is defined as one that is able to respond properly to the changing needs in the labour market, and such an understanding has brought about a change in the perceptions of quality in university education, which has also required a shift of focus on the practices of teaching and learning at university. The traditional, single-size model of university steered under the centralised structure of higher education is no longer considered to provide an effective model of education as it neither allows sufficient space for competitive, transparent and updated teaching and learning outcomes, nor it provides diversity, flexibility, division of labour through inter-university cooperation as well as productivity in research activities through strengthened university-business collaboration. All these considerations have raised hot debates basically on the restructuring of on the issue of the HES in Turkey with particular focus on *university autonomy* as the key shortcoming in the system.

#### 3.3. Development of skilled workforce through high-quality education<sup>3</sup>

The growing need for the development of knowledge and skills to achieve highly educated and skilled workforce has involved crucial debates on adjusting the sensitivities of higher education to the demand for qualified workforce by business agents. Accordingly, the Bologna actors envisage the improvement of *students who can primarily learn to learn* and develop into graduates equipped with advanced knowledge, comparable qualifications and transferable skills (YÖK 2010). *Student-centred learning, transparency, readability, adaptability* through the *recognition of qualifications, mobility and lifelong learning* are considered the core elements of restructuring, so particular focus is

set on problem-oriented tasks to equip students with creative, practical and project-based research skills, which will also facilitate effective coordination in the ‘knowledge triangle’ of education, research and business (European Commission 2011). Another significant issue concerning skilled labour is related to *employability*. In line with the productivity growth-oriented tools of the Bologna Process, this concept refers to the acquisition of the required know-how and professional competences in the relevant fields of study in order to seize the employment opportunities under the rapidly changing labour market conditions (YÖK *op.cit.*). Also, strengthening *university-industry cooperation* is assumed a crucial role in the development of highly educated and technically trained professionals to use their competences in the most productive and innovative ways (YÖK 2007).

As a result, these components of restructuring in higher education help to conclude that the national policies shaped by the Bologna reforms are closely related to the economic context of the global market dynamics, which also contextualize various needs and demands by the domestic social agents.

## 4. (Conflicting) Demands by social agents and national policies

Social agents on the national scale cannot be regarded as isolated from those on the European or global scales. (Weiss 2003, 245-271). Through partnerships on larger scales, social domestic agents are part of the international networks of production and exchange. This part exhibits different demands by the business, labour and academic community representatives. The aim is to analyse the relationship between the demands by social agents in Turkey and the state practices of restructuring the HES. This analysis will be coupled with a further one on the imperatives of the Bologna Process and the features of restructuring designed by the CoHE. Such an effort is aimed to question diverging/converging patterns between the restructuring instruments on the international and national scales and the demands by social agents in the face of the exponentially intertwined networks of the global market economy.

### 4.1. Relationship of business and labour agents with state policies

Upon analysis into the social agents’ approaches towards the national policies on university transformation, one can find out that the business and labour groups exhibit different demands and discourses on the restructuring agenda. As emphasized in the studies by the World Bank (2007) and OECD (2006), the leading national business associations (including big and small-medium establishments) call for immediate financial reforms by which the state will provide and maintain the basic institutions that will cater to needs and demands of the labour market.

Through the policy recommendations by TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists’&Businessmen’s Association), as a big business representative TOBB (Union of Chambers and Stock Markets of Turkey) as small-medium business representative and Eğitim-Sen (Union of Education & Science Employees) as a labour representative, upon the state policies in university transformation, it seems fair to say that the impact of the recommendations by business agents is highly visible within the CoHE’s restructuring policies, while labour agents’ recommendations generate resistance to those by business, and their impact on the CoHE’s policy-making is not so visible as the imprint of business agents. In this scope, it could be observed that the business agents’ recommendations reveal a great deal of convergence with the CoHE’s efforts to transform the university system in accordance with the Bologna’s action lines. However, labour agents evidently struggle against the demands by business, and the recommendations by labour diverge from the business proposals reports. Given this opposition in the social context, the national policy-making processes of the restructuring seems to have been shaped under this conflict, and the CoHE has apparently been implementing its restructuring process by making efforts to accommodate the demands and recommendations by business and labour.

#### 4.1.1. Demands by business

The efforts to link up university and industry could provide crucial insights into certain needs of business in the face of the increasingly competitive conditions of globalisation. Given the changing needs and demands of business on various scales, it is evident that the relationship between education and employment has shifted into a different course in processes of (value-added) production and use of (productive) workforce. In line with the changes in the employment market, there have been transformations in the knowledge and skills required by business and industry, coupled with particular emphasis on employability, which is intended to ensure the availability of skilled labour under the conditions of the *knowledge economy* and its *information society*. Under such economic pressures, business agents’ recommendations on the national policies of university transformation are voiced through the reports by TÜSİAD (2008, 2012) and TOBB (2012). Their common interests concentrate on the bringing up of productivity-oriented skilled workforce through an autonomous and accountable management, promotion of diversity and external governance, development of research and strengthened university-industry relationship, financial flexibility and diversified funding sources, quality assurance and accreditation. Hence, promotion of the educational model designed via the Bologna principles is seen crucial by business groups to achieve international standards in the national higher education policies.

### 4.1.2. Demands by labour

Since the beginning of the Bologna Process in Turkey, Eđitim-Sen, a national labour union addressing the problems of the education system, has evidently demonstrated a harsh opposition to the implementation of the Bologna reforms in Turkey. It has also exhibited a conflicting position with business promoting the Bologna principles for the national restructuring process. In this context, members of the organisation claim higher education as a basic human right, pinpointing their primary demands for extended public funding, scientific freedom, democratic and egalitarian administration that will enable a more activated participation of the academic community into the administrative issues and employment security fostering the academicians' social status (Eđitim-Sen 2012). Accordingly, they strongly argue for a collective scientific approach instead of an individualist and competitive one, so they claim that institutional autonomy and democratic management, freed from bureaucratic hierarchy and external control mechanisms in line with the market conditions, are essential for the achievement of academic freedom.

## 4.2. Relationship of the academic community with state policies

This account will draw on the original interviews with the academics (Altan 2013), who have taken active roles in the implementation of the Bologna Process through their academic and specialist positions in the related institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The interviews generally show that intellectual-specialists within the academic community have helped to expand the CoHE's capacity through their contributions to the progress of the Bologna steps in Turkey. Despite the decisive steps by the central policy-making mechanisms, individual roles and feedback by some academics and specific initiatives by some universities have remarkably influenced the implementation of the Process at the national and local levels. Also, such contributions have been required as the Bologna practices in HEIs have not been transferred as a set of practices directly from the European context to the national. Rather, it has involved a process of 'constitution' by the mutual interaction of many parties at the intersection of the national and international scales, and this complexity has necessitated an organisational capacity greater than that of the bureaucratic structure within the CoHE. Through such institutional dynamics coupled with support from the experts, the CoHE has pinpointed all the restructuring tools, e.g. the National Qualifications Framework, the ECTS, Diploma Supplement and lifelong learning activities. Thus, the academic community has influenced the CoHE policies while the community itself has not remained unchanged as the transformations at the intersection the Bologna Process and CoHE policy have restructured the academic setting, too.

### 4.2.1. Demands by the academic community<sup>5</sup>

Depending on the type of universities and priority needs of departments, demands by the academic community are variable. However, there seems to be a general understanding of a requirement for the restructuring of the national system. Driven by this need, some members, particularly those in engineering, economy and political sciences give full support to the restructuring activities and regard the national transformation policy on the integration into the Bologna Process as quite reasonable and advantageous to the development of the Turkish HES. Moreover, members of the academic community in the newly established universities evidently favour the Bologna implementations as they make use of the presented tools to shape their institutional systems.

On the other hand, some members of the academic community generate a state of controversy on the tools of the restructuring agenda with different claims on the CoHE's policy on the implementation of the Bologna principles. Their most outstanding line of argument is apparently set on quality increase and competitiveness. Coupled with their concerns on standardisation, they argue against the performance-based system since they claim that such a competitive environment will only bring a quantitative increase in their research studies, rather than a qualitative one. Also, there are objections to the involvement of external stakeholders into university management with its emphasis on the efforts for strengthened university-industry relationship. In this context, some academics from various universities initially preferred to remain ignorant to the process and partly resisted it by remaining inactive to the practical requirements for implementing the restructuring agenda of the CoHE.

## 5. National policies and the Bologna Process

University transformation via the Bologna Process has engaged the signatory countries in their restructuring policies on higher education within a new formation of decision-making processes. Two basic questions are addressed at this point: what does the Process envision for the restructuring of higher education in Turkey, and what is the extent to which the national and Bologna institutions influence each other's practices?

The former may be discussed upon the generation of a shared European space on education and research for an overall quality increase in higher education across the signatory countries. Thus, the CoHE makes use of the Bologna Process as a means of legitimising its own agenda of restructuring the HES in Turkey, and the national restructuring policy is shaped with major action lines featuring the Qualifications Frameworks, Quality Assurance, the European Credit Transfer System, Diploma Supplement, Mobility, Lifelong Learning Programmes, Joint Degrees and the Social Dimension (YÖK 2010, 24).



Though the Bologna Process seems to function as a feasible ground for the implementation of the CoHE's restructuring initiatives and the relations between the national and transnational scales may be perceived as uni-directional in the way that there is a power of asymmetry between the policy-making capacity of the CoHE and that of the Bologna institutions by which intergovernmental agreements shape national practices, yet this perspective disregards the complexity of multi-level relations in which social reality is structured. In this regard, the CoHE's autonomy from a nationally centralised body regulating the HES has been transformed into an enhanced form of its capacity which also accommodates patterns of conflict (through the emerging social dynamics in the face of globalisation). Many researchers conceptualise the local, national and transnational networks as parts of a whole with multi-layered processes of policy formation (*cf.* Lazetic 2010, Witte 2006, Kehm 2010, Gornitzka 2010), so a more fruitful discussion as to the second question above would be set on a bilateral form of relations, which should be conceptualised as mutually constitutive of different layers of governance. In parallel to this interconnectedness between the state autonomy and Bologna imperatives, nearly all the interviewees agree that the Bologna institutions assert a greater influence on the CoHE's practices as the basic aim is reported as the restructuring of the national system, yet this should not necessarily imply that the CoHE has been deprived of its capacity to make new policies. Also, the role of the national dynamics on the Process may be observed particularly through university-based initiatives and the efforts from domestic expert circles contributing to the promotion of the restructuring agenda. Accordingly, the foundations of the transnational structuring in the Bologna context seem to have been facilitated by such contributions from certain national actors (*Altan ibid.*).

## Preliminary findings as concluding remarks

Possible conclusions may be drawn under a two-tier form of mutual relationships. The first one is between social agents and state institutions; that is, from the society to the state and vice versa; with reference to the pressures from different social agents of the university system on the state policies, and the impacts of restructuring policies of the CoHE and those of the Bologna institutions on their relations with the social actors. The other one is between the national state autonomy and transnational governance, with regard to the enhanced capacity, rather than a lost or weakening autonomy, of the CoHE through the Bologna tools on restructuring, coupled with the impacts of the Bologna institutions on the national ones, and those of the national ones on the course of the Bologna Process by (re)formulating and enlarging the Process.

Given the structural dynamics of economic openness, one may conclude that there are the agents of labour diverge from the imperatives of the Bologna Process, whereas the agents of business are the leading facilitators of the process. Moreover, some academics, particularly those with the leading positions in the departments of engineering, management, and international relations, along with the contributions of rectors and vice rectors, have been leading the implementation of the Process in Turkey. As to the opposite direction, in the scope of the Bologna implementations through the national policies, the interactions between the institutional (state) and organisational (social) agents restructure the ground on which their relations are shaped. Hence, the Process renders these forms of relationships into the conflicting positions on different parts of the agents, along with mediating role of the CoHE.

Considering the implications of globalisation on the nation state, the emergent transnational interactions conceptualised through the ambivalence of unity and diversity (Olsen 2007, 22-23) reveal respective correspondence to the impacts of the Bologna institutions on the CoHE's enhanced policy-making capacity to include conflicting patterns. In this context, it seems a *condicio sine qua non* for the internationalised Turkish economy to remain inside the European networks of capital. In addition to this economic prerequisite, the national social agents are part of the economic processes and of the social actors on the European scale with their influential roles in the Bologna Process. Therefore, their needs and demands converge with one another, and this implies that the pressures on the national scale are similar to those on the European scale. In this context, The Bologna Process provides the ideological and practical tools within a legitimised framework for the CoHE to restructure the domestic university system in line with its domestic concerns related to the demands by the social agents and the conditions within the state.

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<sup>1</sup> For a different theoretical perspective on the Europeanisation of higher education, see Martina Vukasovic (2013).

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on the international groups and organisations involved with the Bologna Process, see the official website of European Higher Education Area ([www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)).

<sup>3</sup> For more detail on the higher education system envisioned by the Bologna Process, see European Commission (2013).

<sup>4</sup>The list of interviewees in the alphabetical order: Assist. Prof. Dr. Armağan Erdoğan (Former Head of Unit for EU and International Relations at the CoHE), Prof. Dr. Burhan Şenatalar (Former Member of the CoHE, currently Professor of Economics and Head of the BCC in Istanbul Bilgi University), Prof. Dr. Cenap Özben (Professor of Physics and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Letters, Istanbul Technical University) Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Kayacan (Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Head of the BCC in Istanbul University), Prof. Dr. Hasan Mandal (Director of Research and Graduate Policy Center in Sabancı University and National Team Member of the Bologna Experts), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kıvanç Ulusoy (Lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Istanbul University and the Vice-Coordinator of the BCC for the same university, Prof. Dr. Lerzan Özkale (Professor of Management Engineering, Head of the International Relations Office in Istanbul Technical University and National Team Member of the

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Bologna Experts since its beginning, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Durman (Former Rector of Sakarya University, now Professor of Metallurgical Engineering in the same university and National Team Member of the Bologna Experts since 2005, particularly in the fields of quality assurance and the development of the National Qualifications Framework), Dr. Özge Onursal Beşgöl (lecturer at the Department of International Politics in Istanbul Bilgi University, particularly interested in the EU educational policy and social construction of Europe, currently member of the BCC for the same university, Prof. Dr. Selçuk Karabatı (Professor of Operations Management and Vice-President for Academic Affairs in Koç University), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sema Ergönül (lecturer at Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts, former ADEK member for the same university, and currently a member of the BCC in the institution).

<sup>5</sup> For a full list of the interview questions and a more detailed discussion of the feedback from the interviewees, see Altan (2013).

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