

COMPETITION IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION:
CASE-STUDY OF LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS UNIVERSITY OF MUNICH

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts

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Budapest, Hungary
2009

Abstract

Competition in higher education is a recently emerged and relatively unexplored issue. In Europe, with the commencement of the Bologna Process in 1999, concerns have been raised about the disadvantageous position of European universities on the international education market vis-à-vis those of the leading regions in higher education such as the United States and Great Britain. Seeking to enhance European universities' competitiveness and their contribution to regional economic development, the European Union has initiated a thorough reformation process that will entirely revolutionize the image of higher education institutions. Using the example of Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich this study examines the structural changes triggered in light of striving to increase competitiveness, as well as the effects that these changes produce. Despite the generally accepted belief that the implementation of policies oriented to enhancing competition and excellence will lead universities to a prosperous future, I argue that competition in higher education brings also negative consequences which have to be considered both on the institutional and governmental levels.

Acknowledgements

Foremost, I would like to express gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Jakob Rigi and Professor Rositsa Bateson, who helped me a lot sharing with me much of their expertise while I was writing this thesis. Also, I am very grateful to the writing instructor Eszter Timar for improving my academic writing skills.

I wish to thank the professors, administrators and students of Ludwig-Maximilians University who kindly agreed to devote their time to the interviews and to share their opinions on my research topic. I very much appreciate their contribution to my fieldwork.

I would like to individually thank all my friends at CEU whose support always encouraged me to do my best.

Most importantly, I send out many thanks to my parents and to my best friend Aleksandar Stojanovski for their genuine belief in me.

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Introduction

The growing demand for competitiveness has been explicit in the recent European higher education policies. Competition is rising both on the national and international levels: the developments of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the inclusion of higher education (HE) into the list of the tradable services has significantly intensified this process (Hahn, 2005). The agenda concerning the necessity of bringing changes in universities' structure in order to enhance the competitiveness of European higher education can be traced in the policies of the European Commission, OECD, UN agencies, and of Nation-States (COM, 2003, 58; OECD, Policy Brief, 2007, Bologna Declaration). Today European higher education institutions (HEI) are considered by the European Union as major sources for knowledge creation and innovation that can bring socio-economic development (OECD, Policy Brief, 2007). Therefore, EU policy measures in HE are aimed at inducing universities to increase their contribution to regional development. Accordingly, as it has been stated by OECD (Policy Brief, 2007: 1), "HEIs must do more than simply educate and research – they must engage with others in their regions, provide opportunities for lifelong learning and contribute to the development of knowledge-intensive jobs which enable graduates to find local employment."

For a traditional comprehensive European higher education institution this agenda implies that it must become more market-oriented and more entrepreneurially focused,

that it has to expand its goals and activities, that it must be more open and flexible in order to rapidly and adequately be able to respond to the changing demands of society (Gould, 2003; Rhoades and Smart, 1996; Clark, 1998). Marginson and Considine (2000) note that in the globalized world most universities have undergone remarkable changes in the structures of their governance, management, academic field and culture. At the same time, the shift to entrepreneurialism and more business-like structures that is often seen by universities' management staff as a way of being more competitive, has been sceptically met by many academics who claim that turning higher education into a capitalist marketplace would deteriorate educational ideals and the development of knowledge, especially in the liberal arts (Gould, 2003). As Duderstadt put it critically, (2000: 333-334)

Much of this change will be driven by market forces – by a limited resource base, changing societal needs, new technologies, and new competitors. But we also must remember that higher education has a public purpose and a public obligation. Those of us in higher education must always keep before us two questions: “Whom do we serve?” and “How can we serve better?”

Hence it appears relevant and timely to study the consequences of the external (economic and political) pressure on universities to be more competitive.

Competition is generally viewed as a positive stimulus for European higher education that fosters the broad social, economic, and technological innovations including new

ways of thinking about financing higher education, the concomitant acceptance of market forces and commercialization, unprecedented mobility for students and professors, the global spread of common ideas about science and scholarship, and other developments (Duderstadt, 2000; Enders and Fulton, 2002; Kwiek, 2005). The problem of the influence of globalization on HE has been studied in numerous reports, yet I believe there is an obvious gap in the research of competition of HEIs in the context of globalization and neoliberal policies. In order to fill in the gap in research, I employ a critical, multi-perspective analysis of the impact of globalization and competition on higher education, revealing the major problems European universities face nowadays, i.e. reduction in public funding, increased demands of society and the pressure to compete internationally. Thus, my research question focuses on institutional responses to policy directives in HE, the external downward pressure for being competitive on the national and global education market, as well as on the consequences of the reform processes initiated in this context.

To answer this question I examine relevant documents and publications in HE policy in Europe with the aim to contextualize policy development in a particular country and based on a case study of an institution which I selected because of its conscious engagement with the process of HE reform at the national and international level. Taking into account the rapidly growing competitiveness of German higher education institutions both on the European and international levels, I selected a prominent German University – Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich (LMU), which has gained international

recognition and increased its prestige, as a case study. It is a large comprehensive public state university which, according to my observations, reflects the general transformation trends in European HE.

My research is aimed at investigating how the structure of university management has been transformed as a result of global, national and regional competition among universities. It is my hypothesis that the need to enhance competitiveness of European HEIs imposed by the European states' and EU's policies in higher education - under the influence of globalization and neoliberal ideology - results in a conflict of purpose based on an unprecedented multiplication of functions and goals, and in internal competition which leads to a process of fragmentation and inequality.

My empirical investigation includes applying the methods of interviews, observation and statistical analysis. The primary literature sources that I have used while conducting the fieldwork comprise EU policies, other governmental policies, projects of higher education, both on regional and national levels, and reports on the selected HEI over the past five years. Throughout the thesis I elaborate on how Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich became one of the prominent German universities and gained international recognition, as well as, what consequences these changes produced on the institution itself. My ultimate goal is to look for patterns which are suggested in theory, to examine specific institutional circumstances and to offer a set of ideas about the influence of competition on European HE.

Chapter 1: Contextualization of the Problem: Current Reforms in European Higher Education

The contemporary reforms in higher education institutions have created general tendencies in the sphere of universities' management which are mainly driven by the economic and governmental pressures that consider Universities as “enterprises” obliged to bring technological and financial results to the nation-state or region (Altbach, 2004; Anderseck, 2004; Clark, 1998; Enders and Fulton, 2002; Kerr, 2003; Marga, 2005; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). The governmental plans of restructuring higher education in Europe were generated with the explicit purpose of making universities enhance their global competitiveness and to transform them in the image of ‘world-class university’ (Deem, Ka Ho Mok and Lucas, 2008). Competition among higher education institutions is growing due to market deregulation. Policymakers no longer protect universities from competition, but leave them to market forces to shape their future (Newman and Courturier, 2002). Therefore, universities, as I presume, are forced by governments to perform various management reform measures in order to achieve and sustain their excellence.

Many researchers (See, for example, Deem, Ka Ho Mok, Lucas, 2008; Gibbons, 2005; Temple, 2006; King, 2004; Enders and Fulton, 2002) agree on the point that the main objectives of management reforms at European universities are:

- Implementation of the principles of the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon strategy
- Increasing autonomy and accountability for universities
- Strengthening partnerships with business, governmental and public sectors
- Establishing ties with the labor-market; responding to the demands of society with skilful competitive specialists
- Making funding work more effectively in education and research
- Enhancing interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity
- Regarding research primarily as a fundraising solution
- Intensification of branding and marketing work

Concerns have been raised regarding this agenda on how Universities go about transforming themselves in order to become more competitive. Altbach (2004) for example, considers internal self-governance by academics over key aspects of academic life as a main criterion of a world-class university. By contrast, Clark (1998) points out that strengthening ‘administrative core’ and improving institutional management structure becomes a necessity. In his regard, the problem of the traditional European universities is a weak capacity to steer themselves. In order to adapt to the competitive environment HEIs today have to be quick, flexible, and focused on social demands. To perform these qualities they need to refashion their managerial capabilities. Besides, a competitive university is characterized by the expansion of its developmental periphery creating centres that mediate between the university and outside world. Furthermore, entrepreneurial universities actively diversify their funding base that mainly includes

raising money from research councils, grants and projects, from industrial firms, organizations, local governments, and finally getting the income from campus services, student fees, and alumni fundraising (Clark, 1998).

Another dominant tendency in European HE, as many authors argue (Wende and Huisman, 2005; Neave, 2001; Scott, 1998), that emerged along with the strive for more competition is internationalization. Although international cooperation in higher education existed since the establishment of universities as institutions, until the end of the 20th century HEIs used to be deeply national institutions, i.e. their managerial and funding systems, educational programs, and strategies bore distinctly structured national characteristics (Neave, 2001). As Readings (1996) asserts, universities have experienced the shift in their core missions having been reformed from the institutions serving primarily the purpose of nation-states to sustain and promote the national culture to the internationalized institutions that have to perform high degree of excellence measured on the universal international scale and by doing so to contribute to the economic growth of the country.

Wende (2004) accounts for this shift by the process of globalization, or to be more precise, by the liberalization of international trade and the emergence of global markets. Under globalization he understands increased “convergence and interdependence of economies and societies [in which], [i]n contrast to internationalisation, a de-nationalisation and integration of regulatory systems as well as the blurring role of nation

states are taken for granted.” (Wende, 2004: 10) Consequently, internationalisation, according to him, “assumes that nation states, i.e. ‘societies’ defined as nation states, continue to play a role as economic, social and cultural ‘systems’, but that they become more interconnected and that activities crossing their borders increase. Cooperation between nation states is expanding and national policies put a stronger emphasis on regulating or facilitating border-crossing activities.” (Wende, 2004: 10)

As a result of the impact of globalisation and internationalisation, universities in general, and European ones in particular, are reforming their regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements becoming more homogeneous and losing their national identity (Wende, 2004; Scott, 1998). I suppose that the processes of internationalization and homogenization in European HE intensify competition among universities by inducing them to accept the standardized HEI model and, thus, placing them on a unified competition playground.

1.1. European Union Policies on Higher Education

Many works have been recently devoted to the problem of universities’ transformations under the pressure of regional and world competition. However, the issue has grown in importance in light of the recent policies and declarations of the OECD, European Commission and World Bank. Since universities’ transformation process is becoming a more controversial and much disputed subject, it appears tremendously important to analyze the definite policies and pathways for the reforms that are taking place in reality.

At the meeting in Lisbon in March 2000 the heads of EU states inferred that the general strategy for the European region till 2010 must be the following: “To become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” (Wende and Huisman, 2004: 29) Thus, the European Council expressed the need of radical transformations of not only the European economy, but also of the Higher education system, thus explicitly declaring the importance of Higher Education as a provider of economic growth (Wende and Huisman, 2004)

The issue of global competition in HE has also been addressed in the report of the European Commission in 2001. (EC, 2001) As a solution to cope with this challenge Commission decided to strengthen the process of internationalisation of HEI by establishing the ERASMUS Mundus program which started in 2004. This program significantly intensified European academic mobility and inter-Universities cooperation. Moreover, it promoted postgraduate courses organized by a cluster of European Universities. According Wende and Huisman (2004: 29), the ERASMUS Mundus program foresaw “the creation of around 90 inter-university networks to provide 250 EU Masters Courses by 2008.”

Communications from the commission of the European communities (COM(2000) 6, COM(2001) 549, COM(2003) 58, COM(2003) 436, COM(2006) 208, COM(2008) 680) have raised an issue with the low effectiveness of European Universities, low execution

of their potential and thus these documents explicitly pointed to the need for rapid changes. On the agenda of the Commission were the issues of enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of European Higher Education Institutions, sustainable incomes for Universities, increasing professionalism in academic as well as managerial affairs, creating conditions for developing excellence of Universities, establishment of closer cooperation between Universities and enterprises to ensure better dissemination and exploitation of knowledge, and fostering formation of a coherent, compatible and competitive European higher education area. (COM (2003) 58) In order to create the necessary conditions for Universities that would enable them to achieve these targets the Commission has charted the concrete pathways of transformation needed to take place in European Higher Education Institutions: to harmonize the system of higher education in Europe, to enhance academic mobility, to ensure autonomy and accountability for universities, to provide incentives for structured partnerships with the business community, to provide the right mix of competencies for the labour market, to make funding more effective, to enhance interdisciplinarity, to activate knowledge through interaction with society, to reward excellence at the highest level. (COM(2006)208) The influence of the Commission, although indirect and playing rather a catalytic role, still affects universities essentially through targeted funding. (COM(2006)208) Thus, universities are forced to conduct internal transformations to extend their funding, to improve their spheres of excellence and to position themselves most competitively.

1.2. The Bologna Process and Formation of the European Higher Education Area

The most evident transformations in European HE were triggered mainly by the Lisbon Agenda and the Bologna Process that imply the enhancement of competitiveness of European HE, internationalisation and harmonisation of European higher education systems (Anderseck, 2004; Litjens, 2005; Kwiek, 2005). The changes of external factors both on the global and regional levels resulted in the need to determine completely different tasks for university management that could enhance institutions' competitiveness.

The first step towards harmonisation of universities and the formation of the European higher education area was taken in 1999 when the Bologna Declaration was adopted by 29 European countries. The Bologna Declaration aimed at enhancing competitiveness, efficiency and attractiveness of European HE maps out concrete objectives to be attained by the universities by the year 2010:

- Adoption of a system of degrees easily readable and comparable in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education
- Adoption of a system based on two cycles; the first, of three years at least, qualifies one for the European labour market
- Establishment of a system of credits – developing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) – acquired also in non higher education contexts, provided they

are recognised by the university systems as a proper means to favour the widest and most diffused student mobility

- Elimination of remaining obstacles to the effective exercise of the rights to free mobility and equal treatment.

Although the Bologna Declaration implied voluntary commitment and therefore the impact of the European Commission on the nation states was limited, its role has gradually grown in importance from the ‘observer of the Follow-up Group’ to the ‘full member of the Follow-up Group’ (Wende and Huisman, 2004).

The agenda of quality assurance has been emphasised in the context of the Bologna Declaration by the Ministers of Education on the meeting in Prague in 2001. (Wende and Huisman, 2004) The focus of the meeting was primarily on “ensuring high standards: Ministers called the universities and other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher education (ENQA), in cooperation with corresponding bodies from countries which are not members of ENQA, to collaborate in establishing a common frame of reference and to disseminate best practice” (Wende and Huisman, 2004: 25).

Chapter 2: Theory of Neoliberalism and its Impact on Higher Education

As the introduction suggests, universities in the age of globalization must strive to be more competitive, more entrepreneurial, and more effectively managed in order to perform the function of one of the main knowledge suppliers for the national economies (WB reports, EU and OECD documents). This emphasis on the commercial side of universities was triggered initially by the grand dominating structures in our society: capitalism and the neoliberal system. Under these conditions, the entrepreneurial university – characterized by strong partnership links with industry and new forms of knowledge production – has become the dominant model of institutional innovation (Currie and Subotzky, 2000; Clark, 1998; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). However, this imposed competitive market-oriented model omits other roles that universities, as public institutions, have to perform such as the promotion of social change, critical analysis of traditional institutions and socioeconomic hierarchies, and cultural production and diffusion. Thus, the neoliberal University model creates an inner tension with a collegial ethos and with democratic institutional governance. (R. J. Parelius and A. P. Parelius, 1987; Currie and Subotzky, 2000)

In its essence, the theory of neoliberalism represents a set of economic policies that during the last twenty years have been widely implemented in most of the countries worldwide. These policies are mainly based on the principles of the rule of free market, reducing expenses on social services, state deregulation and privatization (Touraine,

2001) According to Bourdieu (1998), the destructive influence of neoliberalism is evident both on the macro- and micro socio-economic levels, as far as on the one hand, it leads to financial deregulation of the national states, and on the other, to the deterioration of collectives through individualization and competitiveness. Similarly, David Harvey insisted (2006: 43), that the “main achievements of neoliberalism have been redistributive rather than generative.”

The shift towards neoliberal principles of management in HE have been often viewed as inevitable due to a number of reasons, including massification of HE systems, the loss of state control over HEI, the growing difficulty of financing HE with public funds, and the dominating belief that only free markets can make the public sector more efficient and more accountable. (Amaral and Karseth, 2002)

As Amaral and Karseth (2002) assert, the implementation of neoliberal ideology in the public sector, including HE, is connected with the popular claim that the previously excessive intervention of governments in public institutions has proved to entail a lack of innovations, inoperativeness, stagnation, and wastage of money. Therefore, transition towards market regulation in HE has been considered as the “heal of all wounds inflicted by the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of state regulation, and by the low managerial aptitude of rectors and public servants.” (Amaral and Karseth, 2002: 5)

2.1. Excellence Discourse and Quality Assessment in Higher Education

The discourse about ‘striving for excellence’ has recently gained unprecedented popularity in HE. As noted by Readings (1996), after the decline of universities’ leading role in the ‘cultural project’ of a nation-state, universities have been positioned in the ‘age of excellence’. This notion, borrowed from economic management, generally implies that universities pursuing the purpose of becoming more competitive on the educational market are making all the efforts possible to enhance the quality of education, research and management. At the same time, universities’ governing boards - imposing the ideology of excellence in all the fields of universities’ activities - often do not, as Reading asserts, really conceive of what the concept of excellence means and how to achieve it. In fact, ‘excellence’, according to Readings, is a shallow notion without any particular content, because it is nothing when not defined by certain criteria, whereas these criteria being arbitrary and ambiguous depend on the one who selects them. Thus, one and the same sphere can be evaluated both as ‘excellent’ and ‘not excellent’ based on the parameters that we apply for evaluating it. Besides, taking into consideration that there is always room for improvement, excellence as such can never be achieved.

2.1.1. Competition in higher education as a consequence of neoliberal policies

Inquiring into the consequences of implementation of strategies to raise competitiveness implies first of all elucidating the meaning of the concepts of competition and of competitiveness as a quality of an organization, and the understanding of these concepts

in an academic environment. In the Bologna Declaration competitiveness is equated to efficiency and a high level attractiveness of an institution:

We must look with special attention at the objective to increase the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilization is measured, in fact, by the attraction that its cultural system exerts on other countries. We need to ensure that the European system of higher education acquires in the world a degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions (Bologna Declaration: 2)

Thus, in the frames of the Bologna Declaration, the competitiveness of European Higher education means attracting more students and distinguished professors within and beyond Europe.

The definition of competitiveness can be expressed in economic terms as suggested by Dunford, Louri, and Rosenstock (2001:109) who argue that “the enterprises that are competitive are those that achieve a greater than average improvement in the quality of goods and services and/or a reduction in their relative costs that enable them to increase their profits and market share.”

A broader understanding of competitiveness in economic terms is provided by Scott and Marshal (2005: 117):

Perfect competition ensures that there is an inherent tendency for supply and demand to adjust to each other through the prevailing price which, if all participants act rationally, will rise or fall according to the relative scarcity of the commodity and the competitive efficiency.

A Modern Dictionary of Sociology (1970) proposes two definitions of competition. The first meaning amounts to understanding under competition

The pursuit of goals by individuals or groups the attainment of which depends upon other individuals or groups not attaining the same or related goals. In competition the objects pursued are limited in supply, and demand exceeds supply.

According to the second definition competition is

[a]n indirect and impersonal process in which individuals or groups attempting to satisfy their needs seek the same limited resources within the given environment. The process of competition was seen as occurring without social communication, without personal antagonism, often without even the awareness of the identity of one's competitors. It was regarded as a subsocial process, part of the biotic level of human organization.

Borrowed from Economics, the terms of competition and competitiveness in higher education imply, as I believe, primarily efficiency and excellence. In my view, although education is also being considered as a sphere that functions on market rules, competition

in higher education still cannot be equated to competition in its purely economic meaning. In contrast to other markets, the supply, demand, limited resources and competition in HE are not so much explicit, and I would argue, they are not the most essential fundamental constituents that define the behaviour of universities. Moreover, competition in HE does not necessarily imply, as in the definition of A Modern Dictionary of Sociology, that one group's achieving goals results in not attaining the same goals by another group. Obviously, within every country there can be a number of universities with the same high level of performance, whereas inability of some HEIs to successfully position themselves on the national or international HE arena may be the result of their own inefficient management and not the consequence of other university's achievements in the process of competition. Hence, I suggest that competition in HE is indirect and unconscious, i.e. institutions are not interested in other's defeat and their performance does not directly influence the performance of other HEI. I suppose that so far economic determination in European universities has not yet expanded to the same degree as in the universities of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, the current transformations in HE are reshaping European universities based on the models of the USA and UK, making the European institutions more market-oriented, entrepreneurial and commercialized.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Following the objectives of my research, I inquired into the management strategies and policies that form Universities' competitiveness. Accordingly, my fieldwork included the methods of semi-structured interviews, observation, analysis of documents and statistical data. The primary literature sources that I used while conducting the fieldwork comprised EU policies, other governmental policies, projects of higher education, both on regional and national levels, and reports on the selected HEI over the past five years.

The fieldwork first of all aimed at the identification of the degree to which the University had been involved in its self-reforming efforts that caused serious management changes and had been in place for the past ten years. Hence, I chose to track the transitions through the publications of the University (newspapers and magazines) that were essential in finding the types of development the University had experienced, whether the commercializing change in status had been in place, or there appeared any shifts in the entrepreneurial culture of the University, its policies and system of funding.

Observation of EU policies as well as governmental policies and projects both on regional and national levels were crucial in this context. Focusing primarily on the comparative analysis of these documents, my research methods also included semi-structured interviews with the representatives of the governing board, faculty, administrators, and students. These interviews were aimed at finding out what mission

and goals the University performs, if it follows any strategies of enhancing its competitiveness, if the changes towards being more competitive have encountered any resistance from the faculty and staff, and what is the role of students in the University under the reforms, how the University is funded and if it takes any efforts to raise its financing. Interviews with students, as well as the online survey proposed to them, revealed their perception of the institution and the problems they encountered during their studies. Besides conducting interviews and examining the relevant documentation, I participated in several classes, observed offices, laboratories, classrooms and studying facilities.

The questions to my interviewees were generally focused on finding out whether competition and excellence paradigm has produced any effects on the particular departments or units of the university. Interrogating on diverse aspects of the university functioning – the system of funding, regulation of the studying programs, structure of university management, system of organizing researches, relationships between faculty and administration, faculty and students, and students with administration, I aimed at revealing the preliminary consequences of the changes as well as the interviewees' attitude towards the reforms. However, as far as my interviews were semi-structured, the questions asked were not strictly defined: they varied depending on the answers of the respondent.

Undoubtedly, placement of the University in national, regional and international rankings is one of the key factors indicating competitiveness of the institution. Therefore, I traced the positions University took in rankings for several past years.

One of the major concerns during my fieldwork was related to comparison of the statistical data regarding the numbers of students at different departments. This data helped me to analyze the changes in size of departments that I connect with the politics of enlarging or decreasing certain areas.

Finally, I analyzed the contribution of Natural and Social sciences to the University development, as well as compared financial policies within the University and its effects on different departments. Recent studies show that all disciplines have diverse potential of contribution to the economies. As Hayrinen-Alestalo and Peltola underline, (2006: 251) “social sciences produce knowledge that cannot be classified by using pure economic concepts...It [analysis] also shows the importance of contextual issues and the tensions that arise between scientific and commercial orientations”. And even more important is the fact that “in the new economy, scientific disciplines and research areas are ranked according to their investment and use value, and the social value of the social sciences and humanities is seen through the lenses of tech-fields.” (Hayrinen-Alestalo and Peltola, 2006: 253)

Given that the qualitative methods prevail in my research I admit that the problems of bias and generalisability may arise as limitations of my work. Nevertheless, taking into consideration that such epistemological issues as subjectivity vs. objectivity are undeniable parts of any research based on qualitative methods, and that as Punch (1998: 139-140) stresses, social research belongs to political origin and is “a human construction, framed and presented within a particular set of discourses (and sometimes ideologies), and conducted in a social context with certain sorts of social arrangements...” (Punch, [quoted from Bateson, 2008: 89]), I attempt to escape the problems connected with biased judgements and potential of generalisation while applying the qualitative methods. The most proper way to do it is to employ multi-perspective analyses taking into consideration diverse perspectives, concepts, and approaches.

3.1. The Choice of Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich

With these orientations in mind, I intended to uncover and discuss the main consequences of the impact of neoliberal ideology on a European HEI. Having chosen to concentrate on the European higher education area where the reforms in HE system triggered by Lisbon Agenda and Bologna Declaration are most evident and systemic now, I decided to seek my case among the universities that were consciously engaged with the process of HE reform at the national and international level; that gained international recognition and considerably raised their competitiveness. Besides, I sought a traditional university that recently implemented new structural and managerial policies following the established competition and excellence paradigm. Among other criteria that defined my choice were

the large size of the university, public (state) character, comprehensiveness and long history. I have highlighted these factors because, in my view, they are of particular importance for examining the outcomes of the reforms at a university.

Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich (LMU) is one of the largest and famous HEI in Germany: according to the Academic Ranking of World Universities report in 2008 (Shanghai Jiao Tong University) LMU occupies the first place on the national rank, thirteenth place in Europe and fifty-fifth place in the world (Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2008). Although the university ratings differ in the distribution of ranks depending on the criteria accepted for the assessment, LMU nevertheless generally falls within the top 150 universities in the world. This fairly high position in rankings has continuously been kept by the University during the past decade: yet in 2003 LMU was placed by Academic Ranking of World Universities on the forty-eighth rank among the best world universities and on the tenth rank among the European Universities (Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2003).

Established in 1472 and being one of the oldest and largest Universities in Germany with 44,405 students (winter semester 2008-2009), LMU nowadays is recognized as one of the leading research universities in Europe with a distinct international character. It participates in twenty-four Collaborative Research Centers supervised by the German Research Foundation (DFG), having organized thirteen of them. Besides, it runs twelve DFG Research Training Groups and twelve international graduate programs in the frames

of the Elite Network of Bavaria. In cooperation with other European universities LMU founded such well-known and influential higher education organizations as the League of European Research Universities (LERU), Venice International University (VIU), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Bavarian International Academic Centers (LMU auf einem Blick / LMU at a glance: brochure on the statistical material of LMU on 2007/2008).

LMU is also active in attracting international professors and researchers: about 1,500 visiting professors work at LMU every year (LMU auf einem Blick / LMU at a glance: brochure on the statistical material of LMU on 2007/2008). Such well-built international commitment contributes to enhancing the income from international funding sources and consequently serves a significant basis for ensuring the sustainable competitiveness of the university and high results in international university rankings.

As regards the structure and governance of LMU, it is put forward in the brochure of LMU that the University is a

“public corporation with the right of self-governance within the framework of the law. It is simultaneously a state institution divided into a central governing body and 18 faculties. The University Governing Board is composed of six members: the President, four Vice Presidents (at least three professors and one academic staff member) and the Chancellor (head of the Central University Administration and responsible for the

University budget). The Governing Board, with the exception of the Chancellor, is elected by the University Council, the main committee for decisions related to university policy and assigned to support the Governing Board. The members of the University Council are high-ranking, established representatives from business, academia and professional life. Each faculty houses a number of academic institutions (departments, institutes, managing units and centers)...” (LMU auf einem Blick / LMU at a glance: brochure on the statistical material of LMU on 2007/2008)

Having ascertained that Ludwig-Maximilians University is a suitable case study for my topic since the institution implements EU policies, applies strategies of enhancing its competitiveness and has already achieved certain goals in this direction, and having obtained the permission to investigate the University I proceeded to the data collection which lasted for three weeks and included, as already mentioned, interviews with the faculty, administration and students, analysis of the statistical information and university reports, getting through a survey for students. In total, I conducted 12 interviews: 3 - with administration and 7 – with the academic staff and 2 - with students. As the online survey concerns, I have received 42 responses from the students studying on various departments.

Chapter 4: Competition on the National Level: the Case of Germany

In support of the EU agenda for enhancing competitiveness, nation-states provided considerable impetus to universities for reform: in Germany the policies on higher education have been considerably changed under the leitmotiv of ‘performance and competition’. The transformations have mainly affected the system of funding the higher education institutions, which was placed on the grounds of competition. As Hufner and Landfried (2003: 141) underline, “the current reform process is taking place at all levels of German higher education, for which, in view of the severe overall financial constraints in Germany, innovative transformations have become an absolute must.” Besides, in 2005 the German federal government initiated a reform of the salary structure for professors, according to which professors will no longer receive automatic salary increases every two years. This supplement will be granted only in accordance with the performance criteria of the professor (Hufner and Landfried, 2003). These novelties imply that competitiveness in Higher education on Germany is present on two dimensions: on the inter-Universities’ level, when Universities have to compete for students and professors, for funding and for reputation; and on the intra-University level, when departments compete for funding and professors compete for achieving greater performance.

4.1. Higher Education Policies in Germany

As substantiation and consequence of EU policies, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research jointly with the German Research Foundation conducted since 2005 “The Excellence Initiative” that aims to promote top-level research and to improve the quality of German universities, to strengthen international cooperation, and to enhance the international appeal of German universities, thus, making it more internationally competitive and focusing attention on the outstanding achievements of German universities and the German scientific community (German Research Foundation (DFG) website). During this period, more than thirty universities in total received funding. According to the German Research Foundation (DFG), the program includes three lines of funding: establishment of research schools for young scientists that will receive one million euros each per year; creation of thirty so-called “Clusters of Excellence” that are aimed to connect universities with leading research institutes and business enterprises; and the selection of nine Universities of Excellence, which are funded for their “future concepts”, i.e. institutional strategies to promote top-level university research. The third line of funding has drawn considerable international attention, both in academia and media. (German Research Foundation (DFG) website)

As Wende (2004) highlights, in order to understand the current alterations in HE, analysis should be undertaken both on the level of European Union and on the national level. This level of analysis is required because HE systems are being shaped by the interplay of policies on these two levels: on the one side, EU policies are executed on the national

level, and on the other side, EU policies are affected by the national level. Thus, reforms in HE are occurring as a result of diverse and complex multi-level policies.

4.2. The Pathways of Transformation at Ludwig-Maximilians University

In many respects, the structure of LMU has been expanded within the “LMU excellent” institutional strategy since 2006 when Central Boards for strategic issues were created. Thus, the Strategy and Controlling Unit was established aiming at building up a conception of further development of LMU and raising its competitiveness as a leading research University on the international level.

The “Excellence Initiative” significantly enhanced the Academia’s research profile and boosted its international position as a leading European research University. Though, already in 2004, LMU initiated its profile-redefinition and competitiveness-enhancing process. Then, as one of the interviewees argued (Administrator_3), quality assurance mechanisms were defined and internal competition was established as a principle for resource allocation at the University. Thus, the research strategy in the frames of “LMU excellent” gradually defined the University’s long-term aims on this basis and laid groundwork for recruitment, investment, providing funds to young promising academics, as well as, for raising international attractiveness for scientists, and for reinforcing existing areas of focus.

Accordingly, Ludwig-Maximilians University has all the prerequisites for sustaining and extending its competitive position on the international education market: structural

reforms focused on raising effectiveness and working out a successful strategy of the institution, significant funding from the DFG, state and third-part resources, leading professors and excellent university facilities. On the scale of Germany, it has been a prominent HEI for a long time. However, its international recognition has come relatively recently and as I presume it is connected with the institutional purposeful strategic program of enhancing its international prestige and competitiveness which is the reflection of the target of the national and EU politics in higher education.

4.3. The Outcomes of the Pressure to Compete and its Impact on Ludwig-Maximilians University

As already put forward previously, LMU follows the mainstream of the competition and excellence ideology imposed by EU and employs a distinct strategy of enhancing its competitiveness. This fact can be proved by the evidence that LMU has taken part and succeeded in the chief national competition among German universities - Excellence Initiative. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged by the interviewers from the university administration that the governance structures of LMU are currently in the process of transformation triggered by the endeavour to develop into the world “leading research University” and that yet in 2004 “an internal competition was established as a principle for resource allocation at the university.” As one key informant put it, the aim of the “LMU excellent” is “to firmly establish LMU as a premier global partner for the identification and problem-oriented solution of decisive questions concerning the future of humankind, society, culture, environment, science and technology.” Accordingly, the discourses of excellence and competition appeared in all interviews primarily with the administrative staff who mainly take it for granted that LMU must strive for being more competitive.

However, despite the general assumption revealed from the conversations with the administrative staff and some professors that competition both inside the university and with other universities leads to prosperity, I examine in the upcoming paragraphs what

are the advantages and disadvantages of competition for Ludwig-Maximilians University. On the one hand, I admit that it is probably too early to make generalizations on the influence of the pressure to compete as far as the ultimate consequences will manifest themselves in about ten or even twenty years since the University is still under the reforms which are supposed to cardinaly alter the whole structure. Thus, it would be easier to single out the effects of competition once the transformations are completed. On the other hand, certain outcomes of the reforms are already obvious and, ultimately, definite predictions can be deduced on their basis.

4.3.1. Creating Excellence Paradigm

Upon the results of the national universities' competition for funding called "Excellence Initiative" in 2006 only seven universities in Germany have been selected by the government and Ludwig-Maximilians University of Munich was one of them. The Academia received funding for carrying out their proposed research project and the right to carry the title 'excellent University' which aimed at adding to their prestige.

From the first sight, it sounds like a great success for LMU to win this competition and to become an 'excellent University'. The money provided by the state allowed the institution to open massive research units "Center of Integrated Protein Studies", „Nanosystems Initiative Munich“ (NIM), and „Munich-Centre for Advanced Photonics“ (MAP) in order to run a number of research projects as well as sub-projects like training

courses, Summer Universities, seminars and conferences. Besides, in the frames of the Excellent Initiative a Graduate School of Systemic Neurosciences (GSN) was founded as a distinct institution, governed by an interdisciplinary scientific board. In this connection, let us investigate deeper what the ‘excellence’ paradigm signifies and what kind of effects it produced upon LMU.

First and foremost, this funding is very limited in the sense that it covers expenses only within the project that it was directed to, i.e. within functioning of the Center of Integrated Protein Studies (CIPS). Taking the chance of becoming ‘excellent’ the University administration employed resources of the whole institution to serve the needs of this project. This fact, in my view, entailed an intangible cleavage between the Natural Sciences and the Humanities, as well as between the departments of the corresponding areas. Based on the observation and the interviews with professors, it was easy to notice that Natural Sciences, including Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, constitute the core disciplines of the Academia, and that there is an explicit privilege of the disciplines and the departments of Natural Sciences compared to the Humanities in all the aspects of the institution’s life. In this regard, among the main disadvantages that the departments of Humanities had to experience, were decrease of funding, shortening of the quantity of positions for professors and abolition of some education programs.

One can argue that these measures are justified since it is sensible for the University, functioning in terms of cost and benefit, to invest in the most promising spheres.

However, I would claim that the advantages supposed to be delivered from the ‘Excellence Initiative’ are hardly worth of the expenses carried by the institution. As for the Center of the Integrated Protein Studies itself, it does not, in my view, contribute much to development of the whole Academia. To prove this, it is enough to see who mainly benefits from the Center. First, it is the state, that receives intellectual resources, innovations in research to be implemented in industry; then the region that got new work places and attracted the best ‘brains’; the local business organizations that benefited from establishing cooperation with the CIPS; some individuals who took the opportunity to advance in their scientific career. But as for LMU, in the exception of prestige and the right to be called ‘excellent’ it ‘gained’ only in increase of working hours of the faculty and the administration thus mobilizing the forces of the institution needed to carry out the project, in shortening of the places for professors and closing some programs of studies in the Departments of the Humanities.

Students did not seem to benefit very much either, as it is their needs and interests that the universities actually are supposed to satisfy, yet on the whole they did not really gain anything from the CIPS (with the exception perhaps of a limited number of students who benefited from it). As for students’ assistantship in researches, it is not, as I have learned, organized on a regular basis, but only a lucky few get this opportunity usually due to their individual networks. Besides, in this case, under students only graduate students are implied. As for undergraduate students, they are not involved in activities of the CIPS anyhow.

Furthermore, the funding for realization of the project is provided only until 2011 when another competition will be organized. And in the case that LMU does not win this competition again, the CIPS will be either closed, or given under supervision of another University, or reorganized as an independent research center. The latter, I think, is the most probable future of the CIPS. So far, it needs LMU to develop itself, but as soon as it will gain enough of the intellectual and labor resources from LMU, as soon as it will become a recognized organization in the region, it will not anymore need the University. In the result, as I consider the most probable, LMU, after endeavoring all its efforts, mobilizing its forces and investing its resources, will be left out without this center.

From the all above said, it follows self-evidently, that the main goals that LMU is pursuing amount to achieving the ‘unachievable’ excellence and raising its prestige as the leading research University in Europe. This can be explicitly seen even from analyzing the website of the institution.

The label ‘LMU excellent’ is placed on the starting page of LMU and is the most eye-catching. There the detailed information about the excellence initiative, the competition itself and LMU’s participation in it is presented. The middle part of the home page is occupied by the news, discoveries or simply observations in the fields of Natural sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) that usually do not have any connection with the institution itself: for example, the headlines are “Unusual cell nuclei help nocturnal

animals see better” or “Alzheimer cell death in Zebrafish: demise of neurons observed live”. Thus, the dominating position of Natural Sciences at LMU is exhibited already on the starting web-site page.

To sum up, I would draw the parallel in the University’s endeavor to become more competitive, to become excellent and the ignorance of the students by the Academia as the most significant constituent of the institution to which the whole function of the institution is supposed to be directed. In my view, considering their limited possibilities and resources, universities usually choose to concentrate on serving interests of different parts (be it interests of local authorities, business communities, academic staff, governing body or those of the students) unequally. In the case of LMU, the institution has chosen to focus on raising its international prestige and recognition by means of developing top-level research. These transformations required mobilization of the labor resources of the institution that as a result negatively affected the quality of student services and education.

As a separate problem, I would question the axiom that a contemporary university must necessarily strive for performing ‘top-level’ research. At what expense are universities to pursue this goal when they are underfinanced by the state? Why should universities that nowadays are obviously suffering from an overgrown complexity of responsibilities, activities, goals and missions take the burden of making cutting-edge research for the state economy? Posing these problems I do not, however, reject the assumption that

universities must perform research activities. Hereby, I am simply claiming that universities should not be pressed by the necessity to perform top-level research, to be leaders in this sphere and to take it as their primary cornerstone mission.

4.3.2. Defining the University's goals, strategies and priorities

At present the core strategy of LMU, as its administrators reported, amounts to preparation for successful participation in the next excellence initiative competition in 2011. In the frames of this chief objective, a process of restructuring of the whole University structure has been initiated that cardinally changed the self-understanding of the institution. Transformations included changes in the system of management, the funding system, and development of the entrepreneurial culture.

As the data obtained through the interviews shows, to the greatest extent LMU is primarily oriented to and depends upon the EU policies and the Bavarian State Ministry of Education in establishing its goals and conceptions of the future development. However, many interviewees acknowledged that nowadays German universities in general and LMU in particular have become more independent from the State Ministries and have more autonomy than before. In this regard, I would maintain the view of Amaral and Karseth (2002) who claimed that the impact of neoliberalism on higher education caused a shift in relationships of states and universities, which can be characterized by the reduction of control and the establishment of partnership relations. To bring into view, the fact that "LMU excellent" conception is worked out and

implemented independently from the State of Bavaria bears evidence that the regional state control over the University is not determinant and that LMU possesses a high degree of autonomy. However, a HEI cannot be absolutely independent from the state, from the society and from other external influences akin to economics and politics. It has to follow the generally accepted rules that are inflicted by the process globalization and that position universities on one international competitive playground.

Following the discussion about the excellence paradigm, it is noteworthy to point out that the overall long-term goal of the university, as the administrators claim, is the achievement of academic excellence. Thus, the importance of the excellence ideology and its impact on the university cannot be overestimated: it has been spread out through all the spheres of the university's activities reforming the culture and values in academia. At the same time, in the frames of the excellence paradigm the operational sub-goals have been defined. According to Administrator_3, they comprise

- Recruiting of excellent scientists. "This means that LMU has to ensure that it is attractive to international scholars both as a place of research and as an interdisciplinary forum of intellectual interchange"
- Quality assurance and management which "needs to become a steady, focused and professional process in order to focus on the available resources in the enhancement of strategically important areas"

- Professionalization of dealings with “adverse external conditions in order to diminish their negative effects on research by suitable concepts of university development”
- Development of the “governance structures towards a stronger internal decision-making competence and a greater degree of autonomy”

Among the other goals and conceptions of the further development the following have been highlighted by the Administrator_3: the concept of establishing internationally competitive research conditions; a quality concept for quality management and assurance in research and the advancement of young scholars; a cooperation concept to promote regional and international cooperation; and a governance concept to introduce the planned reform of the organizational and leadership structures of LMU.

On the premise of the highlighted points, I conclude that the “LMU excellent” program, to the greatest extent, defined the goals, strategies and priorities of the University. Establishment of the excellence paradigm and implementation of the concomitant concepts of governance structure developments, efficiency, quality assurance and recruitment of leading researchers can be commented, in my opinion, as response to the external pressure for raising competitiveness.

4.3.3. Changes in the system of funding

*“We cannot deny that the universities
in Germany are heavily underfinanced.”*

Professor_Humanities_1

In 2006 the German system of Higher Education Institutions' funding provided by the government has been cardinally reformed. The state authorities took it as a problem that universities in Germany were all approximately on the same level with their performance: all of them were equally good, but still there was no “Harvard” in Germany that would be able to compete with the Universities of the USA and UK. The German government, searching for the ways to bring new ideas and innovations in the development of their knowledge economy, found the solution in employing Universities' intellectual resources. In order to achieve these goals, German authorities decided to fund the Higher Education Institutions unequally, as it used to be, but only to fund the best ones - selected on a competitive base. Moreover, the system of the professorial salaries has been reformed: since 2005 professors are no longer granted a fixed sum of money, instead, they are salaried on a performance-oriented base. On the other hand, tuition fees have been introduced in order to provide an additional source of funding for the Universities (European Centre for Higher Education UNESCO-CEPES)

As Administrator_1 reported, the reforms at LMU comprise also the reorganization of professorship positions initiated to cope with the financial difficulties. Implementation of

the so-called 50/40/10 process is planned for the next ten years starting from the last year and is aimed at reconsideration of all the vacant professorial positions. Only 50% of all the free positions will be taken by the professors working in the same spheres. 40% of positions will be given to professors with dissimilar scope of interests, whereas 10% of all the positions will be abolished. In the words of Administrator_1, “the main reason for cancelling of positions is to reserve some money for new spectacular successful ideas, for this next round of Excellence Initiative.” This fact expresses merely that the assets at LMU are not redistributed equally but concentrated on the most successful and prospective scientific fields, thus the University authorities are explicitly maintaining the leitmotiv of competition inside the institution.

The comments both from professors and administrators concerning the introduction of the tuition fees were ambiguous: on the one side, they acknowledged that this source of funding is a substantial support to the Departments that are underfinanced. Accordingly, they are content with the introduction of fees which allowed the Departments to hire more professors and to improve their facilities. But on the other side, they agree on the point that this additional payment significantly complicates life for the students. Based on the online survey and interviews with students, the majority of the undergraduates (69,23%) have to work in parallel with their studies to maintain themselves financially. As Professor_Humanities_1, Dean_Humanities_1, and Professor_Natural_Sciences_1 have noted, having to work a separate job affects the academic performance of students tremendously. Furthermore, the general opinion

indicates that the situation is expected to get even worse owing to the transition to the two-cycle system in the frames of the Bologna Declaration which stipulates that the students have to complete all the courses in the estimated period of time and in contrast to the former German system, students are not allowed to prolong their studies anymore. To top it off, the resistance process both from the part of the faculty and from the part of students has been in place since the reform of funding system was initiated. Students have been particularly active in asserting their right to free education: since 2007 a number of demonstrations and protests against tuition fees have been organized by students in Munich (Newspaper of Bayern „Ausbürger Allgemeine“), and the Student Union of LMU is continuously negotiating with the University administration concerning the fees.

The restructuring process encountered resistance from several departments as well, in particular, from those that had to close down their professorship positions. However, the conflict did not grow into a massive protest given that the interests of the departments differ depending on the amount of financing they obtain. The 50/40/10 process, for instance, is highly beneficial to the departments that are already successful and, therefore, they have all the reasons to strongly support this system. Moreover, in the view of all my respondents, professors do not have any real influence on the fundamental decisions on the managerial issues at LMU. And this state of affairs stems from the management reform at the University which resulted in concentration of decision-making power in the hands of the few - the President and the Governing Board. Professor_Humanities_1,

Dean_Natural_Sciences_1 and Dean_Humanities_1 stated that their letters of protest did not change the situation much. As Dean_Natural_Sciences_1 asserted, “The resistance cannot go through university, there is no chance. If you say ‘I’m against it’, forget it. There is no chance to do that, because the University structure has changed in the way that university leadership can do whatever they want.”

Meanwhile, most of the Departments are experiencing serious financial constraints being unable to employ more professors (at some institutes the professors versa students ratio amounts to 3/700), to support research projects or to improve facilities. At the same time, the current reforms do not seem to be targeted at solving this problem. On the contrary, the 50/40/10 process is increasing the gap in funding among the departments. The effect of the transformations is already obvious: the already successful departments are gaining more advantages while the situation in the backward departments is getting even worse.

Asserting that German Universities have been in the state of financial crisis for about twenty years, Stoeling and Schimank (2001) consider the orientation on the Gibbons’ “mode 2 of knowledge production” as one the major reasons of the decline. In its essence the mode 2 is primarily characterized by the production of contextually applied knowledge, or, in other words, by the market-oriented research, by transdisciplinarity, enhanced social accountability and broadly based system of quality control. (Gibbons, 1994) The findings of my research indicate that the same features are present at LMU: the university administration strongly supports departments in enhancing their incomes from the industry and business community. With the purpose of making departments

more entrepreneurial and increasing profit from research the Entrepreneurship Center functions at LMU since 2000. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to argue that market to the greatest extent defines the University's politics. The partnerships with business and industrial organizations established by a number of departments do not result in significant investments. As Dean_Natural_Sciences_1 underlined, collaboration with the business communities and industries is marked by unfavourable deficiencies connected with the specific narrow interests of these communities in some particular research spheres while seeking instantaneous outcomes, demands in confidentiality of research that impedes publication of the scientific findings and reallocation of professorial positions that can bring negative effects after the investments from the business partners are ceased. Furthermore, for many departments it appears highly problematic to find external sponsors since their scientific areas do not represent any interest for the business communities. Still, LMU undertook certain steps towards implementation of the entrepreneurial model. As dean_Natural_Sciences_1 remarked, "there is that shift that now we think in terms of business more than in the past."

On the premise of the above said, it is clear that the reforms of the funding system of the German Universities in general and of LMU in particular are directed to redistribution of resources not equally but on the competitive base that entails enormous discrepancy in incomes of the departments and professors.

4.3.4. Producing inequalities

To the greater extent, enormous inequalities in incomes of the departments resulted both from the financial redistribution policy on the merit base discussed in 4.2.3 and from the Excellence initiative which provided donations only to the departments participating in the program (departments of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Physics, Medicine and Biology) but entailed thorough structural reforms that fundamentally changed the University profile, mission and objectives. This shift in the steering idea of the University triggered by the Excellence Initiative is marked by the turn towards excellence ideology, orientation on effectiveness, accountability and competitiveness in all the spheres of the institution's activities.

Whether the ideology of excellence and competition yields more gains than disadvantages is presumably too early to estimate. The respondents differed in their opinions concerning Excellence Initiative. However, all of them maintained that the current reforms resulted in a high degree of inequalities between departments. In the account of Administrator_1, the cleavage in funding is immense:

There are successful fields with a lot of money from outside and there are other areas for which it is impossible to get much money: all fields responsible for education perhaps. For this area money from outside is a difficulty to get. And this leads to big inequality in the university. The successful fields in the last excellence initiative are the stars of the university with a lot of money and

potential for the institutes to make cooperations with the business areas and they are very impressive on this. But the big part of the university has to deal with the daily hard work for professional education for a lot of students and this also makes some troubles in the university.

Most of the interviewees also reflected on the problem of discrepancy in financing and its consequences. The major concern they addressed in this regard was the underdevelopment of many departments as a result of the decrease in funding. Among other difficulties related to the low financial support Dean_Natural_Sciences_1, Dean_Humanities_1, Professor_Humanities_1 and Dean_Humanities_2 complained about the scarcity of professorship positions on their departments. The comparisons of students versa professors ratios on different departments are striking: whereas the Department of Physics comprises 50 professors, the Department of Sociology can afford only 5 professors while the number of students is higher on the Department of Sociology. Similarly, the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry includes 47 professors compared to 8 professors at the Department of Languages and Literature. As Professor_Humanities_1 informed me, they have about 500 students per professor at their Department. This unprecedented proportion of students per professor not only creates additional pressure on the professors in terms of teaching and administrative work, but also hinders the scientific development of the Department: the low quantity of professors does not allow them for the possibility to specialize in certain scientific spheres so that this situation induces them to be generalists. Thus, while some Departments are provided

with the chances to develop, others do not get such chances. Obviously, to perform high quality advanced research is extremely problematic at the departments with low quantity of professors who are overwhelmed by the teaching and administrative work.

Similarly, the competition paradigm affected the salaries distribution procedure creating high inequalities in incomes of professors. According to Administrator_1 and Administrator_2, there is no any definite estimated amount of salary. Each Department is provided with a fixed sum designated for salaries and it depends upon the Department how to distribute this sum. Hence, as Administrator_1 claims, “we have some top professors with incredible salaries but for a lot of other professors we have to say ‘we cannot give you much money’.” This fact expresses merely that LMU purposefully encourages competition on the diverse levels of the institution. Explicitly bearing the features of the neoliberal ideology, the reforms at LMU may result in the effects put forward by Pierre Bourdieu (1998): ‘methodical destruction of collectives’ caused by competition which “is extended to individuals themselves, through the individualisation of the wage relationship: establishment of individual performance objectives, individual performance evaluations, individual salary increases or granting of bonuses as a function of competence and of individual merit” (Bourdieu, 1998: 8) and ‘the extraordinary growth in income differences’.

4.3.5. Reformation of the system of management

Referring to the universities' systems of management, McNay (1995) distinguished four types of university models: collegium, bureaucracy, corporation and enterprise. According to him, collegium is associated with a traditional type of governing university with freedom as the dominant value, departments as dominant units and consensual management style. The system of bureaucracy cardinally differs from the one of collegium: it is mainly characterized by the regulatory role of central authorities, reactive adaptation and rules as the major internal references. Corporation is relatively closer in its essence to enterprise. However, whereas in corporation the role of central authorities is directive, in enterprise it is supportive; whereas universities with corporation structure refer to the internal plans in its activities, enterprise universities orient on the students and market strength (McNay, 1995). Undoubtedly, every Academia usually represents a mixture of these models bearing the features of all of them. However, there is always some dominating type of culture that can be associated with one of these models.

Based on my findings, I believe that the management system of LMU has been transformed from the collegium to a corporation model and is still being on the way of reform to the enterprise model. Whereas the prevailing culture of collegium in governance used to be characterized by the consensual management style with departments as dominant units and informal groups networks as the main decision arenas, the shift to corporation implied the dominance of the political (tactical) management style with management teams in the centre of the decision arena and the dominant unit. As regards the role of administrators, it has changed from the position of the servant of the

community to being the servant of the chief executive. Among the features of an enterprise that I have identified at LMU are the dominant value of competence, tendency for raising the number of external funding and the availability of provisional project teams.

At the same time, some professors and students claimed that the university functions as a highly bureaucratic structure. In case of professors, this belief is, presumably, connected with the transition to the new BA and MA programs and system of assessment. Accordingly, Professor_Humanities_1 complained about the excessive administrative control:

Our Faculty and a number of Faculties of LMU have not yet started this BA and MA curriculum. But my colleagues started to work on BA curriculum 4 years ago. And until now it was not implemented because the administration is changing conditions and parameters every few weeks, every few months and you have to start over and over again. And now we finished again, the curriculum, for the BA which is supposed to start in autumn this year and now it is examined by the administration at the university. But I think it's 1 or 2 people who try to examine all the BA curricular of the whole University. And sometimes it seems that they assume they know better than us how to teach Sociology I mean by the feedback we get.

Moreover, both students and professors agreed on the point that the administration is slowing down all the activities “to an unbearable degree”. The main problem, as

Professor_Humanities_1 noted, is that „so many things have to be decided at the administrative level. I think we know much better how to teach Sociology and we are the real experts of curricular, not somebody.“

In parallel to the alterations in the management culture, the process of centralization of power is proceeding at the University. None of the deans or professors admitted that they have any influence on the decision-making process in the University. On the contrary, they asserted that since the change of the procedure of electing the President of the University took place, the power has been concentrated in the hands of the President and the Central Board that reduced decision-making freedom of the deans and professors. According to Administrator_1, „Some years ago the professors were more free in their daily decisions, in their own goals than they are today. This is connected to this general change [management reform].”

4.3.6. Competition on diverse levels of the University

In this way, a Darwinian world emerges – it is the struggle of all at all levels of the hierarchy, which finds support through everyone clinging to their job and organization under conditions of insecurity, suffering, and stress.

Pierre Bourdieu (1998)

The analyzed tendencies for transformations – changes in the funding system, reforms of the managerial structure, intensified concern over research and prestige, I relate to and account for by the strive for enhancing competitiveness of LMU imposed on the University both by the local authorities and by the EU policies. Judging from the responses of the professors, administrators and students I drew the inference that the involvement of LMU into competition appears on diverse levels: on the inter-Universities' level, on the level of the departments within the University, among the professors and among the students.

To the greatest extent, LMU competes internationally for the best professors and outstanding researchers who would make their contribution to raising prestige of the Academia on the world-wide scale. As Administrator_1, Administrator_2 and Administrator_3 informed me, the most important aspect of competition for LMU is in respect of professors. The competition for students does not any play role in the institution. In many respects, this is due to the fact that LMU does not experience any shortage of applicants. According to Administrator_1, “the University does not need advertisements for students because there are too many students”. Indeed, LMU being quite inactive both on the national and international education markets does not even run an office of marketing and communications that would engage in the PR activities. Presumably, the lack of interest in expanding the recruitment activities is connected with the evidence that on the one hand, the tuition fees do not constitute the major source of

funding of the University, and on the other, that it does not have many competing institutions in the region.

Thus, for LMU, the real motive of pride is the reputable professors and researchers. In other words, it is most reasonable for a university primarily oriented on prestige - and a leading position in science - to seek human resources that would add to it. At the same time, competition is also present among the professors themselves. As Administrator_1 put it, „We reduced the financial support of the professors per year; we reduced that step by step. And this led to a new kind of competition in the University.“ Within every department, the salaries differ significantly, depending on the performance of professors. Competition is generated by the circumstance that the departments obtain only a limited sum designated for salaries and which is unevenly distributed among the professors.

On the inter-departmental level competition is proceeding due to the shortage of funding. Given that in the new system of funding only the most successful departments are being supported, competition is increasing, which produces inevitable tensions among the departments, as far as it leads to the situation that already successful departments develop further while others do not get the chance to improve. To take up the opinion of Dean_Natural_Sciences_1,

if you invest only into Natural Sciences and forget about all other fields, then you will do something bad for the whole University. So, it's like in society: if some people get too rich, others get too poor, the society get troubles. And also the

University does not only consist of Medicine and Physics. It also needs languages and legal studies. And I am in favour of the concept of a support university, i.e. when certain fields cannot raise much funding, they also get support.

Nevertheless, the Governing Board of LMU is apparently pursuing the goal of enhancing the performance of the departments and of the institution as a whole by means of placing departments in the conditions of competition.

Competition among students has not yet grown much in its scope. In my view, it originates from the two-cycle system, which so far has been implemented at LMU partially since some departments are still running the Magister studying programs that stem from the German system of higher education. Competition is inherent in the Bachelor-Master system to the extent that the University approves of only a limited number of applications (about 20%) from its BA-graduates for the MA studies. Again, the selection is proceeding on a performance base. In my survey, on the question whether students feel that there is any kind of competition among them for being the best in studies, 53,85% of the respondents gave positive results which shows that even the students are conscious of the need to compete at their University.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Having presented the findings of this study I consider it relevant to return to the hypothesis of the paper to discuss it from the perspective of the obtained investigations. As I hypothesised, the need to enhance competitiveness of European HEIs that was imposed by the European states' and EU's policies in higher education - under the influence of globalization and neoliberal ideology - results in a conflict of purpose based on an unprecedented multiplication of functions and goals, and in internal competition which leads to a process of fragmentation and inequality. My research demonstrates that the competition and excellence ideologies had an adverse affect on Ludwig-Maximilians University. The evidence shows that the pressure for efficiency, and call for more accountability, leads to amplifications of functions that the University has to perform. The amount of new goals and concepts for development are rapidly increasing at LMU due to the efforts of the Governing Board to raise the competitiveness of the institution. The strive for excellence and competitiveness is reflected through the participation of LMU in numerous national and international competitions initiated primarily by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), German Research Foundation (DFG), Bavarian State Ministry and other organizations.

All these trends are predominantly viewed by the Central Governing Board as contributing to the progress of the University. However, the increased international prestige of the University and the performance of top-level research are not, as I argue,

sufficient indicators of prosperity. Multiplication of functions and goals put additional pressure on the professors and executives. Internal competition and quality assurance mechanisms generated by the excellence paradigm yielded an enormity of demands on the staff, enforced a hierarchical dependence, and increased the individual responsibility and accountability of the personnel. Moreover, internal competition caused a fragmentation of the constituent units and communities of LMU, and led to conflicts amongst them.

In regards to the position of the students in the excellence-seeking University, I inferred that the experience of being a student has been transformed for the worse mainly due to the deteriorated student services, which are the consequence of the expansion of LMU, the excessive number of students, and squeezed budgets. According to the opinions of students and professors, the University is poorly oriented to the needs of students while performing its activities and constructing the plans for the future development. Although, the Student Union of LMU has been insistent enough in stating students' right for participation in determining of the future profile of the University, the influence of the students on the decision-making process concerning the LMU regulations is minimal and mostly insignificant. The survey confirms that LMU provides too little support in terms of services and does not express any concern about the difficulties that most of the students have to cope with the introduction of the tuition fees and new two-cycle programs. Hence, the new University system being corporative, self-focused, and vastly

bureaucratic places students in the position of passive agents who have to accept all the policies and regulations that the University establishes.

Thus, in answering the research question – how the institution responds to policy directives in HE and to the external downward pressure for being competitive on the national and global education market, as well as what are the consequences of the reform processes initiated in this context - my investigations demonstrate that Ludwig-Maximilians University has extensively implemented competition principles on the levels of departments, administration, and on the individual level of professors and students. This competition and excellence paradigm has gradually resulted in a devastating development of gaps among the departments (primarily among those of Natural Sciences and Humanities), deterioration in terms of student support, and exceeding pressure on the academic and administrative staff in the light of the demands for efficiency and accountability. At the same time, the current transformations do not seem to be directed towards coping with these problems. The recently restructured funding policy, based on the principle of competition, increases inequalities among the departments to an even greater extent than before. Moreover, the distribution of salaries on a performance basis undoubtedly adds to the competition, tensions and conflicts on the individual level that result in the destruction of the collectives and further fragmentation at the University.

In order to raise its competitiveness LMU has chosen to place a strong emphasis on research. As noted in section 4.2.2., the core mission of the university is to become a

leading research university on a global scale. Following this idea, the University required professorial commitment in research projects sponsored by external funding. The participation by LMU in the national “excellence initiative” competition promoted innovations and top-level research in the field of Natural Sciences. At the same time though, it provided additional impetus to further transformations that plunged LMU deeper in the internal competition and inequalities.

Accordingly, it can be inferred that the findings of the study entirely prove the hypothesis of the research: the need to enhance competitiveness within European higher education institutions imposed by the states’ and the EU’s policies in higher education - under the influence of globalization and neoliberal ideology - results in a conflict of purpose that is based on an unprecedented multiplication of functions and goals, and in internal competition which leads to fragmentation and inequality. Thus, my research both identified the responses of the case study University to the EU policy directives, and revealed the consequences of these reforms.

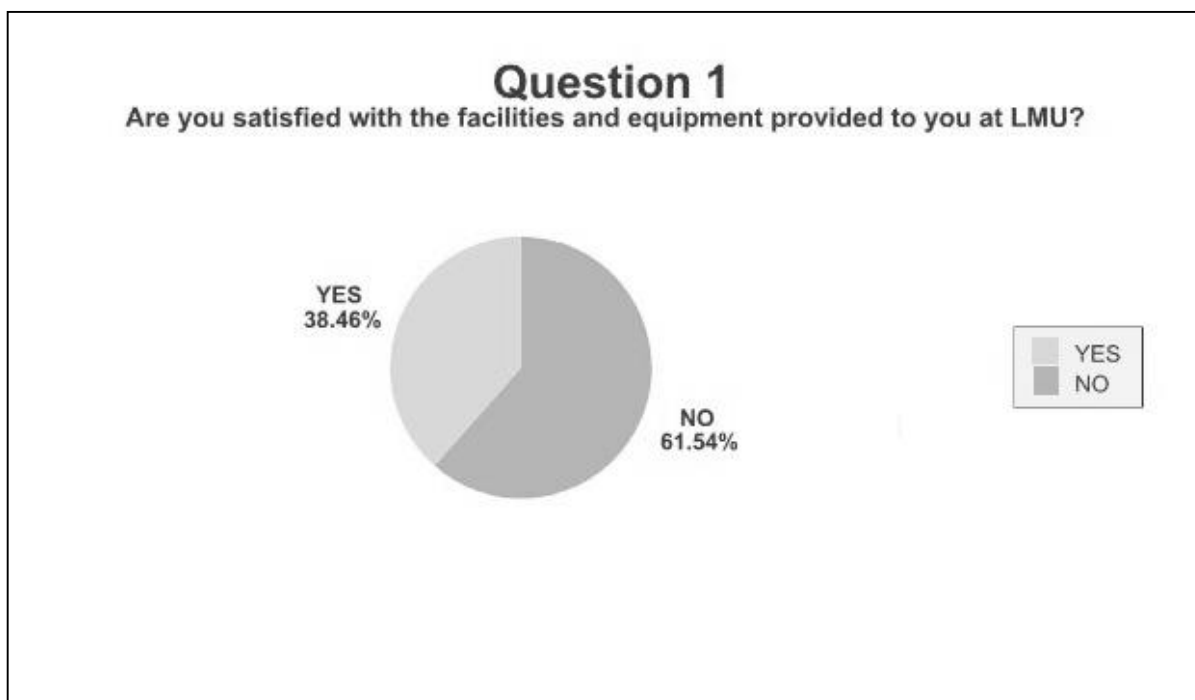
In my view, the theme of competition in higher education and its impact on universities requires further multi-perspective investigations. The evidence shows that the reforms in European higher education lead to a commercialization and commodification of higher education that I believe should not be regarded in purely economic terms. And, moreover, it should not be determined exclusively by neoliberal ideology. Higher education is still a public good, and therefore, in shaping the future profile of universities and in establishing

their missions and objectives, their social role and contribution to the society rather than commercially driven interests, must be the prime concerns for the policy-makers.

List of Appendices

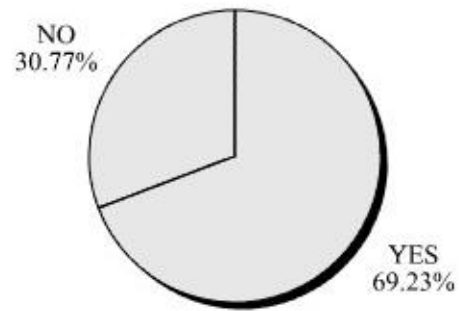
Appendix I

Results of the on-line survey for students of LMU



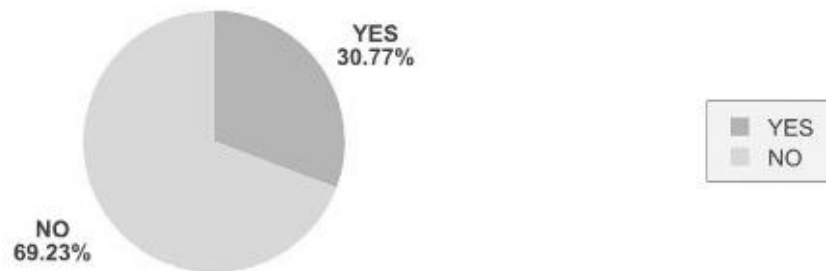
Question 4

Do you have to work to support yourself financially during your studies at LMU?



Question 5

Can you say that your studies are too intense?

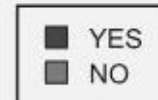
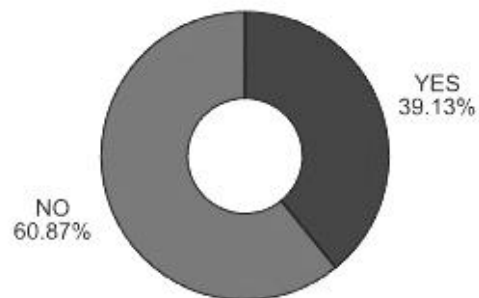


Question 6

Can you say that the administration of LMU is oriented primarily to students in performing their work?

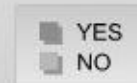
**Question 7**

Does central administration or departments often and easily support students' activities and events?



Question 8

Do you feel proud to be a student of LMU?



Question 9

Have you ever been engaged in any scientific research undertaken by your department?



Appendix II

List of responses from students to the question “What would you like to change in your University (in any spheres - education, services, rules, etc.)?”

What would you like to change in your University (in any spheres - education, services, rules, etc.)?

- First of all, it is absolutely necessary to abolish these university fees introduced 2 years back - which are 500 € per semester. There's much to say about this and other current problems concerning your field of interest.
- Professors should be more interested and motivated to do teaching, their focus is clearly on research
- I would like to be easier supported in students' activities by the departments.
- I would like to have paid the student body (Fachschaft).
- better professor-student relation (more professors per student)
- abolition of tuition fees in whole Bavaria
- institution of a constituted SUEC
- NO excellence initiative, but union and liberty of research and teachings
- intensity of study
- More locations outside the bib to learn in groups.
- better administration, more and longer office hours, lower tuition fees
- I wish I would have more time to study more individual, and not to be forced into this steady timetable, which came with the bachelor/master system, it shouldnt be like school anymore.
- Well, i would change the communication between the students of the different departments. The problem is, that the departments are pretty far away from each other.
- everything! more tutoring, less bureaucracy, more helpful administrators, more emphasis on getting students to work together (rather than what it's like now: every student has to prepare a paper on a subject in a seminar and that's what seminars in art subjects are like. the professor doesn't do anything, the quality of a seminar is dependent on the students)
- I would get rid of the so called "studiengebühren", a kind of fee, you have to pay to be allowed to study. Atm it is about 500 €, 250 € would be enough.
- dispose tuition fees

- More funding (not out of student fees!) so we can improve studying and service conditions. Abolition of student fees. Better food and friendly personnel in cafeterias. Comfortable rest areas.

- I would like to have more professors and no change to the Bachelor/Master system, plus want the university to understand the financial needs of smaller departments.

- better information service**
- financial support for students**
- more practice oriented studies**

- More seminars (and especially in foreign-language studies because most seminars are still offered in German although you are studying French or Spanish)

And I would really appreciate if the facilities (toilets, seats & writing surfaces in the classrooms) could be finally repaired at the "Romanistik Insitut"

I also would love my studies to focus less on theory and more on teaching practise (I'm studying to become a teacher)

- Semester fees

- more student orientation, more teachers and professors, less administration, more preparation for actual exams not just for research for the profs,

- The availability of field trips is not as satisfying as it could be. Additionally, I think that the exams taking place at the very end of some subjects are too big since they want to cover up to 10 semesters which is simply too much.

- better representation of students; less sabbaticals for professors

- I would like to have better facilities at my department, especially better books in the library and more computer work places.

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