

Researching the Europe of Knowledge:
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**Differentiated Integration and the
Bologna Process**

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- Research questions and the problem addressed
- The approach
- Analysis of research findings
- Avenues of further research and policy implications

Higher education literature and EU research scholarship lack of understanding how EU policy evolves into practice

- What is the contribution of the theory of differentiated integration to understanding Bologna and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area?
- How does the analysis of Bologna and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area contribute to the theory of differentiated integration?
- Policy enactment (Ball 2004) by means of national appropriation and institutional interpretation of the Bologna process challenges European integration (or convergence).

The relevance of the research and research questions

- The Bologna process is assumed as a **means** to achieve more integration by European and national level institutions.

But

Bologna shifted from a **means** to an **end** that might contend with the establishment of the European Higher Education Area.

The analysis of Bologna implementation showed that practices were assumed as **ends** undermining the development of practices grounded on shared values and collective assumptions (Neave and Veiga, 2013).

This shift is a challenge for political coordination: how to achieve higher levels of integration in higher education?

- Secondary analysis of existing data from Germany, Italy, Norway and Portugal
 - Qualitative data collected from national reports on the implementation of Bologna process.
 - Quantitative data from the results of a survey carried out in 2008 on the implementation of the Bologna process.
- Generalizations should be avoided on the basis of the sample representativeness (number of countries and institutions).
- Contribution to a more reflexive approach towards political coordination since the knowledge about political processes changes them.

- **Layers in differentiated integration**

- 1. Timescaling**

each country will be bound by the agreement of all as to the final objective to be achieved in common; it is only the timescales for achievement which vary (Tindemans, 1976).

- 2. Reconciling heterogeneity**

Mode of integration strategies which try to reconcile heterogeneity within the European Union (Stubb 1996).

- 3. Differentiating rights and obligations**

The possibility for different member states to have different rights and obligations with respect to certain common policy areas to achieve more integration in the long run (Kölliker 2001).

- 4. Models of differentiation integration**

Models of differentiated integration on the basis of six analytical dimensions (Holzinger and Schimmelfennig 2012). Nine out of the 10 models assume “permanent differentiation” a feature of integration.



Dimensions											
1	Temporary			Permanent							
2	Territorial								Functional		
3	Differentiaion at national-level					Multi-level differentiation					
4	Only inside EU-treaties				Also outside EU-treaties			Only inside EU treaties		Also outside EU-treaties	
5	EU-decision making				Club-decision making (intergovernmental)						
6	Only member states			Also non-member states		Only member states		Also jurisdictions outside EU			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Models	Multi-speed	Multiple standards	Avantgarde Europe	Core Europe, Concentric circles	Flexible integration	Variable geometry	Europe à la carte	Optimal level of jurisdiction	Flexible co-operation	FOCI	
Examples	Many in secondary law	In secondary law, e.g. environmental policy	EMU, basic rights charta	EMU; EEA; associated states	Enhanced co-operation, Bologna (at the start)	Schengen	Bologna	Competence allocation in Lisbon Treaty	EUREGIOS	No example	
References	Grabitz (1984); Stubb (1996, 2002)	Scharpf (1999)	Club von Florenz (1996)	Schäuble and Lamers (1984)	Centre for Economic Policy Research (1995)	Stubb (1996)	Dahrendorf (1979)	Fischer and Schley (1999)	Holzinger 2001	Frey and Eichenbrger (1996, 1997)	

(Holzinger and Schimmelfennig 2012)

1. The national appropriations of Bologna hindered higher levels of integration.

- National policies and the degree of autonomy of higher education institutions promoted discretionary decisions and practices in the recognition of academic degrees.

2. Proliferation of meanings attributed by institutional actors

- Institutional factors associated with institutional role, disciplines, etc. structure the political process and its outcomes.

The highlight of the **how** (enactment) into detriment of **what** has been achieved (implementation) revealed the absence of convergence (e.g. automatic recognition of national degrees) and of consensus around the principles, values and norms.

- The analysis of Bologna enactment showed how:
 - national and institutional levels actually deal with multiple, and sometimes contradictory, policy objectives and reference points (European, national, institutional...)
 - Institutions creatively interpret policy texts and translate them into practices,
 - real material conditions and varying resources are allocated.

- What is the contribution of the theory of differentiated integration to understanding Bologna and the establishment of the EHEA?
 - In the eyes of differentiated integration, Bologna envisages more integration, however the analysis of its enactment showed that it was not the case.
 - Future research: while cooperation between countries promotes convergence, the lack of consensus around principles seems not to enhance further integration.
 - How to include the diversity in the realm of European education policies aiming at further integration?

- How does the analysis of Bologna and the establishment of the EHEA contribute to the theory of differentiated integration?
 - The analysis of Bologna enactment brought forward tensions rather than polarisations between dimensions of differentiated integration seen as two extreme values (e.g. temporary versus permanent).



Since the deadline of 2010 to set the EHEA was established, is it possible to envisage Bologna as a project of “permanent differentiation” ?

National discretionary decisions and practices in policy fields, such as higher education, where the formal, legal and authority of European institutions is limited.

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Co-operation in education and training envisaging the EHEA and an initiative taken by a core of member states (Germany, Italy, France and the United Kingdom).

- How does the analysis of Bologna and the establishment of the EHEA contribute to the theory of differentiated integration?
 - Differentiated integration must focus on the integration as a major goal rather than being a theory devoted to explain the political management of non-integration.

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