

DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

Carla Liege Rodrigues Pimenta

**ATTRIBUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY
OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES IN TIMES OF
GLOBALIZATION IN HUNGARY AND GERMANY**

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EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY
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**Attributes of Higher Education and Quality of Institutional
Strategies in Times of Globalization in Hungary and Germany**

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To God be all honour and glory!



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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to examine the concept(s) of quality assurance that are stated in the guiding education policy and discourses on the Hungarian and German higher education systems, respectively. This dissertation aims to demonstrate the perspectives of students, teachers, and staff at selected public universities in both countries, namely Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and Humboldt University of Berlin, on their quality experiences in higher education, as well as to identify the perspectives of external policy makers on quality measures that are implemented in Higher Education Institutions, through interviews with students, teachers, and staff. Data were collected by a document analysis of national and institutional policies and semi-structured interviews. According to the information acquired from these legislations, the two nations have opposed methods to higher education governance. The management in Hungary is centralized and under the supervision of the national government. As a result of this state control, higher education institutions appear to have limited autonomy in the organization of academic programs. However, in 2021, the HE maintenance model shift, which has brought new way of operating. It is relevant to point out that the ELTE as an institution selected for this study continue to be remained as a state university. The thesis will not be able to cover the model change in depth, at least not in its current form. The German documents selected in this research demonstrate a conviction in the necessity of guaranteeing the quality of teaching, learning and research as well as academic freedom, equality of genders, and the autonomy of educational institutions. The data gathered for this study indicated a close association between governance and quality assurance in discourses about stakeholder responsibility, market openness, and academic freedom, among other topics. Even though professors have complete power over academic freedom, they must realign rules and practices to involve students in decision-making processes. It implies that institutions should continue to study strategies for making the best use of academics' abilities and experience, while also attempting to reduce the outflow of academics from the institution. Data has also revealed that the situation is comparable in both circumstances; the emphasis may be placed on different components in each scenario. Experience with quality in higher education is situational, and the experiences of the interviewees vary depending on their function. It has been argued that no two institutions would ever be the same because of the endless diversity of experiences that the stakeholders have. The precarity of the German context was brought up in the interviews, particularly in terms of pursuing a career in academia. The infrastructure provided to teachers to carry out their duties, as well as the provision of regular training and the promotion of interdisciplinary work across faculties, were the most frequently mentioned concerns from the Hungarian respondents.

Keywords: higher education; quality assurance; governance; institutional autonomy; academic freedom; history of university; comparative study

Absztrakt

A kutatás elsődleges célja, hogy megvizsgálja a minőségbiztosítás fogalmát (fogalmait), amelyek a német, illetve a magyar felsőoktatási rendszer irányadó oktatáspolitikai és felsőoktatási diskurzusaiban szerepelnek. A disszertáció célja, hogy a hallgatókkal, oktatókkal és munkatársakkal készített interjúk segítségével bemutassa a két ország kiválasztott állami egyetemén – a budapesti Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem és a berlini Humboldt Egyetem – a felsőoktatásban szerzett minőségügyi tapasztalataikról alkotott nézeteiket, valamint a külső politikai döntéshozóknak a felsőoktatási intézményekben alkalmazott minőségügyi intézkedésekről alkotott nézeteit. Az adatgyűjtés a nemzeti és intézményi szakpolitikák dokumentumelemzésével és félig strukturált interjúkkal történt. A dokumentumokból szerzett információk szerint a két ország a felsőoktatás irányításával kapcsolatban ellentétes megközelítést alkalmaz. A magyarországi felsőoktatási rendszer irányítása centralizált és a nemzeti kormány felügyelete alatt áll. Ennek az állami irányításnak az eredményeként a felsőoktatási intézmények a jelek szerint korlátozott autonómiával rendelkeznek oktatási és tudományos tevékenységük tekintetében. Azonban 2021-ben a felsőoktatási intézmények fenntartói irányítási szerkezete megváltozott, ami új működési módot hozott. Fontos kiemelni, hogy az ELTE az e disszertációhoz kiválasztott intézmény továbbra is állami egyetem. A dolgozat nem tudja mélyrehatóan tárgyalni a modellváltást, legalábbis a jelenlegi formájában nem. Az értekezésben vizsgált német jogi dokumentumok a tanulás, az oktatás és a kutatás minőségének, valamint az akadémiai szabadság, a nemek közötti egyenlőség és az oktatási intézmények autonómiájának biztosításában való meggyőződésről tanúskodnak. A tanulmányhoz gyűjtött adatok azt mutatták, hogy az irányítás és a minőségbiztosítás szoros kapcsolatban áll egymással többek között az érdekelt felek felelősségéről, a piac nyitottságáról és az akadémiai szabadságról szóló diskurzusokban. Annak ellenére, hogy a professzorok teljes hatalommal rendelkeznek az akadémiai szabadság felett, át kell alakítaniuk a szabályokat és a gyakorlatokat annak érdekében, hogy a hallgatókat bevonják a döntéshozatali folyamatokba. Ez azt jelenti, hogy az intézményeknek továbbra is tanulmányozniuk kell az akadémikusok képességeinek és tapasztalatának legjobb kihasználására irányuló stratégiákat, miközben arra is törekedniük kell, hogy csökkentsék az akadémikusok intézményből való kiáramlását. Az adatokból az is kiderült, hogy a helyzet mindkét körülmények között hasonló; a hangsúlyt az egyes forgatókönyvekben eltérő összetevőkre lehet helyezni. A minőséggel kapcsolatos tapasztalatok a felsőoktatásban szituációfüggőek, és a megkérdezettek tapasztalatai funkciótól függően változnak. Azzal érveltek, hogy az érdekelt tapasztalatainak végtelen sokfélesége miatt nincs két egyforma intézmény. Az interjúk során felvetették a német felsőoktatási rendszer bizonytalanságát, különösen az akadémiai karrierlehetőségek tekintetében. A magyar válaszadók leggyakrabban említett aggályai között szerepelt az oktatók számára feladatuk ellátásához biztosított infrastruktúra, valamint a rendszeres továbbképzések biztosítása és a karok közötti interdiszciplináris munka hiánya.

Kulcsszavak: felsőoktatás minőségbiztosítása; irányítás és menedzsment; intézményi autonómia; akadémiai szabadság; felsőoktatás története; összehasonlító tanulmány

Zusammenfassung

Das Hauptziel dieser Untersuchung ist es, die Konzepte der Qualitätssicherung zu untersuchen, die in den bildungspolitischen Leitlinien und Diskursen über die Hochschulbildung im deutschen und ungarischen Hochschulsystem enthalten sind. Diese Dissertation zielt darauf ab, die Perspektiven von Studierenden, Lehrenden und Mitarbeitern ausgewählter öffentlicher Universitäten in beiden Ländern, nämlich der Eötvös Loránd Universität in Budapest und der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, zu ihren Qualitätserfahrungen in der Hochschulbildung aufzuzeigen, sowie die Perspektiven externer politischer Entscheidungsträger zu Qualitätsmaßnahmen, die in den Hochschulen umgesetzt werden, durch Interviews mit Studierenden, Lehrenden und Mitarbeitern zu ermitteln. Die Daten wurden durch eine Dokumentenanalyse der nationalen und institutionellen Politik und durch halbstrukturierte Interviews erhoben. Den aus diesen Dokumenten gewonnenen Informationen zufolge verfolgen die beiden Länder in Bezug auf die Steuerung des Hochschulwesens unterschiedliche Ansätze. Die Verwaltung des Hochschulsystems in Ungarn ist zentralisiert und steht unter der Aufsicht der nationalen Regierung. Aufgrund dieser staatlichen Kontrolle scheinen die Hochschuleinrichtungen bei der Organisation der akademischen Programme nur über eine begrenzte Autonomie zu verfügen. Im Jahr 2021 hat sich das Hochschulmodell jedoch geändert, was zu neuen Arbeitsweisen geführt hat. Es ist wichtig, darauf hinzuweisen, dass ELTE, die für diese Studie ausgewählte Institution, weiterhin eine staatliche Universität ist. Die Dissertation wird nicht in der Lage sein, den Modellwechsel in der Tiefe zu behandeln, zumindest nicht in seiner aktuellen Form. Die in dieser Studie untersuchten deutschen Gesetzestexte zeigen die Überzeugung, dass die Qualität des Lernens, der Lehre und der Forschung sowie die akademische Freiheit, die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und die Autonomie der Bildungseinrichtungen gewährleistet werden müssen. Die für diese Studie gesammelten Daten deuten auf eine enge Verbindung zwischen Governance und Qualitätssicherung in Diskursen über die Verantwortung der Stakeholder, die Öffnung des Marktes und die akademische Freiheit hin, neben anderen Themen. Auch wenn die Professoren die volle Macht über die akademische Freiheit haben, müssen sie die Regeln und Praktiken neu ausrichten, um die Studierenden in die Entscheidungsprozesse einzubeziehen. Das bedeutet, dass die Einrichtungen weiterhin Strategien untersuchen sollten, um die Fähigkeiten und Erfahrungen der Akademiker optimal zu nutzen, und gleichzeitig versuchen sollten, die Abwanderung von Akademikern aus der Einrichtung zu verringern. Die Daten haben auch gezeigt, dass die Situation in beiden Fällen vergleichbar ist; der Schwerpunkt kann in jedem Szenario auf unterschiedlichen Komponenten liegen. Die Erfahrungen mit Qualität in der Hochschulbildung sind situationsabhängig, und die Erfahrungen der Befragten variieren je nach ihrer Funktion. Es wurde argumentiert, dass aufgrund der unendlichen Vielfalt der Erfahrungen, die die Beteiligten machen, keine zwei Einrichtungen jemals gleich sein werden. Die Prekarität des deutschen Hochschulsystems wurde in den Interviews angesprochen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Verfolgung einer akademischen Laufbahn. Die Infrastruktur, die den Lehrkräften zur Erfüllung ihrer Aufgaben zur Verfügung gestellt wird, sowie die Bereitstellung regelmäßiger Fortbildungen und die Förderung der interdisziplinären Arbeit zwischen den Fakultäten waren die am häufigsten genannten Anliegen der ungarischen Befragten.

Schlüsselwörter: Qualitätssicherung in der Hochschulbildung; Governance und Management; institutionelle Autonomie; akademische Freiheit; Geschichte der Hochschulbildung; vergleichende Studie

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Bologna Declaration (BD), signed on 19 June 1999, was strengthened related to some trends, such as quality, internationalization, globalization, institutional autonomy, democracy, and massification of the Higher Education (HE) systems (Kehm, 2010; Ozga et al., 2011). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have gone through changes to the management, curriculum, and pedagogy arising not only from the Bologna Process (BP) but also from the requirements and international trends inherent in the phenomenon of globalization (Dale, 2000).

When the knowledge society and the new paradigm associated with it (also known as the "knowledge economy" or the "knowledge-based economy") are considered together, they illustrate a new reality in which knowledge has impacts on policies, practices, organizations, and individual's lives, particularly when information and learning are now understood as more critical to achieve greater positions across all sectors of society (Dale & Parreira do Amaral, 2015; Hoffman *et al.*, 2009). Knowledge-based economy paradigm and globalization times are transforming the social role of HEIs as a knowledge society since it has become a vital intellectual gadget, as well as; there must be continued development of networked knowledge, which includes people's mobility and ideas, goods, and services, innovation, and financial capital for economic growth (Hoffman & Välimaa, 2016).

To meet these demands, it has become important for the institutions to reconfigure their practices and programs to promote the 'new knowledge production' within the international principles and global policies, the dynamics of the research environment, and enhance the quality as a key element for the improvements which, on the one hand, allows the institutions to engage in new wide world market logics aiming for qualification at the cultural, social and academic level in an innovative manner. On the other, it enables the mobility of students and teachers to establish a collaborative project, achieve democratization, and access/produces knowledge in the contemporaneity society (S. J. Ball, 2001; Gibbons et al., 1994).

Under these influences, the quality and the search for "efficiency" have followed hybrid systems and standardized models established by international policies, especially those arising out of European cooperation. This standardization justifies the prospect of Roger Dale (2000) when he discusses how national policies might be affected by globalization which stems from a "globally structured educational agenda" or "common world educational culture." In fact,

globalization and the challenges of the “knowledge society” have implications for the production of knowledge and educational policies, particularly in the expansion and integration of students from different countries and contexts in terms of social inclusion and cohesion, which are also part of the organization and higher education aim.

From this perspective, the enactment of the quality assurance mechanisms and tools in the HE systems to be able to systematically and continuously guarantee monitor, and lead the sustainable practices and achievement of the institution's mission consequently promotes the quality of education. The quality assurance phenomena and their importance have been growing in the increasingly globalized world (Rozsnyai, 2003).

This PhD research takes into consideration the importance of the quality assurance of HE. It mainly brings a compared view, which aims to observe/relate the policies that orient the systems and create strategies to ensure that quality will be guaranteed in this dynamic context. The quality of HE aims to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders in the process; establish structures for data analysis for comparison of institutions and countries consisting of an exercise to clarify the contexts and their changing aspects. Primarily, this dissertation intends to explain/interpret critically as these policies have potential implications and (un)intended effects on the contexts and actors and how to enable new approaches for the continuous improvement of the quality.

The objective of this research is quadripartite: (1) to examine the concept(s) of quality assurance mentioned in the guiding education policy and higher education discourses, emphasizing Hungary and Germany’s HE systems, two public universities, namely Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and Humboldt-University of Berlin (HUB); (2) to look into the two universities’ institutional strategies to leverage the qualification and improvement of training and the challenges of globalization and faced ideals of democratization; (3) to analyze perspectives of students, staffs, and teaching personnel in both countries regarding their quality experiences in HE. We have chosen these two HEIs because both institutions have a key role in leading research and their powerful influence on the production of knowledge and social improvement in the countries selected (Backhaus, 2015; Bösch, 2018; Németh & Garai, 2020). On the one hand, Hungary is an excellent example of a country that transitioned from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one in 1989-1990, only to reverse course twenty years later. However, Hungary and Germany can serve as valuable points of comparison because of their historical roots and

longstanding cultural influence. The contextual framework looks at their historical, economic, and social impact on the Hungarian and German HE contexts.

Therefore, the methodological part offers scientific theoretical foundations and insights into selecting qualitative research methods. This section includes data collection methods, participants, and analysis techniques.

The comparative method selected for this research places an integral part in comprehending the context of the educational policies for the quality assurance developments and their enactment in Hungary and Germany on the HE systems, many of which of these discourses are embedded in the contemporary context of globalization. It also aims to understand to what extent the national and supranational transformations affect the HEIs concerning autonomy and democratization (Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003).

The comparative study, using the historical dimension, provides comprehension of the development of the idea of the university, which has been impacted by essential variations in the discourses of the quality and promotes reforms in the universities over time in both European countries inspired by the social, political and economic demands. Comparing the historical context since the beginning of the German university model and after the transformations in the mid-1980s, there have been profound changes in the political, economic, and education fields related to their mark on HE and the nations.

At the institutional level, the comparative perspective is relevant to be discussed, which began in the 1990s, the Hungarian university system reverts to the attributes of the Western scientific and educational system. The HUB, which was situated in East Berlin until 1990, falls into this duality because it was positioned in the German Democratic Republic, which belonged under the Soviet influence zone at the time. After this period, the current changes in the development of both HUB and ELTE are built on these common frameworks. Hence, it is evident that the two institutions share similarities.

With this Ph.D. research, we hope that, on the one hand, it will be interesting sociologically, pedagogically, and on other management-oriented, primarily because the quality of the HE takes an essential role in this complex academic and social world and the entire society.

The research question focuses on how institutions are creating institutional strategies to deal with the local, national, supranational, and international demands and, at the same time,

promote the quality of education to respond to contemporary issues and needs of all actors of society after their changes in the historical past.

1.1 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation – after its introduction – is organized into six chapters. The first chapter begins with examining international policies on HE geared at institutionalization and quality assessment.

Chapter two, based on these policies, the European HE policy established relationships of influence in national contexts and the institution's strategies, which are still in effect today. The issue of quality assurance will be discussed, as well as how Europe is making HE a more competitive field. Many European organizations and associations are involved in this cause; the ENQA, the EUA, the ESU, and the EURASHE are some of the best examples. Also, the literature on quality in HE was examined in the second phase to establish a "state of the art" for quality concepts.

Chapter three covers the contextual framework of the countries and the institutions selected while presenting some historical background to connect with the higher education reforms.

The fourth chapter describes the research questions at three levels (macro, meso, and micro-level).

The fifth chapter presents the research framework and methodology employed in this investigation, putting into context the many methodological options and the various procedures and instruments for data collection and analysis. To complete this dissertation, documental analysis, and semi-structured interviews were selected as appropriate methods to bring institutional discourses closer to the participants' experiences in this study. The data was analyzed using content analysis, allowing for the formulation of conclusions and the generation of some ideas that would aid in planning future research. In addition, this chapter discusses the study's limitations and the ethical aspects relevant to any research.

The sixth chapter includes the presentation and discussion of the findings. According to the research purpose, the results depict the HE context in Hungary and Germany. We connect the conclusions of the document analysis of the chosen policies, exploring the conclusions drawn from data gathered from interviews with students, teachers, staff, and external policymakers. By offering these illustrations of the two contexts, readers can examine the facts arranged in a layered manner from several aspects and dimensions.

The last part of this dissertation is the conclusion and recommendations, intending to connect institutional discourses with the lived experiences of students, teachers, and external policy makers, emphasizing the significance of stakeholders in national and institutional policy because of autonomy and agency (for all stakeholders). Throughout this phase, it was sought to provide a response to the overarching research question and the specific research objectives that had been proposed. In addition, these data, which were analyzed using the content analysis technique, allowed for the conclusions and some ideas that can be used to envision future research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Policies related to Higher Education

The Magna Charta Universitatum (1988) established fundamental principles for European higher education, defining preservation and freedom of research and education as means of guaranteeing respect to students for their unique characteristics, in the sense of creating conditions for their own cultural and academic development, as well as, as an antecedent of the internationalization and globalization processes of HE (Universitatum, 1988).

The 1990s was a fertile period for international meetings that discussed and elaborated a series of legal documents with proposals seeking to enhance the quality of the HE, including the “World Conference on Higher Education,” promoted by UNESCO and held in Paris in 1998. This conference was followed up with the elaboration of the “World Declaration on Higher Education in the 21st Century: Vision and Action”, which was devoted to endorsing equal access and opportunities for the success of all (UNESCO, 1998).

Another event worth summoning in this brief review is the Lisbon Convention held in 1997 under the supervision of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, which set out standards for academic recognition for access to HE in Europe (Convention, 1997). This document expressed the beginning of prerogatives for the provision of isomorphic and comparable qualifications at the European level.

One significant supranational event occurred in 1999, the so-called ‘Bologna Declaration,’ which, in addition to the requirements and international trends inherent in the phenomenon of globalization (Mikulec, 2017), was a major influence on the changes in the curriculum and pedagogy. It is necessary to clarify that this Declaration was not exclusive to the EU; it was endorsed by 26 countries at the time and sought to consolidate the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Halász, 2013). Furthermore, the Bologna Declaration proposed the “*Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*” (B. Declaration, 1999). That is, to say, BD, among other aspects, aims for quality through basic guideline strategies similar to the European area (L. Communiqué, 2009).

It is vital to take into consideration the European context and the global perspective of European policy and space as it has arisen as a result of globalization and Europeanization

processes (Mikulec, 2017). To establish an articulate and well-designed training system among the Member States, Luce Pépin (2007) concludes that it took four broad phases to underpin the cooperation and community progress integration between 1976 and 2006. During these 30 years, the educational policy became a key priority at the community level.

One vital initiative for HE was a development plan called the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ that was officially approved at the European Council meeting in Lisbon in March 2000 (Van Vught, 2009). At that summit, the EU leaders agreed on a new strategic goal for boosting European cooperation and creating ‘a Europe of knowledge’, which focused on making Europe the “(...) most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (Conclusions, 2001).

After a critical assessment of 10 years of the Lisbon Strategy, the prolongation of this strategy is named ‘EU2020’, which at the community level proposed “smart,” “sustainable,” and “inclusive” growth and continued the efforts to maintain social cohesion. This new proposal points to economic success, involving social inclusion and environmental responsibility, as well as the labor market and competitiveness. Hence, this strategy was formulated based on the feebleness and criticisms of the last strategy (Halász, 2013; Stéger, 2014).

The H2020 program was launched in 2014 by the European Commission as part of the Europe 2020 strategy. It was in November 2011 that the Commission presented the H2020 legislative package, a four-year program for the period 2014-2020. The Program brings together sources of funding for research and innovation that have already existed. As a result, it is irrelevant to mention that H2020 represents the most advanced form of public policy for promoting academic and scientific excellence in the European Union (Commission, 2011).

The working methods used to establish the European policy consisted of ‘Open method coordination’ (OMC), which introduces an intergovernmental policy-making method that does not result in legally binding legislative procedures within the EU, and does not require EU countries to announce legislative requirements or amend existing provisions. This so-called “soft law” focuses on networks at the community level, integrating public and private specialists in education (Mikulec, 2017).

In 2007, the London Statement reiterated the importance of successfully responding to globalization's challenges, stating that “(...) *we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunity, and democratic principles that will facilitate*

mobility, increase employability, and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness" (Communiqué, 2007, p. 1).

One of the most critical decisions made at this meeting was the establishment of the "European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education" (EQAR) which would be implemented in March 2008 through EQAR, a mechanism prepared and proposed by Group E4¹ (constituting the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA), and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), or the European organizations representing quality assurance, students, universities, and other HEIs. This declaration aimed to publish and manage an agency registry to ensure the quality of HEIs, as well as to provide public, trustworthy, and up-to-date information, using the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) as a reference point. This information base enables any national institution to perform assessment and accreditation requests based on the list of accredited entities with absolute confidence. Another organization that played an essential role in promoting the European HE community is the ESU, founded in 2007 in London and currently has 45 organizations as members from 40 countries. Among its goals is the representation and promotion of its students' academic as well as social, economic, and cultural interests on a European scale; and encourage students to critical thinking about the educational system; the goal is to build a network of European and international cooperation that allows for the exchange of information between students and organizations. Students' rights and interests are protected by ESU, which provides equal support to national student unions. As the voice of European students, the ESU has played a crucial role in implementing the Bologna Process, serving as both a consultative member and an active participant in the European Youth Forum (YFJ).

These aforementioned international declarations about quality are essential and constitute the foundation for bilateral agreements between countries to improve HE quality. These documents prompted the need for aspirations and initiatives to achieve the overall quality of HE.

In 2008, the launch of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) consisted of a European policy to match the qualifications systems of several countries, operating as a

¹ The E4 Group involves the EUA, ENQA, ESU, and EURASHE as well as several more organizations. As one of most significant contributions, was the publication of "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" in 2005 at the Group of Follow-Up in Bologna.

conversion in order to make qualifications understandable between nations in the European HE Area. Similarly, the EQF recommended that countries introduce the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to improve access, the quality of the systems in general, and transparency (Mikulec, 2017; Raffe, 2013). This policy mirrored the results of the Europeanisation of education as a key element for the mobility of citizens. This encouraged the development of academic and professional perspectives and, at the same time, facilitated lifelong learning (Council, 2008). According to Raffe (2013), the NQF incorporated some requirements which are connected to goals, such as common language, stakeholder engagement, coordination, regulation, quality assurance, unitisation or modularisation, transparency of qualifications, and didactic changes. In order to achieve these objectives, it was imperative to set standards that would be pertinent to the knowledge results. As it might be seen, quality assurance is also a crucial mechanism to be achieved during this process of comparable qualifications.

In 2009, the Leuven/ Louvain- la Neuve communiqué stated that greater emphasis was placed on higher levels of skill and cross-disciplinary knowledge in the labor market; thus, higher education should provide students with the tools they would need throughout their careers. A person's capacity to find work in a changing labor market is referred to as their employability (L. Communiqué, 2009).

The EHEA was inaugurated in 2010, resulting in the Budapest-Vienna Declaration, in which the ministers decided to implement the decided aims and the agenda for the next period in full and sufficient detail (Declaration, 2010).

As part of a three-pronged approach in 2012, the Ministers promised to: provide a quality HE for all, improve the graduate's employability, and reinforce the stakeholder's mobility. The ministers in attendance at this meeting were adamant that reforming HE would aid Europe in creating a thriving economy that would be based on smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Finally, the Ministers emphasized the importance of “learning mobility is essential to ensure the quality of higher education, enhance students’ employability and expand cross-border collaboration within the EHEA and beyond” (B. Communiqué, 2012, p. 3).

In May 2015, ministers designated employability as one of four objectives up to 2018 (Y. Communiqué, 2015).

According to Ulrich Teichler (2011), HE should indeed be conformed to condescending rising pressure to provide adequate preparedness for lifelong learning affiliated with future employment in the "knowledge economy" world (Woodhouse, 1999).

Employability training – a drive fueled by a fear of falling in arrears in economic rivalry – remains the primary driving force for HE modernization and investment in Europe.

At the Paris Communiqué in 2018, ministers committed to “*developing new and inclusive approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching across the EHEA and can succeed only if we do so in close collaboration with the European higher education community, in full respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy*” (P. Communiqué, p. 3).

A set of standards to improve teaching and learning in HE across the EHEA, as well as innovative initiatives that take academic freedom and institutional autonomy into consideration, were also agreed upon by the Ministers. Following the Ministers' decision, they decided to supplement these values with guidance on how their respective governments can encourage HEIs to adhere to them and expand their governments' support across the EHEA, both nationally and internationally. These principles were to be created with the impact of digital technology on teaching and learning innovation and inclusion in mind. In order to fulfill the commitment made in the Paris Communiqué, these principles and associated guidelines, as well as best-practice examples, were to be provided to the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) for submission to the Ministerial Conference 2020.

Proposals made by these individuals and organizations were geared toward constructing the designated EHEA, which helped outline a policy program for HE that was intergovernmental based.

Returning to the purpose of this chapter, we note that we intended to make a thorough account of the international discourses that guide concrete actions in the HE field in these times of globalization. Compare and contrast the implications of these policies on education in supranational regulatory bodies in the national context (Afonso, 2001). With the assumption that an examination of these educational policies will allow us to reflect critically on how they are being implemented and how they are being consistent with the globalized world and with all of the people who are affected by them. In this work, we direct our critical gaze to understand where the quality is to be experienced in the two HEIs.

2.1.1 Globalization, Internationalization, and Europeanization: definitions

2.1.1.1 Globalization

National education policies have been influenced by globalization, concentrating on indicators of assessment, market structures, and systemic regulation. We need to know if the University is working toward a more democratic society based on the social principles because of these initiatives.

What challenges globalization presents are those that have arisen from the interplay between globalism and localism, static and dynamic, the particular and general, among others. New ideas and methods have been required due to this new nuance, going to result in an unparalleled epistemological rupture (Dale, 2004; Santos, 2001).

A decrease in the socioeconomic border between countries is linked to an increase in economic, work, and educational opportunities for people worldwide (McBurnie, 2001). Grant Mcburnie (2001) focuses on the financial aspects of globalization, which connect globalization to generate substantial global trade and mobility, such as education. Despite his assertions to the contrary, he believes that globalization and internationalization are inextricably linked. Similarly, if globalization impacts global organizations, it affects universities.

David Kemp (1999) reveals how globalization and quality assurance are linked. He also pointed out the importance of expanding arrangements between nations for shared qualifications recognition and expanding educational openings for students (domestic and international) (Kemp, 1999).

It's crucial to consider some aspects when it comes to globalization and HE “(...) *internationalization strategies; transnational education; international quality assurance; entrepreneurial approaches; regional and interregional cooperation; information and communication technologies and virtual universities; the rise of new providers; issues of equity and access, to name but a few*” (Mcburnie, 2001, p. 12).

Barbara Kehm and Ulrich Teichler (2007) review of literature on internationalization revealed several essential questions that most HEIs around the world deal with. HE's global dimensions are addressed by institutional strategies, cooperation and competitive forces, and national/supranational guidelines (Kehm & Teichler, 2007).

2.1.1.2 Internationalization

As the world changes, HE plays a vital part in it. There is a slew of causes for transformation, such as modern communication and technology services, increased international labor mobility, the market economy, a focus on the knowledge society, growing levels of private investment, and decreased public support for education and lifelong learning are all significant forces for change in today's society. Because of this, it is becoming highly relevant and more difficult for HE to have an international dimension. This chapter aims to look at internationalization from a new conceptual perspective (Knight, 2004).

Internationalization and globalization in HE are defined in various ways in the literature.

It has defined what internationalization means, considering all of this evidence and the relationship between globalization. It seems that the processes of globalization and internationalization are viewed as distinct but related. Globalization impacts each nation differently due to its history, traditions, culture, and goal. Globalization is positioned as a component of a context in which the international dimension of HE is gaining importance and undergoing major transformation (Knight & de Wit, 1997). Globalization has enhanced the relationships between nations and the people of the world. This has changed HE around the globe, irrevocably driving local institutions, their staff, learners, and alumni into the global context (Mittelmeier et al., 2021).

Looking at the historical context, the research conducted by Jane Knight and Hans De Wit (1995) demonstrates that HE is divided from the medieval period to the Renaissance, the 18th century to World War II, and then to the current day; there have been three distinct periods of internationalization. Internationalization, connected to the mobility concept in academia, has been involved in the European continent for nearly five centuries, but it started to drop in the 17th century (Knight & De Wit, 1995).

Knight (1994) claims that at a specific point, terms such as “multicultural education,” “international,” “global,” and “intercultural” can all be used interchangeably.

Knight (1994) states that international components in HE are described as a dynamic state, which shows that internationalization of HE is viewed as a continuous interaction “(*... a perspective, activity, service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of higher education*)” (Knight, 1994, p. 3). An

institution's teaching, research, and business solutions are infused with an international perspective through the implementation phase.

In divergence, Philip Altbach and Jane Knight (2007) recommend caution for conceptualization.

According to Mcburnie (2001), "internationalization" aligns processes in the direction of international combination; in other words, a university's interest in developing HE's regional and global action plans.

Knight (2004) shed light on the inauguration of new branches, and the emergence of institutions outside their nation's states are the results of the program's circulation and internationalization.

However, the increased emphasis on commercializing HE is also seen as internationalization, which must be emphasized.

In addition, "*internationalization, particularly cross-border commercial education, is a risky business involving significant profits for universities and other providers*" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p.14). Consequently, different nations around the globe have different perspectives on how HE has gone global.

Knight (2005) claims that a new organization of previously unavailable concepts from debates about HE internationalization has emerged in recent years. As per the author, HE has been impacted by social and cultural globalization and cross-border instructional distribution.

Research into the strong connection between the internationalization of education and globalization has become a significant focus. Defining the variables and guiding the discussion requires acknowledging globalization's complex and fiercely disputed topic without simplifying it.

Internationalization initiatives in HE have frequently been classified according to Jane Knight's dichotomy of Internationalization Abroad (IA), Internationalization at Home (IaH), and, more recently, Internationalization at Distance (IaD).

IA includes the mobility of students, staff, and programs. Academic community – teachers or students going to a new nation for a long time and experiencing favorable and unfavorable adjustments to a different culture, language, and academic atmosphere would be an example of IA.

There has recently been an increasing research focus on IaH, which intends to enhance intercultural and international understanding among students within their home country (Knight, 2004).

IaH can therefore be characterized as the integration of international components into the experience of HE. This integration of IaH into HE comprises formal, informal, and hidden courses (Leask, 2009). A significant aspect of IaH is the increasing emphasis on curriculum internationalization, which has evolved into a more significant concept for the variety of internationally oriented instructional strategies employed in HE. Universities, for instance, could provide opportunities for students to learn about other cultures through international social programs oriented toward both domestic and international students.

In recent years, it came into the context the Internationalization at a Distance. There is a great deal of cross-border potential for students to connect via social media and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), followed by millions of students from all over the world (Kizilcec et al., 2017). This third category of international education is becoming increasingly common for students to study abroad while still living in their home country. Students can take advantage of learning possibilities at home and abroad by combining the IA and IaH classifications. (Knight, (2008).

The IaD is considered a "cross-border education," which involves all forms of cross-border education for the students, their respective personnel, and institutional provisions that are geographically separated yet connected via technology. Using the internet, students can now access information, communicate with teachers, interact, and collaborate with other scholars and learners worldwide, removing distance and time as theoretical barriers to international exposure and awareness for any student with a computer and a modem. Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that technology, without borders, and internationalization comes in favor in the light of the Pandemic; this topic will be discussed further in subchapter 2.2.2.2.

In light of the data gathered, this research should help to a better understanding of these concepts. The following subchapter discusses another pertinent problem related to globalization and internationalization and their relationship to HE quality. The major purpose of this theoretical section is to give the grounds for looking at the data acquired and promoting a dialogue that integrates the challenges and tensions of globalization into the practices and legal direction of the selected institutions.

2.1.1.3 Europeanization

It is critical to see Europeanization as a set of "internationalizing" and "globalizing" inclinations rather than a single phenomenon. There has been a visible rise in cross-border connections since 1989, both in terms of individual movement and the broader avenues for furthering one's professional development. On the other hand, many scholars argue that higher education institutions convert 'disembedded' to their national contexts as they start competing for talented students, roles, and assets in a world market that is "without borders" (Beerens, 2004).

According to Roger King, Simon Marginson, and Rajani Naidoo (2011), most HEIs are 'glocal,' harmonizing "glo-na-cal," nationwide and regional pressures. The difficulty of circumnavigating comparable actions of the former communist era and Europeanization is becoming gradually problematic due to the changes (Harmsen, 2014).

According to Kevin Radaelli (2003), in the context of intergovernmental influences, such as the Europe Council or the BFUG, Europeanization refers to systematic and informal legislation. Institutionalizing stated social rules, such as adhering to EU standards, can occur at both the supranational and national levels. As a result of institutionalizing those rules at the regional/institutional, individual behavior is expected to change.

When it comes to Europeanization, the top-down approach recognizes that this meaning neglects processes in which nations submit their procedure and plan priorities to the community level, a practice known as decentralization (Börzel & Risse, 2003)

Instead of adjustment, a coordinated transition at the EU and macro levels, or the EU and meso levels, is necessary. This could have been particularly significant in the context of bilateral relations. Because of the lack of a supranational organization, developments have allowed for uploading. HE is determined by (a) the structure and system and (b) the organization, (c) the nature of the problem at hand, and the HEIs under consideration.

Two main different theories on how Europeanization evolves can be identified. A first external perspective of assurances brings rationalist institutionalism into line with the first external viewpoint of reassurance. It is proposed that norms would be institutionalized following the reasoning of repercussions, which concentrates on how distinct stakeholders' access to structural factors may diverge. The additional statement is that theory of social learning appears to be more likely to be able forward into constructivism and institutionalism. It resists that actors

must be convinced to implement European standards based on the appropriateness logic rather than the logic of equality. In both cases, it is anticipated that Europeanization will result in only a partial convergence of standards (Börzel & Risse, 2003; Sedelmeier, 2011).

Additional factors that affect this include the presence (or absence) of intervening variables and differences between institutions at the outset. As a result, higher levels of Europeanization (more significant change) will occur in some organizations, while reductions (simplistic transition) will appear in others (superficial change). Inaction, inertia, or even retreat can result from such a situation. The two methods of Europeanization, on the other hand, are viewed as inert. Individual players can perceive European rules differently increases the difficulty of outcome measures, suggesting overlay in their implementation. This enables rethinking the national aspect, where participants practice the EU umbrella to endorse their inclinations (Gornitzka, 2006; Maassen & Musselin, 2009). From the vantage point of this research, external quality assurance is seen as being relevant (Damian et al., 2015).

The HE field is constantly evolving, and Globalization/Internationalization/Europeanization are the most significant factors currently imparting and defining the area.

These three terms are equated with very different characteristics, such as process, activity, background, principle, structure, effort, response model, collaboration, competitive forces, mobility, academic knowledge exchange, improvement, and so forth. Regarding the main goals of our research, as well as the page limits of the dissertation, we cannot take on a detailed explanation of the connection and relationship between them. Therefore, this dissertation provides standard, "thin" definitions of Globalization, Internationalization, and Europeanization and their contribution to the quality of HE.

In light of this, the concept of quality became more and more complex; looking from different perspectives (globalization, internationalization, and Europeanization), it became a vital element in coping with the challenges and tensions in trends processes and their impacts on HE and how HE is responding that require our attention. The incorporation of a quality dimension into HE internationalization initiatives, as well as the adjustment of quality assurance policies and procedures to an increasingly globalized environment, is considered relevant to be discussed in this research.

2.2 Defining Quality

In this section, various techniques and ideas connected to quality will be presented to demonstrate that the quality concept evolved over the course of several decades.

The term 'quality' in HE has taken on a more notable role in political initiatives and in the debate on this notion based on the investigative expectations that have been pursued.

One of the difficulties identified in the literature is defining and measuring the quality of higher education. C. Ball (1985) was confronted with the question of directly quoting the author, “what the hell is quality?” yet we continued interviewing and investigating this topic due to its relevance to the academic and social contexts.

Most research publications on the quality of HE have demonstrated this term multidimensionality, malleability, and dynamism. Excellence, effectiveness, efficiency measurement, quality assurance, and improvement are commonly associated with quality (Harvey, 2007; Harvey & Green, 1993).

Some authors state that quality provokes puzzlement and is an indefinable notion (Sallis, 2014). Complementing this idea, Krause (2012) introduced the concept of a wicked problem in HE

Harvey and Green (1993) provide a five-category breakdown of the concept of quality: exception, which is focused on the process of minimizing failures; perfection (excellence), which is concerned with the academic standard of effectiveness and efficiency; fitness for purpose, which is involved with the creation of conditions for economic productivity; and transformative, which is concerned with producing a qualitative improvement in teaching and learning and enabling the participants. Indeed, these authors believe that developing the criteria for quality evaluation in HE necessitates knowledge of these many concepts of quality as well as considering the perspectives of stakeholders (Elassy, 2015).

Van Kemenade, Pupius, and Hardjono (2008) argue that the concept of quality contains four elements: object, standard, subject, and values. According to these educational researchers, the *object* of quality needs to be defined. In other words, it needs to clarify which quality is being measured. For instance, the quality of the curriculum, the quality of lectures and respective teachers, the structure offered by the university, or the quality of the students approved with better results.

As well as this, the quality of HE needs *standards*. Consequently, European institutions have a document with a set of standards and guidelines in the European context, the Standards, and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, or ESG. The *subject* of the quality is contemplated in four groups of stakeholders, and these must be distinguished by internal and external subjects. Internal: consumers of the products (students); users of outputs (employers); sector employees (academics and administrators) and external: the community, funding bodies, and taxpayers (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003). In order to define quality, it is essential to understand that each group has a different point of view and experiences regarding quality in HE (Welzant et al., 2015).

The last but no means least factor considered by the authors is the *value*. This can be defined as “*the way things get done around here*” (Oppenhuisen, 2002 *apud* Van Kemenade *et al.*, 2008). The quality of HE fits with our values toward the synergy of the system, control, commitment of the people in the same community, the improvements and establish the culture of the quality and even these different “*values system might even show the way for the future*” (*ibidem*, p. 184), which means, the value of the quality can be oriented by the balance of the internal and external demands, as designed by an enhancement process of quality of HE.

The theoretical framework about the concept of the quality selected for this study is interconnected with the proposal by Harvey and Green (1993), where universities create programs and projects to respond to students’ needs that have the best efficiency in infrastructure offered, equality of opportunities, recruitment of qualified teachers, preparation for the labor market, and whose concern is oriented to autonomy and collective identities training of all involved in this process.

The author's educational professors Ozga, Larsen, Segerholm, and Simola (2011) present an overview of quality and its various concepts, arguing that the term "quality" has a conceptual infinity that has been implemented to control and develop private and public sectors, supporting the excellence of performance and innovation in products. As a result, the terms quality measurement, assurance, and improvement were used in the philosophical discourses that preceded them. As a result, the concept of quality expressed in international orientations, when it comes to the HE, consists of the search for educational outcomes and educational offerings; in the adequacy of the programs and the participation of all the participants in an environment that fosters a high level of satisfaction for students, teachers, and all those involved in the process.

HE quality, quality assurance, and the part it plays in establishing detailed processes in teaching, learning, planning strategies, increasing accountability, and developing programs involving stakeholders to preserve education within the EU. In other words, quality in HE encompasses all operations and processes of an organization, especially teaching, research and scholarship, academic programs, staffing, students, building and infrastructures, facilities, equipment, service to the community, and the academic environment. The improvement of quality needs to include both internal self-evaluation and external assessment. If possible, the review should be carried out in public by independent professionals with international knowledge (Obi & Nwariwe, 2021; UNESCO, 1998).

The regulations, perceptions, actions, and processes required to maintain and improve quality are referred to as quality assurance.

Quality assurance is often used in a more limited sense to meet a minimum standard or to reassure stakeholders that quality is being fulfilled (Woodhouse, 2004).

According to Sultan and Yin Wong (2012), quality assurance is perceived as a service. The totality of a product or service's traits and attributes, as the costumers relate to its capacity to meet explicit or tacit requirements, constitutes the service's quality. The experience of quality service is a cognitive process of assessing results, which can be understood to suggest that service quality evaluation is a psychological product of perception, learning, and reasoning about and comprehension of the service features.

This multi-dimension of quality has resulted in new interpretations of the quality concept. Historically, the concept of "quality" was related to concepts such as excellence and outperforming competitors. The usage of the term "quality" in HE has been the subject of much discussion in recent years, and several definitions have been given, with the most frequently recognized being "fitness for purpose." It is because of this feature that educational institutions can communicate their purpose through their mission and objectives while also proving their quality in the process. This definition allows for institutional diversity. This is the theory, but whether it is implemented depends on the culture (Woodhouse, 1999).

The following definition is intended to bring quality as a stakeholder concept and as a contextual phenomenon that can be interpreted in various ways depending on the customer's viewpoint and the setting in which HE takes place. At the institution or academic program level,

quality can be defined as "enhancement" or "improvement" (quality as transformation)(Gvaramadze, 2008).

Additionally, quality can be seen as a process and structure and an essential component in making institutional decisions (Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010). And for this evaluation, a possible review of different models of assessing service quality in HE, such as interviews, surveys, and program evaluation (Horváth et al., 2020).

2.2.1 Quality Evolution at the European level

Since Bergen 2005, European institutions have relied upon a document with a set of standards and guidelines in the EHEA, which underpins the development of quality assurance. The 'Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area' (ESG) was implemented by the ministers in 2005, following a proposal prepared by the ENQA along with the Bologna Declaration members.

This document was a proposal in cooperation with the ESU, EURASHE, and EUA. The ESG reinforced a series of procedures, criteria, and guiding plans for the quality assurance of HE. It is called the systematic monitoring of quality assurance guidelines, both internal and external. In the European context, HE quality assurance is an essential component of any framework of easily readable and equivalent degrees, as well as an evaluation of Europe's global attractiveness and competitiveness.

Concerning quality improvement at the European level, three phases were involved: Industrial (business), Labor market (skills), and Pedagogy, in order to understand the key role of the EU in maintaining the quality of HE.

In the first phase, HE adopted approaches from the business (industrial) sector into the public sector. This management paradigm was called 'New Public Management (NPM) and the "agencification" of HEIs, which allowed them to operate as a company (Egeberg & Trondal, 2016). NPM is focused on less production and having more efficient tools in order to have more outcomes. This type of management orientation stresses the importance of incentives, value for money, and better measurement performance instruments (e.g., monitoring systems and audit systems) (Ferlie et al., 2008). In the European context, quality assurance started to gain relevance on 24 September 1998 when the European Council recommended protecting the quality of HE in

their countries' specific economic, social, and cultural contexts while taking into account the European aspect and a continuously evolving world, and encourage and assist HEIs in using necessary measures, notably quality assurance, to improve the quality of teaching and learning and also research training, another important part of their job (Recommendation, 1998).

From this recommendation, we can start to comprehend that quality at the community level is a crucial tool for improving HEIs in a diverse and changing world. Likewise, it is relevant to highlight that, at the time, the concept of quality involved teaching, learning, research, and cooperation between institutions (Obi & Nwariwe, 2021).

The second phase focused on the Labor market (skills), where there is a connection between the university quality improvements and their impacts on employability. Studies point out some “generic capabilities” or “soft skills” which university students should acquire during their studies, such as research skills, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative, time management, organization, autonomy, self-management, flexibility, and critical thinking (Cumming, 2010). Currently, universities are facing the tensions and challenges of a globalized society's demands, especially in preparing graduates to enter the labor market and designing a curriculum and educational practices aligned to the new requirements. The development of skills was considered a tool for quality improvement in HE.

The third phase, which focused on Pedagogy, is particularly relevant to this study. In 2013, the European Commission invited experts in the field of education to meet and discuss the quality. This resulted in the report entitled - Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions (Union, 2013). This set out the importance of the quality of teaching and learning and objectives to help students access educational opportunities across the EU at the community level. These experts established five recommendations to improve the quality of teaching and learning in HEIs activities.

The first recommendation concerned how public authorities should guarantee the presence of a sustainable, well-funded framework that would provide support for HEIs. It involved the academic teachers in this joint project, creating a culture to improve the quality of teaching and learning and connections with the institutional strategies. The second recommendation delegated the responsibility of each institution to design, provide resources (human and financial), monitor systems, get feedback from the students and implement a strategy to support the quality of teaching and learning due to the HEIs' missions and goals. The third recommendation encouraged

every institution to take into account positive student feedback work. This aimed to improve on weak areas to create an excellent environment, expand the student progress and acknowledge the teaching competencies of the teachers. The fourth deals with the professional development of staff in HEIs and recommend that all teachers should receive a pedagogical certificate by 2020 and should be involved in continuous professional education. The final recommendation included the performance evaluations of staff throughout their careers (Commission, 2014).

The macro-level pattern is caused, among other things, by the intensification of globalization in HE and/or national HE systems. Some scholars claim that this view emphasizes the importance of context and its mediation with global discourses on quality and its processes, while others disagree. According to those studies, EHEA national policies exert global demands on quality assurance policy making, which has an influence on the increasingly globalized quality agenda in HEIs settings. (Ursin, 2013; Weir, 2009).

The researchers sought to assess the impact of transnational cooperation and national implementation across European countries. To bring sensibility to the context, the actors involved in institutions throughout Europe developed a new perspective on institutional autonomy based on academic values and on the establishment of open decision-making platforms where stakeholders are required to participate and contribute to visible quality assurance operations for accountability and transparency purposes (Hopbach & Serrano-Velarde, 2007). In light of these principles, the relationship between governmental approaches (rational planning and control versus self-regulation) takes into account the state's and independent agencies' roles in ensuring sustainable practices and the accomplishment of the institution's mission, thereby promoting educational quality (Damian et al., 2015; Gornitzka, 1999; Hopbach, 2006).

It was through these regulations that HEIs were able to develop strategies and plans for adapting to this rapidly changing environment. As part of the Bologna Process and the quest for quality features, these initiatives are largely focused on the expansion of the European higher educational system (Kehm, 2010).

With the implementation of quality assurance across various European countries, the key problem is operating within a multidimensional and varied environment. Institutions in some countries are required to create a quality culture based on industry best practices. Others necessitate a third-party assessment and ongoing oversight by organizations dedicated to enhancing product quality (Orsingher, 2006). The ESG, on the other hand, has been changed to

include provisions for agency internal evaluation adjustments after being viewed as a core for improving management and practices both between and within institutions alike.

Several investigations have examined the impact of these policies on HE on a national level (Afonso, 2001; Hopbach & Serrano-Velarde, 2007). Analysis of these policies in HE was expected to allow for critical examination of how they are implemented and whether or not these policies align with the institutions and stakeholders. For the purposes of this study, it is to know where quality is located and how it is oriented in the countries that we have chosen. Here, this research tried to examine how government regulations on HE and the attributes have impacted academic institutions, using assumptions derived from national standards or from institutional traditions as our main discourses, and what those impacts mean for academic institutions' practices and strategies (Alzafari & Ursin, 2019).

According to Alberto Amaral (2002), the EHEA implementation process raises risks that should not be overlooked, such as the loss of autonomy of HEIs, the emergence of a new centralized European bureaucracy, the reduction of diversity, and the marketization of education.

On the other hand, Amaral (2002) also states that in the context of this implementation process, national educational systems and HEIs must respond to identified changes, including specific questions of HE and globalization, information, the knowledge society, and the market.

It's important to remember that the quality of HE encompasses more than just the curriculum; it also includes things like faculty qualifications and training, school governance and organization, and community involvement. It also includes things like student and school evaluations.

This Ph.D. research looks at the impact of these EU supranational policies on the national and institutional levels in both countries selected to analyze their strategies to respond to these demands. Considering how each HE system mirrors the historical and social context in which it functions. Looking at the historical dimension allows connections with the current policies and strategies enacted in the institutions selected for this study and the stakeholders' perspective in this context.

2.2.2 Social quality, governance, and pandemic

One of the primary goals of the HE is the development of well-rounded individuals and the production of citizens who are responsible, well-informed, and eager to contribute to a better future. In order to meet these goals, HE must undergo a significant transformation in order to develop a system that can anticipate the needs of society and the individual.

Universities play a critical role in social development and consolidation; therefore, they remain the primary providers of HE. To remain relevant in today's changing world, universities must adapt and reimagine their roles and responsibilities in new ways, allowing them to serve as a platform for critical thinking and creativity while also providing students with the skills they need to succeed in the real world.

For the obligations of HEIs to ensure equal access and treatment in uncertain and varied contexts, this tension is comprehensible, as demonstrated by national and international legislation on access and treatment. It is still far from a consensus process in this globalization, which is characterized by tensions and conflicts at the social level and economic and social vulnerability for others, and where sometimes the interests of equal access become the antithesis of HE in a capitalist and market logic (Santos, 2001). As stated by Chossudovsky (1997), we are living in the “globalization of poverty” with the absence of jobs and the hindrance to a subsistence economy (Chossudovsky, 2003).

As said before, this dissertation takes into consideration international and national discourses relating to HE in modern times that influence concrete actions. However, it has equated the effects of these policies on education at supranational levels (Afonso, 2001). In light of the presumption that an examination of educational policies enables us to reflect critically on their implementation and alignment with the globalized world, all subjects concerned determine where the highest quality of education will be found at one of the HEIs.

Dias Sobrinho (2012) argues that with the emergence of neoliberal discourses, which aim to serve the market and a consumer society, the necessary senses and meanings are being lost in the process of students with HE qualifications and, therefore, should be seen as a social quality.

Abbott and Wallace (2012) use the concept of social quality as a paradigm that encompasses four areas: economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and social empowerment. According to the authors, these four indicators express the products' relationships

with systems, institutions, and communities. Their study shows that it is possible to measure the quality of society in a way that is both accurate and efficient by using 27 countries from the European Union. It was also noted that "in all countries, people need economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and encouragement to take charge of their own lives to feel satisfied with their lives" (Abbott & Wallace, 2012, p. 164).

The concept of a "social quality" can be linked to the European University Association's definition of quality and the development of the quality culture in European universities, which refers to four aspects: the values of participation, the experiences and commitments to the realization of quality, and the structural elements necessary for quality improvement and institutional efforts to implement this improvement (d'Egmont, 2006).

While Freire's ideas on empowerment are still relevant today, the emphasis on collaborative work with and for the community in a dialectic setting is critical to developing social competency and criticality in this new concept of social quality (Freire, 1985). This dimension of social order prompts the development of an education that goes beyond the walls of the universities and contributes to global literacy. The quality of social life in the HE requires that universities commit themselves to goals related to forming values, creating conditions for a thriving institution oriented toward a participatory citizenry, and processes that seek to improve quality in all areas of the institution. As part of the HE mission to promote social responsibility, it aims to teach students how to participate in decision-making processes by providing them with more than just academic credentials; rather, it aims to provide students with the tools they need to build their own sense of agency and self-determination in today's increasingly complex world (Dias Sobrinho, 2013).

That is to say, in order to have a high-quality education, it is critical to take into account in the assessment process all of the elements and actors involved. In this sense, Dias Sobrinho (2013) calls attention to the existence of social conditions for students as an aspect of quality education, which seems to mean that quality education requires adhering to principles of equality and social justice (Stoer, 2006).

Social changes have shaped HEIs, which is reflected in their desire to be socially relevant and respond to the community's needs. The university-community relationship is based on a mutual desire to be relevant, and this is a crucial indicator of how well HEIs are meeting social expectations.

However, universities face difficulties implementing government strategies to expand the number of students with disabilities who can access and participate in HE. This emphasizes the importance of teaching and learning processes in institutions and guarantees that all students have equal admission to educational opportunities. Change is necessary at all levels, including discourse, institutional structure, and practice. Examined here are questions about higher education policy and whether it provides enough direction to enable necessary reforms in the field of HE (Lee, 2014).

It is common to think of "relevance" solely regarding a student's ability to contribute to society's economic well-being. There is no doubt that HE has a role to play in meeting these needs, but its value must be assessed in light of societal concerns.

An assessment of the relevance of HE must be included in efforts to improve its quality. When evaluating an institution's value and effectiveness in meeting the community's needs, it is imperative to look at how it is able to contribute to the quality of life in the area in which it is located. When it comes to assessing and verifying the quality of HE, relevance is the most critical factor.

Relevance and quality must be the driving forces in both academic and social contexts. Low-quality education can never achieve relevance in the broadest sense; the two concepts must always be linked. HEIs' social responsibility must be strengthened as they define and evaluate these factors, necessitating a two-way conversation between the institutions themselves and the broader community. In this sense, academic institutions are increasingly concerned about diversity and inclusion. It is necessary to re-examine how such identities as race, ethnicity, and national origin interact and generate the experiences of students and teachers, and researchers within HEIs and their super-complex structures as a result of globalization, internationalization, and massification of HE (Barnett, 2000; Byrd et al., 2019).

2.2.2.1 Rankings

Another essential factor to consider when it comes to governance is rankings. It is customary for university systems to be built hierarchically, with rankings at the top.

Regardless of the field, current rankings all encourage a social model based on actors who are constantly striving to develop. Modern rankings are based on the idea that one can always enhance one's performance. This is directly tied to the circumstance that the most significant rankings are issued regularly. It is also common knowledge that performance can be quantified to a high degree of accuracy. The quantification process is essential to provide rankings with any semblance of impartiality and scientific legitimacy. Indeed, because of this, rankings are often used as a "logical" construct in discussions of reputation, and they tend to take precedence over other methods of showing the "value" of individuals, as well as their performance and growth (Brankovic, 2021; Ringel & Werron, 2016).

In this perspective, Espeland, Sander, and Wend Espeland (2016) showed in their research how the emphasis on rankings, particularly on recruiting and engagement, has influenced students, the admissions process, and career centers through modifying the mission and resource distribution of the institution. This concern can have a significant simultaneous trickle-down effect on teachers. The increased demand to publish in high-impact journals disrupts the traditional teaching–research–service trinity (Espeland et al., 2016). According to the authors, Education is essential in order to improve the ranking system. They contend that if students and stakeholders are aware of what is being measured and how they are being measured, they would be able to make more educated decisions. As a result, customers influenced by the outcomes of rankings, rather than the existing reality, may determine the rankings in the future.

2.2.2.2 Pandemic

The pandemic was not a part of the original study but has since changed the education system and impacted the students, teachers, and stakeholders on a global scale, which is a crucial point to bring up.

The educational environment has been influenced by factors that have resulted in social, administrative and didactic-pedagogical relationships. Not only has the image of the actors – parents, students, professors, and directors – changed, but the interactions that take place in the school environment have taken on new dimensions, resulting in new platforms in a world that are rapidly digitizing, giving rise to a new concept of time – synchronic, remote, and personal.

More than two years after the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people thought the illness was a long way off and not something they needed to worry about right away. Most faculty, students, administrators, and staff had never heard of quarantine or social distancing, nor had they heard of emergency remote teaching. Everything changed in an instant. Almost all universities began a rapid shift to a new mode of operation that made remote learning and work the norm. Universities were temporarily shut down, and alternatives to teaching and learning were discovered at a rapid pace (Elumalai et al., 2020).

For many EU countries, the COVID-19 pandemic was the most significant interruption to educational continuity since World War II. More than 17 million students were affected by school closures. Managing borders, reducing the strain on already overburdened public healthcare systems, and safeguarding the economy are among the top priorities for national governments (Dorsey-Elson et al., 2021).

HEIs were reshaped during the COVID-19 pandemic, more abruptly in the primary column was teaching and more gradually in the second pillar was research, and the third aspect activities. Emergency and crisis management took precedence in the first few months of the epidemic, while quality management was later. Quality in any academic field quickly became a significant issue, and the following safety and administrative management of activities in the classroom was a necessity (Cirlan & Loukkola, 2021).

In order to guarantee a smooth shift to educational distribution and learning, administrators and faculty members were required to hold frequent urgent meetings to analyze online resources, implement pandemic operations, and conduct various surveys continuously. In schools and universities of all sizes, whether private or public, in Europe or abroad, this quick transition to online learning or remote instruction proved to be the most effective and efficient alternative (Baker, 2020).

COVID-19 represents an acute crisis; it posed issues for enrolled students and established institutions. According to the research, the main barriers to a transition to distant learning during COVID-19 were technical resources and discriminatory access to education (Treve, 2021).

In terms of pedagogy and methodology, some practical activities helped during the pandemic, such as establishing and developing an online faculty community on social media to serve as an opportunity for sharing tips and strategies, organizing disciplinary and programs using software like Microsoft Teams, Canvas, Moodle, and Zoom. And re-imagining career

development policies and procedures to discuss the pandemic in order to support faculty during the pandemic (Baker, 2020). Although some, some students who lack the ability to organize their study time and space struggle to resist numerous distractions, which can negatively impact their experience with emergency remote teaching and academic success (Barnard et al., 2009; Jurisevic et al., 2021).

Quality in any academic area was rapidly necessary after ensuring educational safety, institutional organization, and excellence in teaching and studying practices. Keeping a healthy work-life balance is an essential consideration for universities' main task force when it comes to defining quality in the academic context. This includes time allocated to teaching, research, third-stream initiatives, and administrative duties. Meetings were also held to provide psychological and unofficial peer support, as well as peer learning and mentoring activities, which served as a control mechanism for individual team members, teachers, and students.

Researchers differentiate between crisis remote education beginning in spring 2020 and online learning, actually supporting the former to be viewed as a reactive response to the crisis, so although the latter is designed and rooted in theoretical and practical knowledge. Under the tension of pandemic constraints, the transition from one form to another may have gone undetected by some.

In this research, we will examine the effects of the pandemic through the lens of students, teachers, staff, and policymakers, following the institutional strategies developed to deal with the new global crisis.

This section's information reveals that the influence of COVID-19 on quality in 2020 prompted educational institutions worldwide to go online very quickly. A substantial obstacle has emerged in teaching, learning, and research, as well as how local stakeholders address the issue.

2.2.3 Teaching, learning, and research

As a component of universities' governance, guaranteeing the quality of teaching and learning has emerged as an essential topic in HE worldwide. In addition, to these elements, teaching and learning are getting growing academic attention, as evidenced by the increasing number of articles in specific HE scientific communications.

Many academics contend that the growing global competition for funding and attracting students, particularly in countries with high student tuition fees, drives quality management systems in universities (Eagle & Brennan, 2007). Due to the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition of quality, however, means that measures differ from one institution of higher learning to the next. According to Venkatraman's assertions, quality objectives and observations also contrast according to stakeholder groups (Venkatraman, 2007).

As a part of quality assurance, there are numerous methods for making certain that students receive an excellent education. These methods include course evaluations, grading and outcome monitoring procedures, and system standards (Tight, 2012). These three issues relate to the quality of teaching in HE, such as; individual - or instruction - and learning-connected matters; aspects of institution and governance; aspects of HE as an academic discipline; and knowledge and subject-related aspects (Teichler, 2005).

Students' peers and teachers seem to benefit from a shared understanding of assessment at the foundational level. Carless *et al.* (2011) conclude that "(...) *feedback is sustainable when it supports students in self-monitoring their work independently of the tutor*" (p. 406). The findings show that a partial description of quality as course assessment, classifying and outcomes, monitoring practices, and structure guidelines are accurate in many respects, but in others, it is misleading. This includes topics such as teaching and learning, student experience, system policy and institutional administration, academic work, and knowledge management in educational institutions (Tight, 2012).

According to Noben, Deinum, and Hofman (2022), teaching is more accessible when it assists educational developers in supporting lecturers in enhancing their teaching behavior by concentrating feedback on particular teaching domains. The authors derived six observable teaching behavior domains from the research that are known to impact student achievement. These six domains are as follows: (1) a safe and inclusive learning environment; (2) efficient organization (classroom management); (3) clarity of teaching; (4) intensive and activating teaching; (5) teaching learning strategies; and (6) differentiation.

In recent years, teaching in HE has experienced a pedagogical change, with new ways to promote student motivation, autonomy, and accomplishment. The introduction of new teaching methods has brought about these changes. An alternative strategy to conventional methods of instructing students has recently been gaining popularity. This is because both pedagogical and

administrative requirements have gotten increasingly complex. This is demonstrated both internationally in the Bologna Declaration, which aimed to reform the frameworks of HE, and highlighted the importance of stimulating active, not passive, learning and encouraging students to be critical, creative thinkers with the capacity to go on learning after their study days are over (Fernandes et al., 2012).

Education's consumerism may negatively impact the perception of quality and value for money in HE. Academics and employers may have different ideas about what constitutes a high-quality education for students and how best to measure it. In some cases, students who believe they are receiving a low-quality education are more likely to drop out altogether. The most crucial aspects in providing quality education are the lecturer's quality and the student support systems. There is a possibility that university students will be dissatisfied if the university does not provide what they expect (Hill et al., 2003).

In this study, we will hear from stakeholders about their experiences/perspectives on quality in general and the HE context.

Thus, the quality aspect derives from reflective practice. Quality teaching promotes learning, including teacher-student interactions and curriculum structure and organization. Many teaching methods encourage student metacognition, but none is as important as the teacher's interaction with the student.

The quality of research is determined by three standard requirements: visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability. Quality assessment is a requirement for all research, but it is essential when the analysis process involves many interpretations and iterations, and standard strategies and procedures cannot be used. As a result, the analysis process is less transparent, and quality control is not built-in. Thus, ensuring the research process and conclusions is more complicated (Akkerman et al., 2008).

In addition to teaching and conducting research, the university is responsible for participating in and contributing to the community in which it resides. Universities worldwide are facing a growing demand to link their research and teaching knowledge to a third mission which is not only societal engagement but varies from technology transfer, business partnership, and supporting entrepreneurship (*e.g.*, establishing start-ups) and sustainability. This demand is beyond the fundamentals of academic study and is being driven by the need to address growing societal and economic challenges (Rinaldi et al., 2018).

In learning, to have a successful student-centered approach, there needs to be a collaborative shift in organizational, philosophical, and pedagogical orientation. For teaching staff, this brings both rewards and problems. Teachers' preparedness is essential, and research has uncovered several typical challenges, including limited preparation, competing schedules, resistance from other staff, student resistance, and a lack of confidence. Therefore, any effort to realign the curriculum should focus on identifying the factors that foster the relationship between the instructor and the student (Kirby & Thomas, 2022).

Nowadays, the broad implementation of new pedagogical technologies in the classrooms of HEIs and the efficient use of novel technological practices are the primary pillars of assistance in enhancing the quality of education. It focuses on the variables that characterize the quality of education, what factors reflect the quality of education in the HE, and quality assurance.

3. Contextual framework:

This comparative study analyses two countries, Germany and Hungary, regarding their HE institutions. This Ph.D. research looks at the historical perspective and compares past approaches that impact how institutions planned and implemented the current quality enacted in the HE systems selected in both countries. This historical perspective enables us to apprehend the evolution of the university concept, which has been impacted by major changes in the discourses for quality and encourages policy changes in the universities over time in the European context, inspired by the socioeconomic and governmental demands.

Germany and Hungary show similar aspects of the history of the education system.

Firstly and foremost, their mutual historical development. The abolition of the communist regime led to a drastic change from communism to democracy, the reconfiguration of the institutional sector to the labor market, and the change in the political sector (*e.g.*, democratic elections, laws, and the parliament change). Hence, those transformations in the social-political context influenced reform in the educational systems in both countries, starting with the decentralization of the system (Halász, 2003). The mindset of the former Soviets had shifted; now, they view education as a tool to empower the masses to play an active role in changing their social realities.

In 1945, a shift occurred: the Humboldtian model was maintained in the western part of Germany, the so-called Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), while in the other part of the German state, called the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which came under Soviet influence, and in Hungary, a so-called Soviet model prevailed until 1990 (Németh & Garai, 2020).

The FRG's policies and beliefs dominated the former GDR area in the early post-unification period. The Gymnasium's original streaming system was re-established as the only path to HE. While Gymnasium selection was widened, which resulted in an increase in HE admission, Germany still trails behind many other Western and former Eastern Bloc countries in terms of higher led to innovations (Baker *et al.*, 2007).

After the collapse of Socialism in 1990, Germany began to use quality assurance as a source of accreditation for HE, and Hungary followed suit in 2004. The benefits of the collapse of the socialist regime even extended to HEIs being able to regain their autonomy. Applying Europeanization and creating the EHEA through implementing the quality assurance measures

by HEIs was a reaction to the new social order that envisioned redefining education as a meaningful investment (Rozsnyai, 2003).

Furthermore, these changes influenced the quality developments in HE. After the reunification of the GDR and FRG into modern-day Germany in 1989 increased, the enrolment rate in HE. However, they have not increased as much as in other former East Bloc countries, where the Soviet-installed comprehensive secondary system has resulted in rising mass demand for HE, much like in the United States. The reason for this is Germany's unique combination of liberal and conservative educational and social ideologies today (Baker *et al.*, 2007; Berend, 2002)

In the final stage, which began in the 1990s, the Hungarian university system reverts to the characteristics of the Western scientific and educational system. The Humboldt University of Berlin, which was located in East Berlin until 1990, falls into this dichotomy because it was located in the German Democratic Republic, which was run as a Soviet-style governed territory at the time. After this time period, the current changes in the development of both HUB and ELTE are built on these common foundations.

When comparing these two countries, looking at the data collected from Eurydice Network provides a framework for analyzing the progress made by European countries in fostering learning mobility and eliminating obstacles to this kind of mobility. It is possible to track the recommendation's focus areas using six indicators in the HE sector.

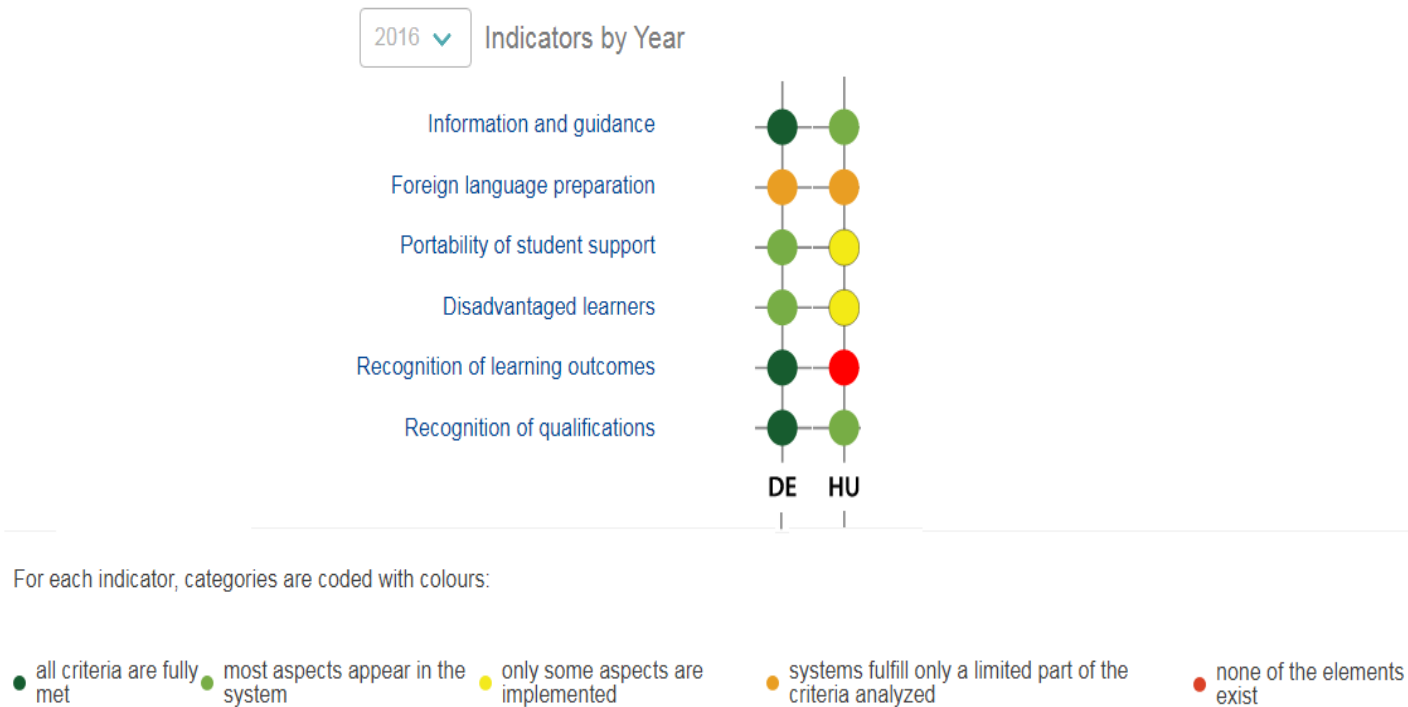


Figure 1: Adapted by the author. Scoreboard Indicators in Higher Education (2016). Source: Eurydice Report. [Scoreboard Indicators in Higher Education | YouthWiki \(europa.eu\)](#)

According to the indicator information and guidance, Germany satisfied all requirements in 2016, comprising the Web portal(s) coordinated and sponsored by the public sector for learning mobility, focusing on outward mobility. Hungary, however, demonstrated that most characteristics are present in the system.

Regarding the preparation of foreign languages, both nations displayed comparable results: both systems only partially meet the standards examined; in other words, just one foreign language is required of all pupils.

Portability of student support, Germany showed that the majority of the characteristics are present in the system and that domestic student support measures, such as grants and/or loans, are available for credit and degree mobility, though with some geographical (country-related) restrictions, program types, fields of study, and/or time constraints. On the contrary, Hungary showed that only some aspects were implemented.

Regarding disadvantaged students in HE in both nations, Germany demonstrated that most components are present in the system for tracking disadvantaged students' involvement in

mobility programs and providing financial help. However, in Hungary, only some aspects are implemented.

Germany fully complied with the ECTS credits allocated for the recognition of learning outcomes, and supporting documents (such as the course catalog, learning agreement, transcript of records, and work placement certificate) are used appropriately. All credits earned during a study abroad period are also transferred. However, Hungary lacks all the necessary components to encourage the recognition of learning outcomes.

The final metric is the recognition of qualifications; Germany offers automatic recognition, which means that all HEIs issued in other EHEA countries are recognized at the system level on an equal level with comparable academic credentials in the home country and are given the right to be taken into consideration for admission to a program of further study at the next level. However, most of the Hungarian HE system's components are available, indicating that a subset of EHEA countries has automatic recognition in place. The right to be considered for admission to a program of further study at the next level is granted by all HE qualifications produced in these countries, which are all systemically recognized on an equal footing with comparable academic qualifications in the home country.

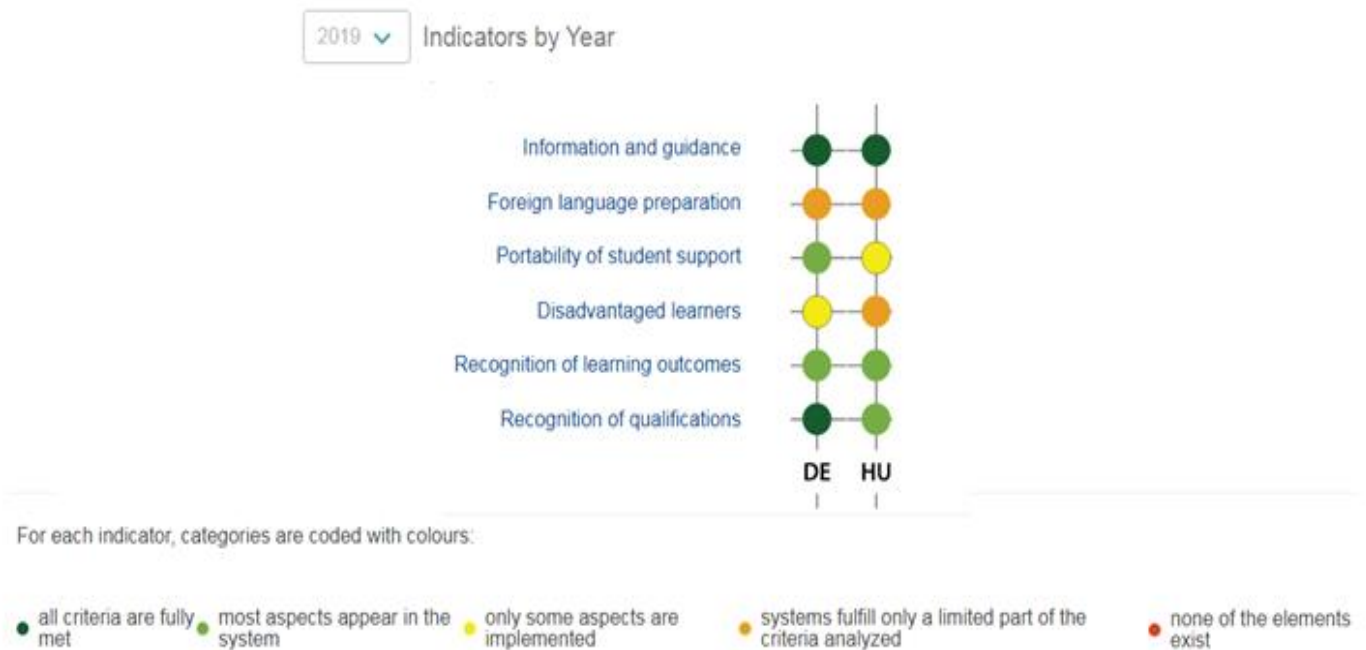


Figure 2: Adapted by the author. Scoreboard Indicators in Higher Education (2019). Source: Eurydice Report. [Scoreboard Indicators in Higher Education | YouthWiki \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eurydice.eu/Scoreboard-Indicators-in-Higher-Education/)

In 2019, the data showed some positive changes; both countries' indicator information and guidance fully met the requirements (see figure 2).

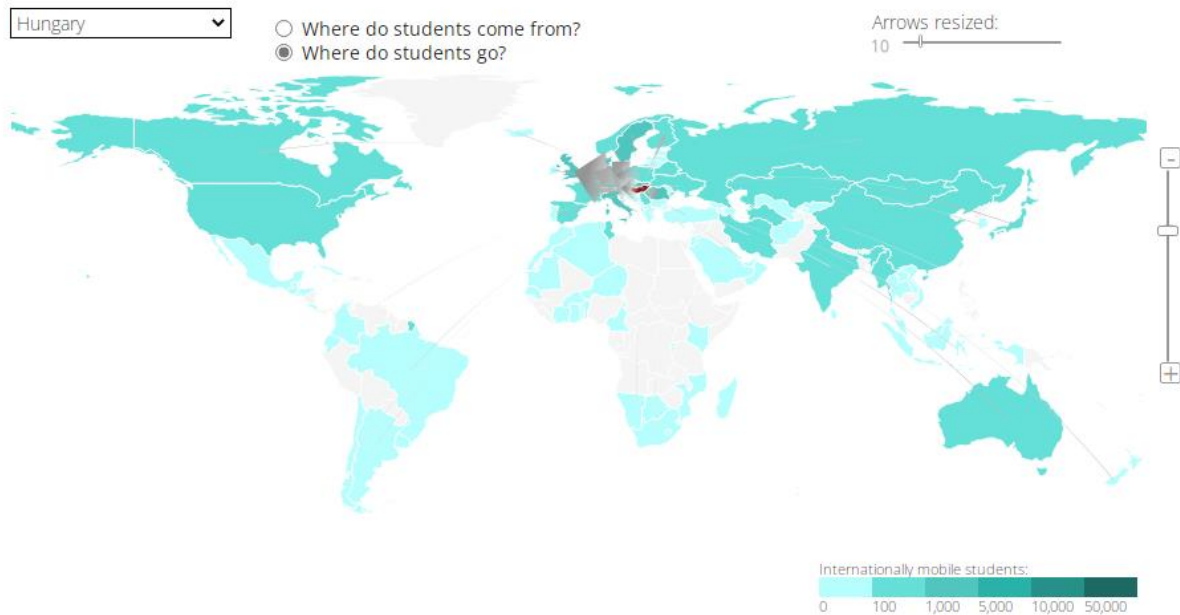
There are no changes in foreign language preparation, student support portability, and recognition of qualifications indicators; the results remain the same.

However, in the indicator disadvantage learners, there was a negative change, while Germany only showed some aspects implemented, and in Hungary, only a limited part is enacted in the system.

Similarly, the recognition of learning outcomes indicator in both countries had the same results; most system components were designed to promote recognition of learning outcomes via mobility.

Regarding internationalization in both nations, the UNESCO report below depicts the global flow of tertiary-level students; for this thesis, the two countries were chosen as the subject study's subjects – Hungary and Germany.

In the Hungarian context, the total number of mobile students abroad was 13,038. The United Kingdom was chosen as the first destination for Hungarian students to travel abroad; there were 2,379 students mobilized. Austria was the following destination country, with 2,156 mobilities, and Germany had 2,082 Hungarian students (see Figure 3).



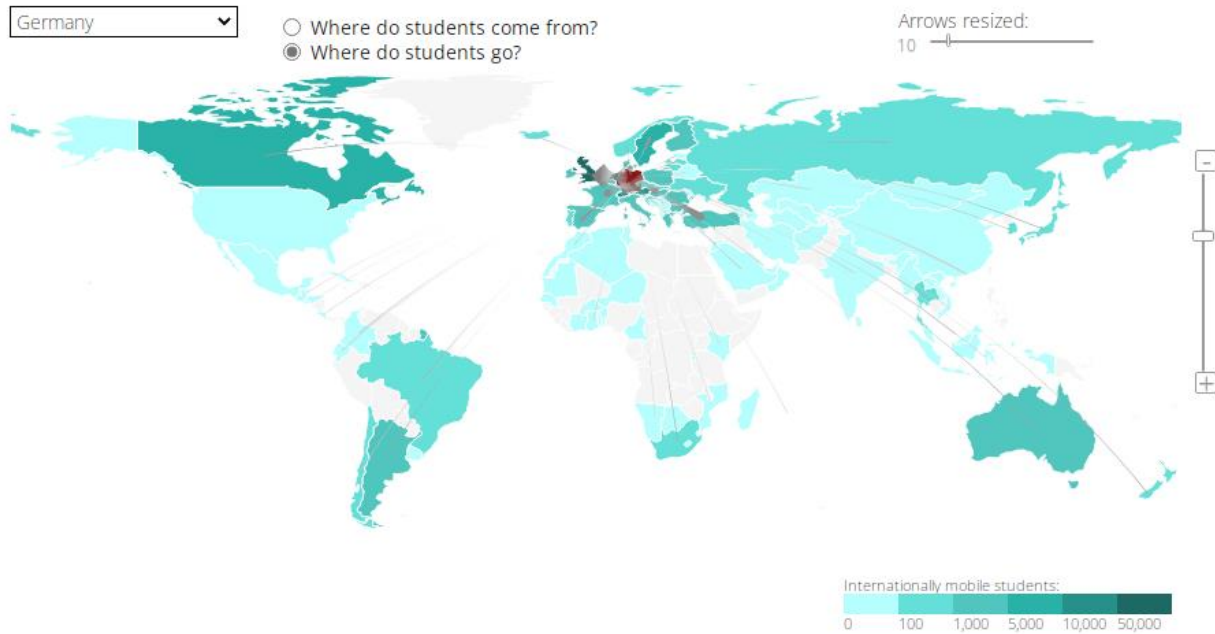
Hungary

Country of origin		Destination country		Key Indicators	
Germany	3,430	United Kingdom	2,379	Students abroad:	
China	2,377	Austria	2,156	Total number of mobile students abroad	13,038
Romania	2,216	Germany	2,082	(% of total mobile students)	0.2
Iran, Islamic Rep.	2,169	Denmark	1,187	Outbound mobility ratio	4.6
Serbia	1,944	Netherlands	963	Gross outbound enrolment ratio	...
Slovakia	1,750	Romania	616	Students hosted:	
Ukraine	1,202	Slovakia	609	Total number of mobile students hosted	35,479
Turkey	1,138	France	334	(% of total mobile students)	0.6
Nigeria	970	Switzerland	284	Inbound mobility rate	12.6
Norway	000	Finland	162		

... : missing data
n : nil or negligible
a : not applicable

Figure 3: Student's mobility in Hungary. Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

The total number of mobile students abroad in Germany was 122,445. Austria was the first country destination, with 29,322 student mobility. The Netherlands came in second with 21,314 mobilities, and the United Kingdom came in third with 13,232 German students (see Figure 4).



Germany

Country of origin		Destination country		Key Indicators
China	32,472	Austria	29,322	Students abroad:
India	18,574	Netherlands	21,314	Total number of mobile students abroad 122,445
Austria	12,865	United Kingdom	13,232	(% of total mobile students) 2.0
Syrian Arab Republic	12,442	Switzerland	11,020	Outbound mobility ratio 3.7
Russian Federation	9,646	Turkey	4,378	Gross outbound enrolment ratio ...
France	8,720	France	3,998	Students hosted:
Turkey	8,494	Denmark	3,518	Total number of mobile students hosted 333,233
Italy	8,405	Hungary	3,430	(% of total mobile students) 5.5
United States	7,430	Spain	1,977	Inbound mobility rate 10.1
Cameroon	7,214	Sweden	1,064	

... : missing data
n : nil or negligible
a : not applicable

Figure 4: Student's mobility in Germany. Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

This report demonstrates the increasing significance of student mobility in both nations and the benefits of such mobility to the consolidation of EU partnerships and cooperation.

3.1 The German case

Despite its deep historical origins, the system's expansion in terms of the number of HEIs occurring at any given time. Although the University of Heidelberg was established in 1386, making it the oldest university in Germany, a total of 31 HEIs were established in Germany before the turn of the 20th century.

These institutions include one University of Theology (Paderborn) and five Universities of Arts. However, on average, German HEIs are substantially younger; just one-quarter of the HEIs existed before World War II. Figure 3 below depicts two different growth patterns. First, there has been a growth in the number of institutions and their overall size; fifty percent of Germany's universities were established after 1963. The formal establishment of the universities of Applied Sciences (also known as Fachhochschulen) in 1968 marked the beginning of the second wave of expansion. Although only a small number of these institutions emerged prior to the decision, their formal recognition as a type of HEI kicked off a new expansion operation that is still ongoing to this day; approximately half of the Fachhochschulen were established after the year 1992. There are just three universities and 26 Fachhochschulen among the 35 HEIs that were established after 2009 (Lepori & Zahradnik, 2022).

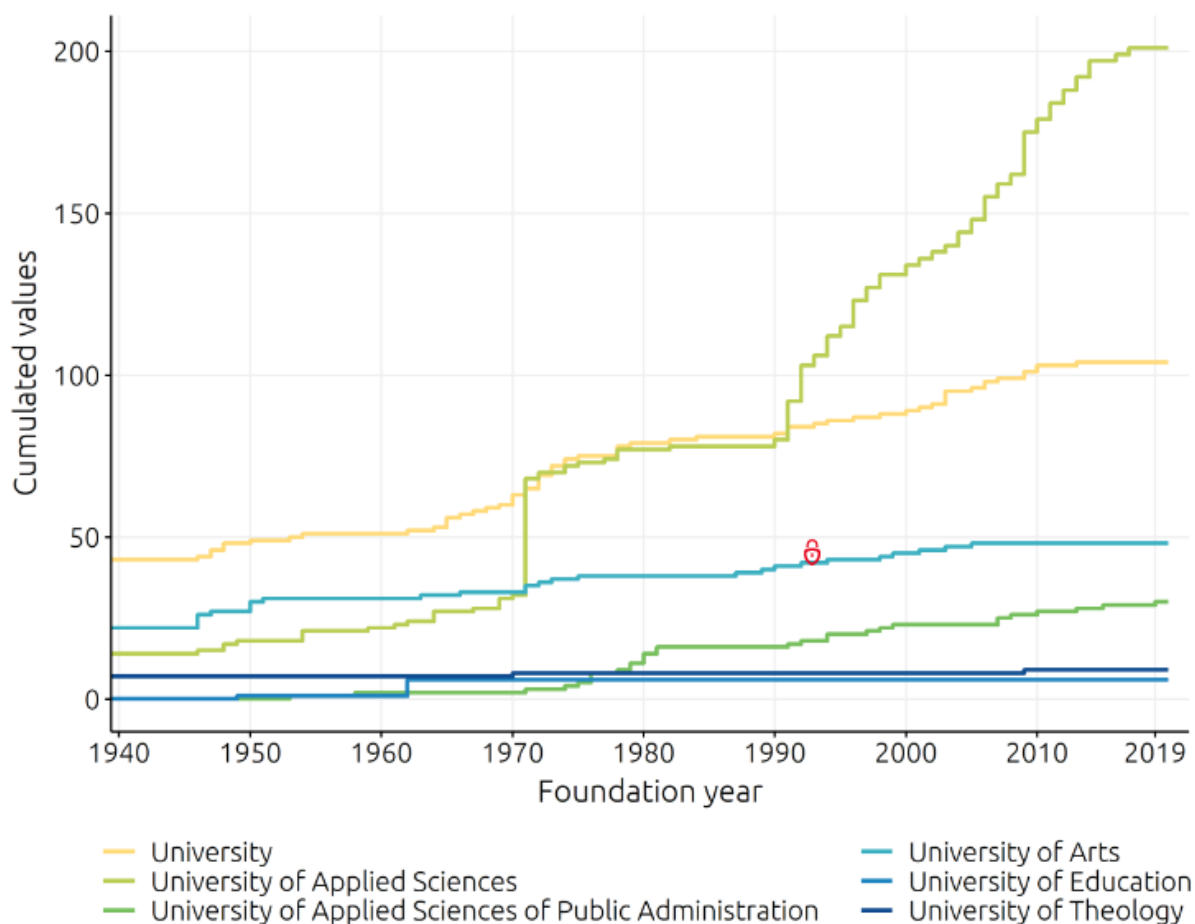


Figure 5: Foundation year of HEIs by type in Germany. Source: <https://zenodo.org/record/6420610#.YtF0l-IByUk>

At the beginning of the 19th century, the concept of *Bildung* in the German liberal view was associated notably with Humboldt's idea. The national culture legitimated by the higher learning called *Bildung* consisted of the critical obligation of the state to promote. However, the Humboldtian idea and the German *Bildung* did not support the sole German culture, instead endorsing the flourishing of a particular national 'superideology' at the beginning of the common sense of being German through education (Kwiek, 2006; Nybom, 2003).

In the German historical context, the modern HE model is represented by philosophers Wilhelm von Humboldt, Johann Fichte, and Friedrich Schleiermacher philosophers. It was a synthesis of the ideas and aspirations of the German community for the Reich, finally unified through novel education notions (Kwiek, 2006; Paletschek, 2001).

The formation of *Bildung* was conceived in classically aristocratic terms (a stratum to which von Humboldt ultimately belonged), removed from any instrumentalism or vocational spirit. *Bildung* thus says the idea of German idealism should foster creative abilities, the maturity of character, and the organic development of the individual.

The milestone of the *genesis* of the modern public university culminated in the development of state thought. Three powerful models played an essential role in developing HE in Europe: the Napoleonic, Humboldtian and Anglo-Saxon models. The competing major regional models of continental Europe: are French and German (Horlacher, 2016; Rüegg, 2010)

The French model planned by Napoleon stated that the university ought to prepare highly qualified officials and civil servants in the meritocracy perspective, and the training (curriculum and the administration) was to be centralized by the state in a bureaucratic organization manner (Rüegg, 2010)

The term "high levels of education" makes reference to the training that takes place at the *Grandes Écoles*, in which specialist education is prioritized as a crucial tool for professional formation and positions, as opposed to the more general term "high-level education" (Arthur et al., 2007).

The function of the university in the medieval system was reformulated by the national state, which merely taught certainty, definitive and unchangeable knowledge, and did not take into account the enormous dynamic dissemination of knowledge and the necessity to systematize the constant production of new knowledge through research (Backhaus, 2015; Rüegg, 2010).

However, the ideological and philosophical perspectives behind the foundation of the Humboldtian model of HEIs can be situated in modernity when university institutions were under crisis. At this point, some universities were closed, mainly because the universities were not adjusted to the modern science of knowledge production (Nybom, 2003).

The German model brought policy modernization and revival of the university in 1810. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a Prussian minister, convinced the king to bring a new idea of a university. Hence, the foundation of the University of Berlin (Rüegg, 2010). Indeed, "the adoption of the concept of *Bildung* at the institutional level and associated attempts at nation-building were of consequence for the founding of the University of Berlin in 1810" (Horlacher, 2016).

This new German model was a systematization of the philosophical theory about the organization and management of the university, which considers the urgency of the cooperation between teachers and students; the holistic nature of knowledge — New Humanist; the unity between research and education/teaching; complementation of primary education with HE; freedom of science production; and also, the close but autonomous relationship between state and university. Foremost, philosophers believe research activities could lead to the perfection of individuals and, thus, the whole society.

Like any institutional discourse, it offers an ideology of motivating and mobilizing ideas, myths, and aspirations. In this case, the core discourse in the rise of new universities constituted a classic idea about the university integration in the ethical-spiritual sphere of the emergent nation-state—the concept of this state as the educator of the elites and senior administrative and professional staff.

Going back to the historical context, despite experiencing financial issues during the Weimar Republic and ideological captivity at the hands of the Nazi dictatorship, the university system after World War II was mainly restored to its form from before the War. The new Grundgesetz ("Basic Law") of 1949 in West Germany provided that the State would be responsible for education policy and the regulation of HEIs. The federal state would primarily possess powers in matters pertaining to people or funding. The freedom of the sciences was also secured by Grundgesetz, which increased the autonomy of universities and helped prevent the politicization of HE (Reis, 2015)

Not until the latter half of the 1960s did the significant change occur. During this period, the student uprisings of the '68s took place. The primary goal of the demonstrators was to alter the internal structure of the educational institutions and to improve the quality of the learning environment. They were angry that the teaching staff had not been entirely de-Nazified after World War II. The desire for increased competitiveness compared with other national research systems and the establishment of the OECD in 1961 were also important drivers of the reforms that marked the beginning of what is frequently referred to as the "age of mass HE" (Kitschelt & Streeck, 2003; Reis, 2015; Trow, 1999). These reforms included substantially increasing the amount of money spent by the federal government on expanding and updating the facilities of German universities. An amendment that was made to the Grundgesetz in 1969 that shifted some responsibility from the State to the federal level made it possible for these things to happen. The

latter now had what was called the competency of Hochschulrahmengesetzgebung, allowing it to offer broad recommendations for enacting the HE system through legislation while allowing the states significant leeway in implementing those rules. The number of academic staff members employed at German universities more than tripled between 1961 and 1971 (Reis, 2015).

Following the reunification of Germany, the institutions of former East Germany were required to conform to those of their Western equivalents (Connelly, 2014). Universities were under pressure to improve their research output during this time period because they were considered critical components of the nation's development systems, producing highly educated labor and information on which the economy and society depend (Enders, 2001).

Currently, Germany has 16 states, and each state has its independent capacity to lead the education system. The first step of the German HE regarding quality assurance was to establish an accreditation council to respond to the emergence of HEIs evaluation in the national context. However, a challenge was posed by the council's inability to develop excellent standards to be followed by the institutions to enhance teaching and learning and create different orientations. State autonomy could be positive, but in this scenario, at some point, it worked against the process because all the states had the freedom to choose and decide the assessment tools they found appropriate to implement. At the beginning of the evaluation process, the institutions and experts found it difficult to create a quality evaluation that adhered to the accreditation council's orientation standards because each institution interpreted quality differently (Harris-Huermann, 2008).

Seven German federal states implemented tuition fees in the mid-2000s; Lower Saxony was the latest state to repeal them in 2014, restoring tuition-free HE throughout the country. Several waves of student protests were staged throughout the course of the procedure. Students from Germany and the European Union (EU) that pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree for the first time can take advantage of free HE opportunities around the country. Students who return to school for a second time may be subject to fees in some federal states, and the state of Baden-Württemberg opted in 2017 to impose fees on international students who are not from the EU (Gallas, 2018).

At present, we wonder what remains from the Humboldt model after the Bologna Process "*(...) the unity of research and teaching also in education instead of a pure knowledge transfer; the connection of technical education and general human education; finally, the community of*

scholars with equal rights” (Von Bruch 1999, p. 34–35 *apud* Frambach, 2015). However, universities during this time were founded on different expectations and purposes. The Humboldt model was planned to establish an intellectual capacity in the holistic perspective (individual): preparing to practice as a philologist or a secondary teacher was equally important in that model.

Within the massification of HE, the professional perspective is changing the training role and is distanced from the Humboldtian model. This new institutional environment has been challenging for those that have been following the old ways of *Bildung*.

In the perspective of pedagogy, the teacher had to practice the unity of research and teaching: the teacher can teach as knowledge only what they have gained by themselves as a result of their inquiry.

Comparing the Humboldt type of German model with the Anglo-Saxon model provides a broad knowledge based on the essential belief that it can serve as a foundation for continuing professional education and training, which employers typically offer.

The Anglo-Saxon model, which appeared in the nineteenth century with the founding of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, is characterized by personality development through "liberal education," interconnected among instructors and learners, as its core aspect. Because it provides a broad educational foundation with less focus on subject-specific and skill-related content, the Anglo-Saxon model is different from the French and German models, since it is not well-developed than the French and German models. This is because it is not envisioned to prepare students for a particular profession after graduation, unlike the two preceding models of vocational training and HE. According to Arthur *et al.* (2007), this type of educational foundation can be used to prepare students for further professional education and training, which is frequently provided by industry. Since the students' primary focus is to arrange flexibility and wisely with challenging situations, this model emphasizes professional rather than technical and vocational knowledge in other models (Sam & Van Der Sijde, 2014).

In order to have this historical dimension that goes beyond the determinants of the way of producing knowledge in the modern age allows for the understanding that the contemporary university should be adapted to the current culture and the new way of creating knowledge, less rationalistic and more holistic and humane. However, this brings new tensions that affect scientific knowledge and the social context of the work (technical professional). At the same time,

this brings an institutional dilemma between the labor market and scientific and academic training in a globalized context.

The Bologna Reform was implemented at the community level, along with the reform of academic remuneration arrangements, the establishment of "junior professorships" (Juniorprofessuren), and the German "Initiative for Excellence" (Exzellenzinitiative) are all examples of significant reforms and government initiatives that have recently been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. In parallel, academic institutions endorsed new tools such as assessment, performance analysis, marketing, and new kinds of management to compete effectively in the regional and international markets for higher education, which are constantly being developed to appear more transparent with the increased use of rankings. As will be demonstrated, many of these shifts brought about significant repercussions for the educational system found at German universities (Kehm, 2013; Reis, 2015).

3.2 Hungarian case

HE in Hungary has been around for centuries, in the 1270s, there was already a *studium generale* in Veszprém. László the 4th mentioned in his decrees that there was an episcopal *studium generale* in Veszprém that ceased to exist as a result of a standoff between rival families, but he issued a decree to reopen it. As far back as 1367, Pope Urban V approved the charter to establish a University in Pécs, Hungary. Although Pécs University was still in existence by the early 15th century, it was converted into an episcopal institution due to a lack of royal sponsorship. The institution appears to have endured until the early 16th century Ottoman takeover. King Sigismund of Hungary built Hungary's first university about 30 years after the first one was established in the Buda district. A charter for Buda (Old Buda) University was granted in 1395 by Pope Boniface IX. This university ceased/terminated/dissolved in 1409. King Matthias was given permission to open/found a university called Academia Istropolitana in Pozsony (now Bratislava) by Pope Paul II on July 20, 1467, which lasted until the 1480s (Kozma et al., 2017). In 1635, Cardinal Peter Pázmány signed the charter for the Jesuit university in Nagyszombat (after the Royal Hungarian University and now Eötvös Lorand University) after establishing several

colleges and trying to establish a university. It is worth noting that this institution is the first to have been continually operational from its foundation.

It was ruled by the church until 1769, when Queen Maria Theresia (1740-80) assumed power. Afterward, the Royal Court exerted a strong influence on the university because it was already a state institution. Under the leadership of Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II, the Empire established a unified administrative structure for the first time (1780-90). The Queen nationalized the established institutions (Mason, 2014). Despite Joseph's efforts, Hungary maintained its constitutional independence and privileges thanks to the 10th Act of the Parliament in 1792.

As early as 1777, Hungarian legislators passed the country's first education law. The *Ratio Educationis* governed the educational system, from pre-school to post-secondary education. Teachers and students alike had equal rights and responsibilities under the rules governing how schools were run and who was in charge. As a model at the time, the *Ratio Educationis* established legal institutions that are still in place today, such as how the rector and senators' administrative roles are assigned and how faculties are organized. Contrarily, the *Ratio Educationis* announced the dual system of personal leadership and guaranteed the Court's direct control with presidential support (Németh & Garai, 2018; Rónay, 2019c).

Additionally, as a result of the reforms in education, especially in the development of teacher training programs, the *Ratio Educationis* II legislation were enacted the teacher preparation exams, although confessional teachers were exempted from taking it. Additionally, it was a return to prior HE political movements that sought to minimize the influence of confessions in the system of teacher preparation (Garai & Németh, 2018). In parallel with this, the *Ratio Educationis* II established the frameworks of direct interventions by the Court and minimized the autonomous moving space of the academic management.

The elements of the Humboldt-type model were employed in the Hungarian context during the period of neo absolutism - by the Austrian Empire. To be precise, in the early period of repression after the 1848 revolution. Between 1849-1851, the neo absolutist government introduced some restructurings to reform and modernize the Hungarian HE system. Following these reforms, the seminar system based on the German model was introduced, the length of university studies was extended to 3 years, and the philosophy faculty became independent. One crucial aspect was that the teachers could offer courses for their students in conformity with their

research practices. However, it contributed to disorganization in the curriculum of phil. fac., because teacher education had always needed a systematic training structure (Garai, 2019).

From a historical perspective, it is evident that the Hungarian HE system influenced other foreign models, such as the German, French, and Soviet-type university models, in the second half of the 20th century. More important is understanding the interrelatedness between the national state development during political changes, the education reforms, and the transformation of the HE systems.

During the last third of the 19th century, other countries and imperial-royal republics in the region began developing theoretical pedagogy based on German models in Hungarian universities, and this trend continued throughout the rest of the century.

According to András Németh and Béla Pukánszky (2021), the French Revolution and Napoleon's sovereignty also ruined the universities in Europe, which had classically been supported by Catholic or Protestant leaders and instructed the same kinds of training in all faculties, such as the influence of confessions. France's enlightened authoritarian rule regulated the curriculum, awarded diplomas only to those who conformed to formal ideologies and even punished those who disobeyed the rules of conduct. Even though the Revolution and Napoleon enacted its essential components (such as centralized control and the establishment of specialized schools), it has been in effect under consecutive French autocracies. Two new university models emerged at the start of the 19th century, just after political change, paving the way for radical reform of the traditional university (Németh & Pukánszky, 2021).

Due to their close cultural ties, German and French professional models had a more significant influence on the Austrian and Hungarian sectors. The Eötvös family, who contributed significantly to the modernization of Hungarian public education, were adherents of the French model. Both models could be seen in the regulations of the Secondary School Teacher Training Institute, formed in 1870. A university-based teacher training institute (*grandes écoles* – the French model) or university-based seminars for secondary school teachers' education are two options for organizing teacher training based on international models (the German model) (Garai, 2019).

According to Garai and Németh (2018), “(...) *development of Hungarian society resulted in the fact that only certain components of this university model were implemented and adjusted to particularities of the Hungarian society and economy*” (p. 229).

The University of Budapest was one of the first institutions in the Habsburg Empire to enact university policy changes centered on Humboldt's Prussian university model, which began in 1849 and spread throughout the empire. Because of the Compromise of 1867 and the union with Transylvania, Hungary had a unique position within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the other nation-state within the Monarchy that was governed by its own legislative authorities (Németh & Pukánszky, 2021).

From 1945 until 1990, the Soviet model was enacted in the Hungarian HE, which created a rupture between the unity of teaching and research preconized by the previous model - the German university model. The central aspect of this university model was to focus on the technical professional training and vocational education where the professional colleges were established. On the other hand, the ultimate purpose of this paradigm was to ensure that the state (state party) was in complete command of its affairs (Rónay, 2021).

In the decades after World War II, the neo-humanist university paradigm that had been popularized in Central and Eastern Europe during the second half of the 19th century was forgotten. As a result of the establishment of universities with a particular focus, the structure of HE in Hungary came to mirror Soviet patterns of the university to create a narrow-profile university. A large administrative structure (the Imperial University) oversaw most of the 19th century's French HE system, mostly consisting of special schools (*grandes écoles*). Several of these characteristics were reminiscent of those seen in the Russian and later Soviet HE systems (Németh & Garai, 2020).

The HEIs functioned to teach only specific disciplines under the financial control of the State (Rozsnyai, 2003).

After the political and economic changes in 1989-1990, dilemmas and challenges to modernize education and the HE system emerged once more. This was a new age in the history of this country after the end of Soviet rule and resulted in a relevant shift regime to democracy (decentralized governance) and a free-market economy. Hence, this 'social transition' encouraged reformations in education development according to new democratic perspectives (Halász, 2003).

In the same vein, Halász (2003) advocates that “(...) *in Hungary has been a relatively strong commitment to modernization, as exemplified by the fact that when the conservatives came to power in the late 1990s, they retained most elements of the education modernization policies initiated by the liberals*” (p. 56).

The Hungarian scenario shifted when the republic and the changes in Constitution focused on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The foundation of a democratic parliament and free elections in 1990 and the establishment of a new Act (in 1993) that marked the first regulation document for mentioning the autonomy of Hungarian HEIs facilitated greater academic freedom (Rónay, 2019c).

This document was launched to highlight the new HE system path. The Act LXXX of 1993 on HE brought a new vision, and universities began to focus on the interconnections between research and teaching in their mobile participation between teachers and students. This Act marked the return to the German university model, which developed the principle of science and scholarship as the core of this pedagogical model. Academic freedom and autonomy are also a cornerstone of the Humboldt model, highlighting that programs, lectures, and research strive for an unconditional practice (Östling, 2018). However, although some academics question this, the Humboldt model is said to have a reduced degree of autonomy (due to the state's more significant influence), but academic freedom is nearly totally guaranteed (Kováts & Rónay, 2021; Rónay, 2019a).

There were 15 hours a week of classroom time dedicated to scientific research in Germany under the Humboldt model, and this encouraged students to pursue science-related interests during their secondary school years.

Another important aspect related to these novel orientations, as mentioned before, is the issue of quality, threatened by the massification of HE. It became a significant issue and gained valuable space in the national policy agenda (Csizmadia et al., 2008; Kövesi et al., 2004).

The direction of Hungarian HE system started to return to the Humboldt-type university model in order to “catch up” with Western Europe (Halász, 2003, p. 56). In 1993, a body responsible for evaluating the programs and other scientific issues was created in Hungary called the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC), which introduced quality assurance in HE. The external evaluation began with this national agency responsible for monitoring and providing suggestions to improve the quality of the programs and align them with international demands (Szanto, 2004).

In 2005, the case of the Hungarian HE system changed with the so-called ‘modernization agenda.’ One year later, a new law launched the institutional framework for implementing bachelor's and master's degree programs to be followed in HEIs alighted within the community

level- EU transferring credits from one institution to another by using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was the goal. The importance of quality becomes evident when introducing guidelines under the Bologna structure agreement (Alesi et al., 2007; Marcus, 2014).

However, in Hungary, in 2011, the approval of the National Higher Education Act played down the changes in the Hungarian HE context.

Kováts (2015) clarified this aspect in his study that institutional autonomy was reduced in several ways, such as: “(...) *in the area of education and research, admission quotas for each institution and educational areas were centrally set, and the number of state-funded places of the most popular 16 programs has been drastically cut*” (p. 31). Rónay (2018) argued that “*the universities do not have safeguards against a potential delimitation of organizational autonomy. As we will see, the governing majority embraced the opportunity to violate their freedom*” (p. 179). As a result of strict governmental control, we can infer a disconnect between the principles of legal discourse in the past and the realities of higher education contexts. This shows a lack of structural institutions' autonomy to execute their curricula and handle their resources, reflecting teachers' restricted freedom to engage in pedagogical activities.

According to historical models, Hungarian university development has followed a social and political change pattern. Changes in institutional autonomy and academic freedom are also monitored as shifts within and between these two aspects of the university administration. A strong sense of institutional autonomy is essential when it comes to departmental reforms and state intervention. It has the potential to either increase or decrease the number of campus administrators participating in decision-making processes (Karran et al., 2017). In our Ph.D. research, it is relevant to establish this relationship between the governance changes and their influence on quality assurance and the environment of Hungarian HEIs from the point of view of the stakeholders involved in the selected institutions.

3.3 Institutions selected

Both countries' current HE systems can trace their ancestry back to Humboldt, as previously stated. It was decided that both institutions would focus their research on the HUB, and as a result, the modern idea of a university was born, along with the significant events and improvements to educational quality that have occurred since. This will allow us to compare the original German model and the adaptation of it in the classic Hungarian University, which was based on the Humboldt model.

The Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) is the first, until now, continuously functioning university in Hungary, which has played a significant role in social training in this country and producing knowledge for the benefit of society. This Ph.D. research is relevant to understanding this close relationship between the German model, quality assurance, and their implementation in ELTE, which (or whom legal predecessors) followed that model in their activities.

3.3.1 Humboldt University of Berlin

The Humboldt University of Berlin is one of the relevant universities in Germany, created in 1809. As aforesaid in the German context, the foundation of the HUB was an essential stage in supporting the social reforms and promoting this new sense of a whole nation through the *Bildung* and education in the HEI. At the beginning of the 19th century, the modern university model was introduced to build an unbreakable tradition decentralized from the government. The foundation of this university emerged embedded with social relevance as an intellectual core center of science and education and the spiritual revival of the nation after World War II (Thom & Weining, 2014).

The modern university tried to solve the issue of the separation of teaching in the university and the research in the academies. It defended both financial and intellectual autonomy. Freedom of teaching and learning was the cornerstone of the German type of university. It prepared the field to face the great challenge of reconciling the internal demands of the sciences with the demands of the state and society (Horlacher, 2016; Östling, 2018; Thom & Weining, 2014). Throughout the years, the university passed essential changes, but the principles of teaching and researching co-existence remain nowadays.

Currently, the university portfolio has 189 courses/programs in total: 57 bachelor's degrees, 77 consecutive master courses, 36 Courses leading to a teaching position, 16 Postgraduate and Certificate Studies, one Diploma course, and two regimented courses leading to a degree approved by the state or the church. The number of students has reached 42,468, including the Charité². Regarding the research aspect, the university offers 43 Graduate schools and graduate programs, 16 Research Training Groups, five Collaborative research centers, and two Clusters of Excellence (Berlin, 2016).

At HUB, regarding the quality management of the institution, the department responsible for this important matter is Academic Affairs, which emphasizes the promotion of quality developments in teaching, studying, and research, followed by the quality Management Unit, which is mainly active in the Evaluation, Analysis, Development, and Consulting (Berlin, 2020).

3.3.2 Eötvös Loránd University

ELTE is the oldest and most prestigious university in Hungary, working uninterruptedly since it was established in Nagyszombat (currently: Trnava, Slovakia) on 12 May 1635 (Nagyszombat University, later Royal Hungarian University, Pázmány Péter Hungarian Royal University of Sciences³, today Eötvös Lorand University) (Rónay, 2019). The name associated with the university's foundation was Péter Pázmány, the Archbishop of Esztergom, who re-structured the Jesuit college into a university that brought changes to the Hungarian HE system by creating the faculties of Theology and Philosophy. In November of the same year, after imperial and royal approval, they started their teaching activities in the Faculty of Humanities and then Theology. It was characterized as a state university under the church's influence until 1769 (Szögi et al., 2010; Tarrósy, 2002).

Between 1867 and 1918, the Humboldt model was developed, with direct and ministerial solid supervision over operations and finances, but with substantial academic freedom to the academia (Rónay, 2019a).

Another important event in the political transformation in Hungary was during the Soviet influence, which set in motion a series of reforms to abolish institutional autonomy. This

² Berlin School of Medicine, Charité

³ That was the official name of the university in the interwar period.

condition persisted until the previously noted regime change, which restored the Humboldt model to its previous position. However, this almost complete autonomy with significant academic freedom lasted only three years, and after a series of modest amendments, the first comprehensive reform was implemented in 2005, followed by another in 2011. Since then, the HE system has undergone numerous transformations with limited autonomy and academic freedom. Though these events are connected to the history of the overall HE system, they impacted the operation of ELTE, such as when the legal institution of the chancellor was established.

Lastly, in 1999 the institutional structure of Hungarian HE changed into the next millennium (Tarrósy, 2002).

ELTE has the most extensive educational portfolio and is the principal scientific establishment in Hungary. The current number of students enrolled each year has reached approx. 28.000, and there are 1.800 highly qualified teachers and researchers. The university offers 13,162 courses: 38 bachelor's, 219 combined teacher training programs, 96 masters, and more than 60-degree programs in foreign languages. ELTE is one of the principal academic centers, with 118 Ph.D. programs at 16 doctoral schools (Eötvös Loránd University, 2015).

Like in the case of all state HEIs, the governance of this state university originally was under the rector leader, who was responsible for the university. In 2014 the chancellor system was introduced by the law in all state HEIs. With this, the leadership has been transformed into a dual-type, where the rector is responsible for the operation (it means the academic matters) and the chancellor for the management and maintenance (non-academic matters). The latter is appointed and ordered by the minister. Next year, in 2015, the Parliament established a new body – consistory – which also belongs to the government and practices veto right in crucial decisions, like budget or institutional strategy. The Deans organize the faculties. The Senate is a vital player in decision-making and in controlling the institution (Eötvös Loránd University, 2020).

4. Research Questions

The primary objective of this project is to examine the concept(s) of quality assurance mentioned in the guiding education policy and Higher Education discourses within Germany and Hungary's HE systems. In order to achieve this goal, this research will:

- identify the relationship between national quality assurance policy documents and assess their potential implications and (un)intended effects on the actors involved;
- identify the institutional policies and strategies, increase the qualification and improvement of training, and how the institutions do act in the face of the challenges of globalization, autonomy, and ideals of democratization;
- analyze the perspectives of students at selected public universities, Eötvös Loránd University and the Humboldt University of Berlin, in both countries regarding their quality experiences in HE;
- identify the external Policy Makers (management personnel, teachers, and researchers) perspectives about quality measures that are deployed in HEIs;

Questions to be investigated on three levels:

- (macro-level) Which dimensions and meanings of quality are expressed in national policies for Higher Education in Hungary and Germany, and how do the differences in financial conditions assess their potential effect on the autonomy of the institutions and the actors involved? What is the connection between the legal document's content, national orientation, and the HE system's effectiveness?
- (meso level) In what ways do the institutional policies and strategies leverage the qualification and improvement of training and the challenges/tension of globalization and ideals of democratization?
- (micro-level) How do the students perceive Higher Education quality in general (structured, teachers, management, learning- formal or informal and programs- internship or exchange, scholarship offered by the institutions)? How do the top and middle management employees, researchers and teaching personnel perceive the quality at the university? What needs and potentials do they identify?

See figure 1 for the study focus:

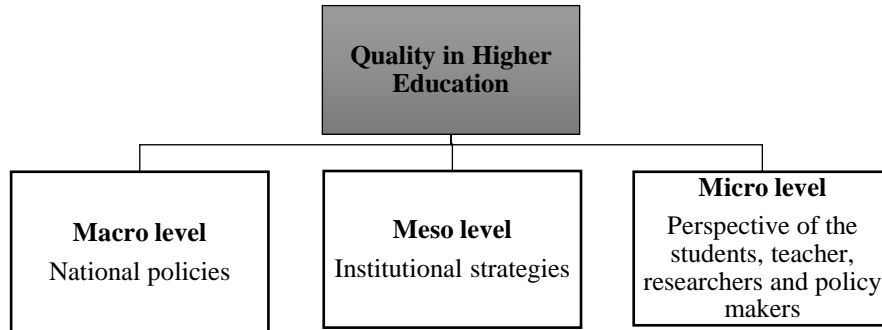


Figure 6: Study focus chosen to use the tripartite division of macro, meso, and micro levels of HE. Source: Author.

These are questions that pertain to the study's general aspects and the link between the micro, meso, and macro levels, which are all levels that can and possibly will be mobilized in social analysis. In order to construct an understanding of a specific social situation, this group of questions is interconnected with one another (Serpa & Ferreira, 2019).

5. Research Framework

5.1 Research paradigm

The paradigm aligned to this research is Constructivism because aimed to understand and interpret the concept of quality from different angles since the participants construct the senses and views in various ways, even when referring to the same aspect.

Constructivism is an epistemic proposal that comprehends reality as subjective and multiple, “(...) *in the constructivism paradigm as the researcher asks participants to reflect on their experience of a phenomenon and describe what was essentially meaningful to them. Through this reflection, both the researcher and participant gain insight, or construct knowledge*” (Given, 2008, p. 117). This perspective is based on the understanding of intentions and meanings - beliefs, opinions, perceptions, representations, attitudes, and concepts - that human beings place in their actions, concerning others and with the contexts in which and with which they interact on participation, intervention, and collaboration from the personal critical reflection into the action.

In the constructivism paradigm, all knowledge concerning reality relies on human activities generated via the interaction between individuals and the world in which we exist and communicate in a social context. It is involved with the interpretation of events.

This Ph.D. dissertation is related to this philosophical paradigm because we intend to reflect on the institutional strategies, educational practices, and behaviors of the participants' discourses in the semi-structured interviews and connection with legal documents analyzed at the national and supranational level.

5.2 Research tools and methods

The research methodology of the dissertation follows an approach with a qualitative-oriented research design, taking into consideration the questions and the guiding objectives of this PhD research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Denzin, 2017). The main aim of the empirical work is to collect qualitative data on the macro, meso, and micro-levels of Hungary and Germany.

The primary and secondary data sources that will be used in the research plan are: 1) Primary data sources: – data collected from the teachers, students, and expert interviews– data

collected from the document analysis, national and State HE regulations. 2) Secondary data sources: scientific/academic papers, dissertations, books, and existing research focus on the quality assurance in HE.

In a deductive study employing a multi-method research design, document analysis and semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data gathering techniques, while content analysis was used to analyze the data within the constructivist paradigm. Figure 2 shows the methods of data collection for this research project.

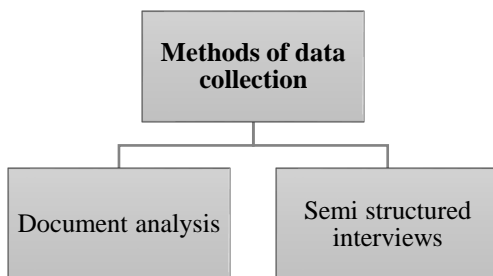


Figure 7. Methods of data collection

Detailed explanations of the various methods can be found in the following subchapters.

5.2.1 Document analysis

In this research, document analysis was used for European and national policies (macro-level) and official documents of the two institutions selected (Meso level). The quality systems were examined, the tools and strategy for assessment (internal and external), and how the quality of the teaching, learning, and management of these institutions is ensured. The document analysis allows us to identify the tensions and contradictions between the internal and external demands, the forces and influences that shape the HE system in aspects of social and economic development (Bray & Jiang, 2014), designing programs that adequately meet students' needs, while at the same time responding to the demands of the knowledge-based economy.

As for methods of data collection to support this research, the institutions' documents were analyzed, which demonstrate various aspects involving the institution, such as management, regulations, commitments, values, and mission choice of these documents allows "(...) researchers access to an 'official perspective' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994).

The analysis of HE documents in both countries focused on 14 legal documents that were essential to understanding national-level policies and institutional policy at ELTE and HUB. The documents that were analyzed are shown in the table below.

Country	Legal documents / Institutional documents
Hungary	National level
	Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education
	Institutional Level – Eötvös Loránd University
	ELTE Organisational and Operational Regulations - Academic Regulations for Students (2021).
	Organisational And Operational Regulations Volume 2. Annex 6 To the Academic Regulations for Students- Doctoral Regulations (2016).
	On the institutional implementation of the Government Decree Non. 599/2021. (X. 28.) regarding the mandatory vaccination against coronavirus of the employees of state and local government institutions
	ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body (2021).
	Federal Level
Germany	Federal Data Protection Act – BDSG (2017)
	Freedom of Information Act - IFG (2006)
	State-level
	Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law - LHG) of January 1, (2005).
	Bavarian University Act (BayHSchG) from May 23, (2006).
	Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law- BerLHG) as amended on July 26, (2011).
	Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law - LHG) of January 1, (2005).
	Institutional level - Humboldt University of Berlin
	Constitution of the Humboldt-University of Berlin (Version of 28 June 2011)
	Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin (2013)
	Statute collection data thesis (2010)

Table 1. Legal documents selected for the analysis.

All the German legal documents were in German, which were translated to English using automated software from Word Microsoft office, and to analyze if the term was comprehensible, we asked native speakers to help translate them. In the Hungarian case, all documents were found in English.

For this study, policy document analysis was used to compare the present quality policies in Germany and Hungary HE and look for parallels and variations between the two nations. The chosen institutions were divided by the Federal level, state/national level, and institutional level.

Regarding the institutional level, the policies enacted were also added in the pandemic situation because they guide the institutional activities during the critical period.

As for the HUB, it was only found a website called "Pandemic operation" that provides updates on the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on academic teaching and research as well as professional career development. For students, teachers, and employees, there is a FAQ, a regulation for working from home, and current tasks and responsibilities for both teachers and students on this website.

5.2.2 Semi-structured interview

In the framework of my Ph.D. research goals, the semi-structured interview approach was chosen because it allows a discussion about quality, it encourages personal thoughts and feelings from students, teachers, top and middle management staff, and researchers of the institutions selected. This was considered a suitable technique because it will allow a direct communication experience, where the "I- the subject," in this case, the interviewee, can speak, expressing opinions and values that are "Theirs." The following definition is that those authors, Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Accardon, and Susan Emanuel (1999), consider the relationship established between interviewer and interviewee should be comprehensively based on trust relatedness between two persons. Nunes (2004) complements this idea by stating that when in contact with the participants, there are two essential questions: social proximity and familiarity, which favors "*nonviolent communication*" (p. 195). This means that during the contact with the participants, the necessary conditions should be created for the interview development, such as the environment, general information on the subject to be addressed, issues elaborated in advance and related to the objectives of the research, and finally, the relationship of empathy and verbal and non-verbal reinforcement involving the interviewer and interviewee (Brown, 1990).

In this view, the interview aims to promote knowledge-producing practices about the participant's opinions and experiences on a given topic and/or context and to infer the meaning of these experiences, enabling a scientific understanding of a social phenomenon in the midst of interactions between people and situations governed by a set of social interactions (Brinkmann, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

For this investigation, it is considered using semi-structured interviews as a technique that allows an approximation of the context and the people. Using this technique will make it possible to get to the "statements" of the interviewees and to understand the individual importance that each participant attributed to the quality of the HE, specifically in ELTE and HUB. That is to say; the interviews facilitated the auscultation, inquiry, and realization of inferences about the senses and experiences of the students we interviewed.

The interview planning is considered one of the relevant points to reach the objectives outlined—initially, the construction of an interview script (Appendix 1) contains important questions to be answered. The interview guide assisted as a guideline for the researcher to insert a series of topics and, mainly, reorient the questions to the topic under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). As these authors, Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1994) argue: the scripts are mainly used to collect data in several places that can be compared. If similar data is collected at each site or each statement can be made regarding the distribution of the facts gathered. Although, in some studies, this is essential, concerns about program agreement, rather than understanding the data, can counteract the potential of the qualitative approach.

As Ferreira (2014) points out, the interviews "*correspond to intersubjective constructions, that is, descriptions and discursive positions that are constructed from a situation of interaction structured from pairs of question-answers, a model where the narration of the interviewee is not automatic, and the interviewer's intervention is not neutral*" (p. 176). It is with this attitude of dialogue between interviewee and interviewer that we position ourselves in close proximity to Castro, Ferreira and Gonzalez (2013) when they consider that: the interview is an intentional conversation and is used when there are few situations to be observed or quantified, and even when you want to deepen an issue. In the interview, one should let the person speak freely, unlike the open-ended questionnaire, which avoid shifting the focus, which is more objective compare to the interview. When the interview is intentional, the participants were comfortable talking about their personal and institutional experiences.

A critical aspect of doing a semi-structured interview is to recognize the challenges that are associated with this tool to gather data. According to the author Eike Adams (2010), the challenges are: staying focused during the interview, managing silence, being non-judgmental, and, most importantly, comprehending their ethical responsibility toward the interviewee

(Adams, 2010). More aspects can be added, such as including control of the interview (*i.e.* who sets the direction or tone) and establishing an honest relationship with the participants.

5.2 Content analysis

The data collected were analyzed through content analysis. The Nvivo 12 software was used for data processing, facilitating the structuring and compiling of data through the maximum retention of information handled in research (Bardin, 2011; Krippendorff, 2018). The content analysis consists of a technique that allows understanding, removing, and validating inferences from texts and contexts in the analysis.

Content analysis was used as a method of information processing. In light of the study's goals, this technique was deemed appropriate for describing and organizing the data collected, whether related to the documents selected on national and institutional policies or interviews with stakeholders.

It is an analytic technique that can be used to understand, retrace, and validate inferences drawn from texts and contexts in an analytic environment (Krippendorff, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Castro *et al.* (2013), content analysis is seen as a research technique that aims to go beyond immediate and spontaneous comprehension, or in other words, to observe the meanings of a text with greater acuity, and this necessitates the development of connections between analytic premises and textual elements, as such, the focus of this work is on interpretation. As a result, this can lead to an in-depth interpretation of the text and the creation of inferences about the world of research. An interpretive process seeks to describe the discourses and assign feelings and meanings favorable to the inferences drawn.

The content analysis "(...) *is a way to enrich spontaneous reading, making it more productive, relevant, and useful*" (Lopes, 1993), and "*from it are derived understandings, meanings, and inferences about the communication's production conditions*" (Lopes, 1993, p. 257). This analysis created categories that allowed to uncover what is not explicitly expressed in the discourses.

Content analysis is part of a categorization process that is either *a priori* or emergent from the analysis itself that follows the deductive approach method (Bardin, 2011). Precisely, for this

investigation, a procedure of topical categorization was followed, which was taken as analytic dimensions.

As a result, the documents were analyzed in six main dimensions.

Dimension	Categories	Indicators
Dimension 1	Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General concept - quality assurance, excellence, and professional development
Dimension 2	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private sector • Stakeholders • Higher Education Internationalization (mobility programs) • Data protection
Dimension 3	Institutional autonomy: Homogenization x differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic freedom • Institutions and programs • Role of the State and institutions • Evaluation and institution`s autonomy
Dimension 4	Internal and external evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments • Improvement in the outcomes • Rankings
Dimension 5	Learning, teaching, and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered learning • Teaching methods • Scholarship/ Social support • Feedback • Interdisciplinarity
Dimension 6	Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being • Changes/ challenges • Training

Table 2. Dimensions of analysis.

Since the study was conducted in two European nations, Hungary and Germany, document analysis and semi-structured interviews were deemed the best method for capturing the complexity of the setting and research components.

In this research, Nvivo 12 was used for our content analysis because it is an application that assists researchers in performing qualitative analysis by making data organization and compilation easier by retaining as much information as possible about the research that was conducted.

The following table is an example of the coding used in the first research stage at the macro level.

Legal Documents	Year	Dimension Quality
Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education	2011	<i>(...) in cases involving the launch of a bachelor, master, or tertiary vocational programme (...) the higher education institution may propose an expert other than the one specified in paragraph (4), provided that it is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. In such case, the educational authority shall invite the organisation (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 67, and Section 4b).</i>
Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (state University Law - LHG)	2005	<i>(...) quality assurance concept includes an interim evaluation or other suitable measures to provide feedback on previous performance during the qualification period and status advice before starting the evaluation (Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law - LHG) of 1 January 2005, Section 51 b).</i>
Bavarian University Act (BayHSchG)	2006	<i>In the field of study and teaching, especially bachelor and master's programs, one quality assurance measure must be accredited following the Study accreditation State Contract. 2Legal Regulations under Articles 4 (1) to 5 and Article 16 (2) of the Study Accreditation State Treaty is issued by the State Ministry (Bavarian University Act (BayHSchG) 2006, Section IV, Article 57).</i>
Law on Universities in the state of Berlin (Berlin University Law - BerlHG)	2011	<i>Quality assurance and accreditation- Through appropriate measures, universities ensure that their work, particularly in research and teaching and in the conduct of examinations, complies with recognized quality standards. Essential stand-up of the university's internal quality assurance system is the regular implementation of evaluations, especially in the field of teaching. The students and the graduates are to be involved in the evaluation of the teaching. The member's Universities are obliged to participate in evaluation procedures, in particular by providing the necessary information (Law on Universities in the state of Berlin, 2011, Section 1, Article 8A).</i>

Table 3 Example of document analysis: Dimension quality – Macro level. Source: Author analysis through Nvivo12

The table above provides a graphic representation of the quality/ quality assurance analysis enacted by each country's legal framework. Further research into the relevance of this topic based on higher education policy documents is now possible, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. This was taken into account throughout the subsequent stages of the content analysis. A meso-level example of dimension quality (interviews) can be seen in (Appendix 3).

5.3 Target groups and sample

This Ph.D. research concentrates on the following target groups:

- Quality experience of students, teachers, staff in ELTE and HUB, and external policymakers within the Hungarian and German context.

The perspective of the participants will be added to the data collected at the meso level (institutions) and the macro-level (supranational and national policies), seeking to combine all the data to identify the consequences of these processes on individuals and systems.

The technique selected to find the participants is snowball or chain sampling, as this approach is useful in locating information.

“The process begins by asking well-situated people, “Who knows a lot about _____? Whom should I talk to?” By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases” (Quinn Patton, 2002, p. 451). This technique helps us to comprehend the participant's perspectives about the topic, and the semi-structured interview is based on gathering suggestions from those who have parallel or different points of view.

Before beginning the interview, most consent forms had been signed. Verbal consent from the researcher was necessary where this was not practicable, followed by the appropriate consent form. Only in the absence of face-to-face meetings was this a viable option. Virtual interviews (Microsoft Teams and Zoom) were organized similarly to personal interviews.

All respondents were first contacted via e-mail, which included thorough information on the study's objective, scope, overview, and the researcher's background and ethical information such as confidentiality and procedures. The interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient for the interviewees, and they were conducted both in-person and online.

Semi-structured interviews lasted, on average, 60 minutes; within three weeks of the interviews, audio recordings were made, and transcriptions were completed. Some participants were asked to review their transcription and add or modify what they found important or not for this study. Most of the interviews were conducted in English; only four interviews were in

Portuguese. All 43 interviews were voice recorded, and the audio file was erased after transcription.

As a result, all interviews for this study were conducted anonymously. Following that, each interview will be recognized by the countries HU- Hungary or GE Germany, the interviewee's position – Student, Teacher, Staff, and External Policymaker; and the interviewee's code number (*e.g.*, HU Student 1, GE Student 1, HU Teacher 1, GE Teacher 1, HU External Policymaker 1, GE External Policymaker 1,... and so forth).

Overall, the data collection took place over a long period of time, from September 2020 to November 2021, and 43 participants in the process: 22 were female, and 21 were male. The breakdown of the participants is shown in Table 3. The difficulty in finding and interviewing participants, especially throughout a pandemic, explains in large part the discrepancy in the number of Hungarian and German interviewees (teachers and students).

Participants type	Number of interviews	Hungary	Germany
Teachers	16	12	4
Students	15	10	5
Staffs	7	4	3
External policymakers	5	3	2
Total	43	29	14

Table 4 Participants in this research. Source: Author

The decision was made based on the general principle that a sample of roughly 30 participants is a sufficient medium-sized subject pool that can provide helpful information “This medium size subject pool offers the advantage of penetrating beyond a very small number of people without imposing the hardship of endless data gathering, especially when researchers are faced with time constraints” (S. E. Baker & Edwards, 2012).

5.4 The ethical aspects of the research

In educational research, ethical problems are a noteworthy consideration that must be treated seriously. The subjects are students, staff, teachers, and external policymakers from the institutions selected. Any research involving persons requires ethical consideration of the potential impact and implications of the research involved. This research project considers it vital to clarify ethical principles in the form of ‘informed consent’ used with the students, for interviewing staff at the university, and for research and teaching personnel on implementation and assurance quality. To start conducting the semi-structured interviews, the request was submitted asking the approval from the Research Ethical Committee from the Faculty of Education and Psychology at ELTE. Participants were given information and asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 2), which the Ethical Commission approved of the Eötvös Loránd University.⁴

Additionally, support from the Humboldt University of Berlin was received, especially from the International Office, to begin interviewing in the institution following their regulations; they have advertised our research recruitment in their monthly newsletter and asked for help from the Humboldt community participants. There are also ethical considerations, such as the sort of participants or the sensitive data the responders may be sharing. The methodological design was designed to maximize the protection of the respondents without compromising the validity and reliability of the study by analyzing these factors in the current research and reflecting on potential ethical issues. There were no minors among the participants, and they all agreed to participate in the study after being informed of its purpose and given a copy of the informed consent form.

5.5 Comparative Approach

This comparative research enables discussion, deepening reflection, and broadening horizons about the interaction of local, national, and supranational levels. Furthermore, this dissertation seeks to illuminate how the institutional policies and strategies leverage the qualification and improvement of training and analyze the students’, top and middle management’s, researchers’, and teachers’ perspectives about HE quality experiences in both

⁴ The number of the permission: 2020/304.

countries with public universities. In our case, we want to compare two European countries to “identify convergent and divergent elements, even when the analysis units share the same general reference framework” (Bray & Jiang, 2014). The study also allows us to comprehend the contrasts and commonalities amongst HE systems and policies in relation to the systemic functions they serve and the cultural identities that are transmitted by the varied social settings and complex realities (Manzon, 2015). This study contributes to research and practice in three major ways: (1) it enriches the international comparative HE researches both theoretically and empirically; (2) it improves our knowledge base for the construction of institutional strategies in the HE selected for this study; and (3) it identifies the different approach to enact the quality and the way the students, researches, teachers, and management employees at both institutions in Hungary and Germany perceived the quality enacted. We expect to identify the effects and impacts of HE education policies on the stakeholders involved in this process and also to identify the influence of the autonomy or the lack of autonomy that can influence the quality of HE in the countries selected in the research.

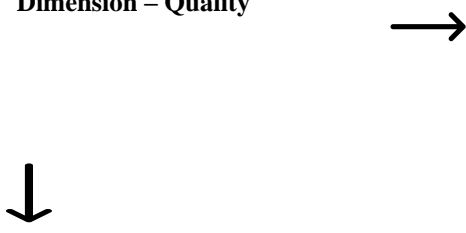
This comparison provides an understanding of the convergences between quality and globalization, institutional documents, and practices according to the stakeholders' points of view. Besides, the divergences are interconnected with the national social context and the actors involved that have some impact on their *modus operandi*. This study leads to the conclusions of the tensions/challenges faced by institutions to respond to the individual, national (State), and international demands, but also gives the possibility to discover ongoing processes, how the institutions are managing and creating strategies to achieve the quality and promote training adequate to these new times.

6. Results

This part of the study shows how the data gathered during the research was analyzed, taking into account the questions and goals set for it. In this perspective, it is first shown how research contexts are characterized, which leads to a specific analysis. There were six dimensions to look at the documents selected, and the research participant's views of the topic.

The process of analysis does not follow each of the document sequentially. The analysis takes place "back and forth" between the documents and the interviews, seeking to find an articulated reading of each data dimension in this study. Some documents are referred to more frequently in the analysis because of their importance at national, supranational, institutional, and levels.

A mapping of concepts was completed in the first phase of the investigation using dimensions, which later formed the basis of an analysis category. Thus, we found terms like "performance," "efficiency, and "excellence" associated with "quality." We also found terms like "recognition, merit, and academic success" interconnected with "quality."

Country	Dimension – Quality Legal document 	A number of references: Quality	Number of references: quality assurance, performance, efficiency, and excellence
Hungary	Act CCIV of 2011 on Nation Higher Education	15	150
	Organisational and operational regulations - Volume 2. Annex 6 to the Academic Regulations for Students Doctoral Regulations (2016)	34	187
	ELTE Organisational and Operational Regulations - Academic Regulations for Students (2021)	13	96
	On the institutional implementation of the Government Decree Non. 599/2021. (X. 28.) regarding the mandatory vaccination against coronavirus of the employees of state and local government institutions	0	1
	ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body (2021)	0	3
Germany	Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law – LHG) of January 1 st (2005)	31	123

Bavarian University Act (BayHSchG) from May 23 rd (2006)	5	59
Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law – BerlHG) as amended on July, 26 th (2011)	17	75
Federal Data Protection Act (2017)	1	30
Freedom of Information Act - IFG (2006)	0	1
Constitution of the Humboldt University of Berlin (2011)	0	6
Evaluation Statutes of Humboldt University of Berlin (2013)	21	33
Total references	137	764

Table 5 Number of References

The results obtained from the preliminary analysis are summarized in Table 5, which shows the documents analyzed and references found only for the quality/quality assurance and the associated terms. By employing this strategy, one can gain an early understanding of the data, observe what the data reveals on a visual level, and encourage the beginning of an analytical level.

As a result of the significant number of mentioned sources, which totaled 342 at the German State level referring to quality, quality assurance, performance, efficiency, and excellence, it can be inferred that the German States selected are committed to providing high-quality education and, more importantly, to laying the groundwork for a high-quality culture. 165 references are received in the Hungarian context; this gap is undoubtedly related that it was only one national law document controlling HE systems in Hungary, whereas in German, we had three state-level documents. The selection of these three states provided an overview of Germany's regional framework and their connection to the federal level. The legal frameworks of these three states were used extensively in the first phase of the analysis, while the subsequent parts focused on the strategies implemented at the Berlin and the institutional level.

Concerning the institutional level, the idea of quality/quality assurance is most prevalent in ELTE's policies, with 333 references to various categories related to this dimension, indicating that the term is widely used and cross-cutting in legal documents. There were also 6 references in the documents of the HUB, and this discrepancy is mainly explained by the number of institutional documents that serve as the standard for both organizations' operations.

Phase two of the research process began with a review of the relevant literature to determine the dimensions and categories that will be examined. A single dimension of 'quality assurance' and three areas, namely, HE and learning management, teaching/research, and internal/external evaluation, were created.

During establishing academic degrees, the code topic represents the scope of the quality assurance of the analysis and the discussions in EU standards.

6.1 Quality concept

The following section is designed to show and discuss the results of the gathered documents and interviews.

Taking into consideration the historical context, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the quality of HE in Hungary was jeopardized due to an increase in the number of institutions. Since then, it has become a vital issue on the national policy agenda (Csizmadia et al., 2008; Kövesi et al., 2004). The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) was established in Hungary in 1993 to oversee the evaluation of academic programs and other scientific activities. With this national institution in charge of monitoring and providing recommendations to improve the quality of HEI programs and align them with international demands, the external review began (Szanto, 2004). In Hungary's HE system, the so-called "modernization agenda" began in 2005.

In 2006, Hungarian HE established the foundations needed to implement bachelor's and master's degree programs in HE connected with the Bologna Process. The importance of quality is made clear by the Bologna framework agreement's implementation of guidelines (Alesi et al., 2007; Marcus, 2014). To meet state-mandated standards, the present legal framework for HE was introduced in 2011, and quality assurance is viewed as a vital component:

(...) in cases involving the launch of a bachelor, master, or tertiary vocational programme (...), the higher education institution may propose an expert other than the one specified in paragraph (4), provided that it is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. In such case, the educational authority shall invite the organisation (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 67, and Section 4b.)

HAC is not the only stakeholder achieving educational program standards, recognizing institutions, and accreditation courses. The European association for quality assurance in HE bodies has also identified it as a critical component for quality management in Hungarian HEIs.

An interviewee's perspective on accreditation confirms this:

“(…) it is not just that the universities have to demonstrate quality, but quality assurance agencies also have to demonstrate it. And we have that document ESG which is the European standards and guidelines of the quality assurance in the European higher education area. There are three main parts of this document, the first part is internal quality assurance, and the second and third part is about external quality assurance activity (…) to keep these standards and guidelines and have to work with that” (HU External Policy Maker 1).

To put it another way, the external policy maker reaffirms that the national agencies are the ones who are responsible for meeting the criteria of external quality assurance at the national level in order to be a part of the European HE area. To continue operating at the national level, the agency must adhere to specific standards to qualify for accreditation and show the efficiency of the institution's procedures. Woodhouse (1999) mentions three aspects of quality audits: first, the adequacy of planned quality processes according to stated aims; second, the alignment of actual quality activities with the strategies; and third, the efficacy of the activities in attaining the intended goals.

In addition to that, since 2015, it has been possible for Hungarian educational programs at universities to undergo accreditation with any ENQA-member organization (Bachelor and Master levels).

In addition to the element of external quality assurance in the context of Hungary, one participant had the opportunity to work in the HAC, which helped clarify what quality entails.

“I had a chance to work in the Hungarian higher education quality assurance group (…) I would call it Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság, the institution which is responsible for the quality and quality assurance in the higher education, and I got a chance to work with them in institutional reviews. In the past five years, as I remember, I have gotten eight or nine times to be part of this institutional review team. And it was so interesting for me because I really think that quality means to improve the higher education system, not just year by year, but day by day, which is some kind of improvement. (HU External Policy Maker 2).

As a result of the fact that this statement proves that quality can be defined as improvement or quality as transformation, which is congruent with the perspective presented by Gvaramadze (2018).

Looking at the meso level of the analysis, ELTE establishes a quality assurance plan that shows a long-term plan for development, strategies for scientific research and education, internationalization, environmental preservation, and further artistic or creative activity. These

are all taken into account when proposing the creation of an organizational unit in each faculty to assess and evaluate the activities following the university's mission: *“The Faculty Council decides on the proposal, appointing the responsible organizational unit of the faculty and the person responsible at the faculty at the same time, who organizes the program and take responsibility for maintaining the high quality of the program”* (ELTE Organisational and Operational Regulations - Academic Regulations for Students, 2021, p. 234).

Aligned with this strategy, the ELTE institutional guide reflects the changing needs of academic matters to promote *“changes made in the training program are evaluated annually by the Quality Management Committee and the Academic Board, based on the information provided by the faculties”* (ELTE Organisational and Operational Regulations - Academic Regulations for Students, 2021, p. 32).

One of the most noteworthy examples from a doctoral school program at ELTE is a legal framework that includes provisions for quality assurance and evaluation in line with university regulations that consider facts, professional expertise, and ethical principles.

The doctoral schools shall devise a quality assurance plan for the doctoral programs and doctoral procedures within the framework of the University's quality assurance regulations, based on legislation and the guidelines of the doctoral councils. (2) The University Doctoral Council – with the assistance of the discipline doctoral schools – shall continuously monitor the functioning of the doctoral schools and doctoral programmes. (...) Based on the quality assurance regulations, the University Doctoral Council shall prepare an evaluation of the quality of the functioning of the doctoral schools as part of its annual report (Organisational And Operational Regulations Volume 2. Annex 6 To the Academic Regulations for Students- Doctoral Regulations, 2016, p. 20)

The Quality Management Committee assurance and evaluation criteria, methods, and norms are available to the public on the university's webpage and are updated regularly.

From the micro level perspective, the participants had a very clear perspective of the concept:

“Quality is - excellence. I understand quality in a good sense. Even though we talk about bad quality, it doesn't come up to the required excellence. Quality to me has a very positive meaning, that is striving towards excellence” (HU Teacher 12).

The importance of quality is based on what Ozga, Larsen, and Simola (2011) stated, which is that quality supports excellence and innovation in product and service performance and

development.

We have the following viewpoints on the Hungarian HE system and its quality relationship:

“I feel that quality is understood in very different ways and forms in the Hungarian higher education, it has different indicators, what I would say very, like standardized quality indicators, that you can pick and cross if it exists in higher educational institutions based on like documents based on different standardized processes in the higher education, but it's not always covering the real quality of higher education. (...) But what I feel is that in a Hungarian context, what very often happens is that those elements are seen individually in a very narrow path, and not as a complex coherent concept that is somehow complementing each other in many ways. One example is that, in an accreditation process, the quality is very often investigated based on the relevance of or the existence of different documents, or the place the status of higher education institution in the ranking lists, etc.” (HU Teacher 1).

“I mean that quality in Hungarian higher education for me has two aspects that relate to Hungarian higher education as the site of research and knowledge creation. (...) I don't think we have reached the highest level of quality yet” (HU Teacher 10).

Rankings are associated with quality, at least according to participants, but it is necessary to know what and how quality is measured so that participants may make better judgments. Because of this, people are driven by rankings rather than the present reality.

The Hungarian HE system is improving its practices, but it requires adjusting some practices to adapt to the current context and the stakeholders' expectations.

During the interview, both the intricacy of the term "quality," which is the outcome of the product and their relationship with pricing, which determines whether or not the product is appropriate for its purpose, were discussed.

“It's a complex question of how to reach our goal when I'm talking about quality in the business is the outcome of the product means the product itself, the kind of description of the product or service you are providing, and you may talk about the relation of quality and price” (HU Staff 1).

Another aspect brought from the data is the quality perceived as job-related or as professional development, which is aligned with the European documents created at the community level, which states the importance of employability and the structure offered by the university (L. Communiqué, 2009).

“(…) job-wise, quality for me is having a job where I feel valued, and I feel that what I'm doing has value and for my colleagues and supervisors and bosses, respect me, and treat me with respect, so I guess that's kind of what quality for me” (HU Staff 3)

“I think quality in higher education means that if I choose a profession that I want to learn about, and I go to university, I choose a university and I put my time in that university, to have a degree, to earn a degree, it means that it will give me the right education. First, the support that I need is the help I need. And if it's high quality, like it's quality in higher education, I can trust that the professors are good. I mean, they are good in their field, I can learn from them. And it also means that the administration is working well. If I have trouble with credits or with courses or something, I can easily solve the problem because the administration is helpful, and they are there to help me” (HU Student 2).

“I think this is important, but this is what I meant when I described what it means by quality education, what quality means in higher education that you actually, that your students actually get something which will be applicable and useful and in their own personal and professional contexts. I think this is a must, and I think our unit is doing very well in that. We actually offer programs that are useful, and so to say, relevant for the job market” (HU Teacher 8).

“I don't know if I have this other meaning, without the professional meaning, because I think for me this professional meaning. (...) But for me, the first that comes to my mind, it's always the opportunity for improvement, so something that you focus on and how to develop what you have already, this kind of perspective, I would say that really important that it's a dynamic concept and not fixed, something that you can reach and then that's it, this is one key element for me. The other is that I think you have to place quality in a more interactive space” (HU Teacher 2).

This general concept of quality has been mentioned in the legal documents and the participant's overview. The next part of the analysis takes into consideration the German general concept of quality and the experience of the participants in the institution selected for this study.

This overarching idea of quality is referenced in the legal documents, as well as in the evaluation of the participants. The following section of the analysis takes into account the German general notion of quality as well as the experience of the participants at the institution that was chosen for this study.

The German case displayed a similar path in the organization and structure of the quality assurance system. Between 1989 and 1990, Germany began to use quality assurance as a source of accreditation for HEIs and their programs. In 2006, reforms were launched in agreement with national and federal states, which freed the autonomy of the institutions in their activities and practices, mainly concerning creating internal quality assurance strategies in connection with ESG (Hopbach, 2006).

The German tradition in this field contributes to the robust legal framework of the three German states that share a vision of quality assurance. The Baden Württemberg HE Act of 2005 highlights the quality assurance concept and the importance of the institutions in creating their quality assurance internal systems in response to the framework of the Federal state. It states:

(...) the details of structures, procedures, and quality criteria, including the procedure, the requirements, criteria, and standards of the evaluation (...) the number and composition of the evaluation bodies, regulate the universities by the act. The quality assurance concept includes an interim evaluation or other suitable measures to provide feedback on previous performance during the qualification period, as well as status advice before starting the evaluation (Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law - LHG) of 1 January 2005, Section 51 b).

At the national level, the definition of comparable quality standards is based on a decentralized accreditation system in which independent agencies of a private nature conduct the accreditation processes. These Agencies provide an audit concerning the teaching, learning, and other program matters where the German HEIs can, without restrictions, indicate the agency they want for the certification of their courses, as long as the German Accreditation Council (GAC) recognizes it.

At the institutional level, the federal states showed commitment to guarantee the leadership of the HEIs plan and develop an internal quality assurance system.

Overall, the quality assurance system is structured internally and externally in the German context. It is cognizant of the broad perspective about the regional or international quality assurance principles, which may have side effects on systems and the quality of education (Hopbach, 2006).

In a similar way to ELTE, HUB established a Quality Management Unit within the institution, *“the evaluation procedures in the area of administration and service are carried out on behalf of the Executive Committee by the Quality Management Unit, including those responsible for the process to be evaluated or the organizational unit to be evaluated”* (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 5).

In the other procedures according to § 3 (1), the non-personal and relatable data collected by the Quality Management Unit is feedback to the organizational unit submitting the relevant offer. The Dean of Studies, in the case of central institutes, the director of the institute, is responsible for passing on the results to the responsible committee for teaching

and studies, and in the case of central institutes to the responsible institute council. It regularly advises the evaluation results available to it and, if necessary, develops proposals for quality assurance and quality development for the respective faculty or institute council (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 4)

The HUB Dean of Studies seems to be the most significant people in charge of ensuring that quality standards are adhered to on a consistent basis. The Dean of studies has access to the entire assessment process of their respective departments. Reporting the results in statistical form is their responsibility. That responsibility is with the institute council, which informs the faculty or institution council on the analysis result it has and, if necessary, offers ideas for quality assurance and improvement. Commission for Teaching and Studies, Faculty Council, or Institute Council of central institutions have access to teaching personal outcomes for their respective departments (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013).

The Quality Management Unit performs review procedures on behalf of the Vice President responsible for research. Research Service Center or Humboldt Graduate School may also be involved in evaluation procedures. This will be notified before the process begins (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013).

At the HUB institutional strategy, the top criterion is quality, “evaluation,” which encompasses all procedures for systematically describing, analyzing, and evaluating university performance areas and processes.

Humboldt University of Berlin regards evaluation as an indispensable instrument of comprehensive quality management, which aims to check one's performance and thus forms a basis for appropriate improvement measures and funding opportunities and for documenting the fulfillment of the university's tasks. Evaluations are carried out following scientific standards and are based on the principles of expediency, efficiency, and transparency (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 1)

During the analysis, we encounter that evaluations focus on study and teaching (including counseling and support for students, research) and promotion of new talent, administrations, and service quality.

Evaluation serves quality assurance and improvement, the promotion of quality awareness and constructive dialogue within the university, internal and external accountability, and the regular review of the implementation of the gender equality mandate. The respective procedure must be shown how quality assurance and improvement are carried out. Evaluation results are incorporated into developing comprehensible performance

parameters, verifiable quality objectives, and binding problem-solving and target achievement standards. They can be used to reorganize university processes and organizational units, in target agreements with Humboldt-Universität institutions, and the internal distribution of funds. All members of Humboldt-Universität are called upon to participate in the evaluation and implementation of the measures agreed on their basis (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 2).

Another vital aspect to notice in the German institutional regulation is the shared results of these evaluation procedures to be a transparent process.

(...) for evaluation procedures following § 9 No. 2 (evaluation of research units), plans and staffing lists, short presentation of research topics, project-related third-party funding statistics, number of supervised and completed theses, doctorates and habilitations, science prizes, research scholarships, and awards, publications and bibliometric data, information on cooperation and knowledge transfer, activities, and positions in the Scientific community (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 4).

In regard to the participant's perspective, the goal was to understand how they think about the quality and identify characteristics of quality that are linked to education, as well as the connections with the legal documents as conditions that make it easier or make it more difficult for quality to exist in the university.

The general notions of quality held by participants relate to the usefulness of a product or service, which is associated with the views held by ELTE participants, as was noted earlier. As stated below, this idea is expressed:

“I would define quality as an attribute of an item that describes, more or less, a relation towards an objective of this item. I have an objective with something, and the quality described somehow in how far this is met. This can be in terms of quality in a non-numerous [sense], but it can also be numeric. That's why I think quantity is part of quality and the universal more quality is much, much bigger than the universe of quantity” (GE Teacher 1).

“It's something that you, at the end of a process, decided this process went fine. Or if you have a product that [fits] the purpose and lasts long and doesn't. Well, lasts longer than a few days are fit for purpose and for art, or films that would be that there's something new or interesting about this, but let's think about it, you recognize that we put some effort in there making an offer” (GE Teacher 4).

The aforementioned comments are associated with the perspective that quality is regarded as a service and that the experience of the service supplied is a cognitive process. This approach

was presented by Sultan and Yin Wong (2012); it demonstrates that quality may be thought of in terms of both a process and a structure, in addition, to be an essential factor in the selection process followed by institutions (Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010).

In this case, a quality embedded value is mentioned as a cognitive process defined by Van Kemenade (2008) as a value integrated into assessing system results, controlling, and promoting quality culture.

“quality is something that has a high value in a sense, but the value comes not from the item itself. For example, what's behind it, like the work that gets into it, the thought that gets into it, like the process to produce something (...) [I] think that makes quality, but the product itself, in the end, is of high value. However, it's not a matter of not necessarily monetary value, because something can be of quality, even though it's like in the capitalist sense not like it doesn't have market value, it could still be of quality, like when you talk about objects and like products” (GE External Policy Maker 1).

The broad notion of quality held by the German side of the participants is connected to the concept of "fit to purpose," which is related to the theoretical point of view held by Harvey and Green (1993).

“Quality is a certain goal to reach and which measures you will implement to have the necessary and wished results. It's about the comparison to others, let's say, ordinary performances is a bit better than the average” (GE Staff 2).

According to several scholars, quality is an arcane term that contributes to the difficulty of describing it (Sallis, 2014); the same happened with the interviewees since the quality is multidimensional.

“I think it depends on the area to which you want to apply. Quality is always the judgment. And then you need to know what to judge who is involved in the process and whatever (...) I guess it should be of good quality, something that I don't know, fits my interests and my desires, and whatever I want to do with the thing ” (GE Teacher 2).

Quality is viewed as a judgment in this quote and is linked to the service experience as an integrated concept that was previously indicated as a psychological process (Sultan & Yin Wong, 2012).

The following section of the analysis will demonstrate a general view of the quality expressed in the regulatory document and the participants' perspectives on their experiences in both countries. The summarized section is shown in Table 6 below.

Summary	
Germany	Quality assurance
	Quality evaluation
	Quality as service
	Quality as excellence
	Quality as fit to purpose
	Quality as value
Hungary	Quality assurance
	Quality measured by rankings
	Quality as service
	Quality as professional development
	Quality as improvement
	Quality as excellence

Table 6: Data analysis summary for the Quality dimension

At the national level, Hungary and Germany demonstrated a similar quality idea regarding quality assurance and its implementation in HE institutions. Both countries are enacting the Bologna Process in their programs.

In Germany, the quality notion is mainly related to evaluation and standards that must be implemented in order to provide high-quality HE. Other terms found in the investigation included fit to purpose, value, service, and excellence, all commonly associated with the literature.

Similarly, in Hungary, we could interpret terms as a means of improving HE. The different themes discussed in the interviews were labor market quality and professional growth. The participants said that higher-level academics might equip them for their future profession.

Participants' previous experiences with the university and its employees could influence their perception of quality and the connection between customer happiness and service quality. Satisfaction, as revealed by interviews, significantly affects perceived service quality. According to interviewees, universities and stakeholders are now solely responsible for quality improvement.

The participants' viewpoints about the quality varied, mainly because of their experiences and different positions within the institution. Quality is likely to be seen differently depending on one's point of view. Hence it is critical that HEIs clearly define the links between skills and traits

regarded as significant by employers and the tasks and activities used to develop them.

However, participants at both universities appear to be aware of the significance of quality and the existence of requirements, but they appear to be unsure of how to implement them. Because of this, they are unable to make informed decisions about how to improve institutional quality.

6.2 Governance

As outlined in the previous chapter, back to the current law of 2011, the state conducts the Hungarian HEIs governance and decision-making, transforming the HE scenario. Foremost, the internal governance structures within the institutions changed with the enactment of the “Chancellor” role in the Hungarian HE system. The chancellor represents a great power in state HEIs management, while they are appointed by the government, implicating state intervention in the financial and management. This somewhat counterintuitive result decreases the rector’s decision-making within the institution’s practices, purposes, and organizational system. However, academic management is still the responsibility of the rector exclusively.

In 2015, the Hungarian situation was more critical with the institutionalization of the “Consistory” that contributes to less autonomy of HEIs in their institutional development strategies, academic programs, research, and financial matter (Rónay, 2019b). For illustrative purposes, the excerpt below demonstrates the managing structure of HE in Hungary:

At public higher education institutions, the chancellor shall be responsible for ensuring the operation of the institution. The chancellor shall be in charge of the economic, financial, controlling, internal audit, accounting, labour, legal, administrative, IT and asset management activities of the higher education institution, including technical, facility utilisation, operational, logistical, service provision, procurement and public procurement matters, and shall manage operation in this field. The chancellor shall also be responsible for the preparation of the necessary measures and proposals relating to management and the fields specified above, exercising in that context the right of consent, in matters not falling under the competence of the consistorian, to decisions and measures having economic consequences for the management, organisation, and operation of the institution (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 13/A).

The appointment of the consistory and chancellor as HEIs governance bodies in this emergent scenario indicates the more robust state control and the decrease of the institutional management of the rectors and academics who are considered essential players in the decision-making process.

The governing body of the higher education institution is the senate. The senate shall be chaired by the rector. (2) The rights of the higher education institution laid down in the Fundamental Law shall be vested in the senate. (3) The senate shall a) define the higher education institution's educational and research tasks and monitor their implementation, b) adopt its own operational arrangements; c) adopt the medium term institutional development plan, which shall cover a period of not less than four years, define yearly implementation tasks, and include a strategy for research, development and innovation; d) make proposals as to the content of the call for applications for the position of rector, select candidates for rector, and evaluate the performance of the rector as an executive officer (*Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 11*)

In the case of State universities, first, there was a traditional management system until 2014, with the rector as a single leader and the Senate as the primary decision-maker. Besides them, the Financial Board also existed. It was an advisory than a decision-making body; however, it had a veto right in some financial matters. After 2014, the Financial Board was optional, and finally, in 2021, it was abolished. Between 2014 and 2019, single leadership transformed into a double leadership: rector together with the chancellor, and in 2015 this was added to the consistory.

Both the chancellor and the consistory are able to restrict the rector's and the senate's decision-making power with their prior consent right. They have this right in connection with financial matters. However, both of them can influence or intervene in academic or scientific matters indirectly. Furthermore, the consistory has this right in connection with RDI strategy as well.

An experimental program known as "model change" began in 2019 with four public HEIs converted into private universities. The experimental venture was expanded to almost the whole segment in a relatively short period, much to the surprise of the HE sectors. Formally, the government began the model change process in response to a request from the Senates of each of the institutions.

Furthermore, the government has committed to providing substantial financial assistance to institutions transitioning to the new model. As a result, although there were 28 public HEIs in

2018, with 88 % of all students enrolled, there remained only six public HEIs in autumn 2021 (with around 20% of all students)⁵. It is central to the highpoint that, while the law considers privatized former state HEIs to be private HEIs, they are not in reality because of two factors: first, they were founded by the state rather than a private person. Second, whereas the private founder uses private money and property to establish and maintain the HEI, the state used state property in the case of these HEIs, and because they did not receive real property (save for certain of them), the state must pay their operation in the future as well.

The state founded several foundations for owning and maintaining most of the previous state HEIs (one foundation for given HEIs). The given board of trustees manages these foundations. The amended Act ensures their power to take over any decision-making power of the senate, elect and appoint the rector, etc. However, this opportunity exists only for non-state HEIs. The still state HEIs operate with the previous structure (rector, chancellor, senate, consistory).

In this new model, the boards of trustees exert power over the institutions rather than the government. Among other things, the board of trustees gets the right to decide on future regulations. It can take off these or some of these right from the senate or let the original structure go on (which include not only the university's structure but also guidelines leading to academic employment and student selection and evaluation) (Kováts & Rónay, 2021).

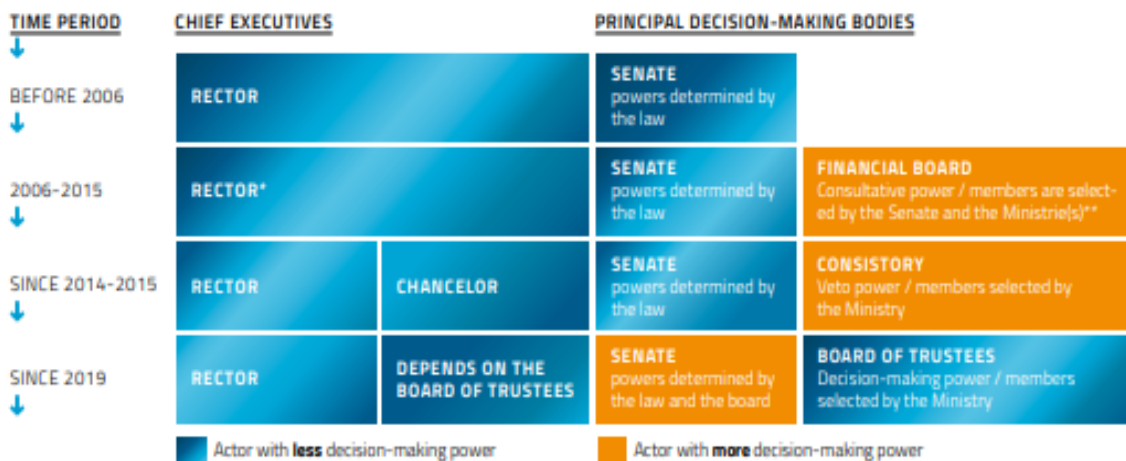


Figure 8 Major actors in the governance of HEIs in Hungary. Source:(Kováts & Rónay, 2021)

⁵ Private or religious institutions provide the rest of the students' education.

The figure above depicts the Hungarian HE's chief executive and significant decision-making bodies across time. Since 2010, financial inspectors and financial directors nominated by the government have been in charge of university spending, including government-appointed internal auditors. Additionally, beginning in 2011, the Ministry responsible for HE had a say in selecting rectors until 2014, when this right was given back to the senate at the same time as the chancellor's introduction. Various ministries delegated members between 2011 and 2013, and Senate candidates were few and far between. After 2013, membership in the Financial Board was no longer mandatory, and the institution was solely responsible for selecting members. (Kováts & Rónay, 2021).

The higher education institution shall be headed and represented by the rector, who shall have competence to act and take decisions in respect of all matters that do not fall under the competence of any other person or body pursuant to a law, the rules for organisation and operation, or the collective bargaining agreement. When performing the duties defined in points a) to f) of Article 13/A(2), the chancellor shall act as the head and representative of the higher education institution. At public higher education institutions, the rector may submit to the maintainer objections against the decisions and actions of the chancellor, or in the event of the chancellor's failure to act. (2) At public higher education institutions, the rector shall be responsible for ensuring that the core activities of the higher education institution are performed properly, exercising in that context the rights of the employer over those employed as lecturers, professors, research fellows and teachers, as well as the rights of the contracting party in relation to the non-employee engagement contracts referred to in Article 25(3). The rector shall be entitled to determine, with the consent of the chancellor, the salaries of those employed as lecturers, professors, research fellows and teachers and the payments due under non-employee engagement contracts and other legal relationships. (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 13).

Two practical examples of the restructuring of institutions' *status quo*, when the government has been regulating HE (institutions' academic, scientific, and functions) include: firstly, the obliteration of Gender studies from Hungarian HE programs. Secondly, the Central European University eradication from Hungary (Rónay, 2019a). These examples may indicate the centralized (top-down) approach to the policies and practices of the Hungarian HE system. It is noteworthy that HAC had approved the program, and there were no quality objections to it, so this action was taken despite this fact.

Additionally, ELTE has remained one of the remaining state HEI with the enactment of the model transformation. The ELTE governance can be seen in the Figure below:

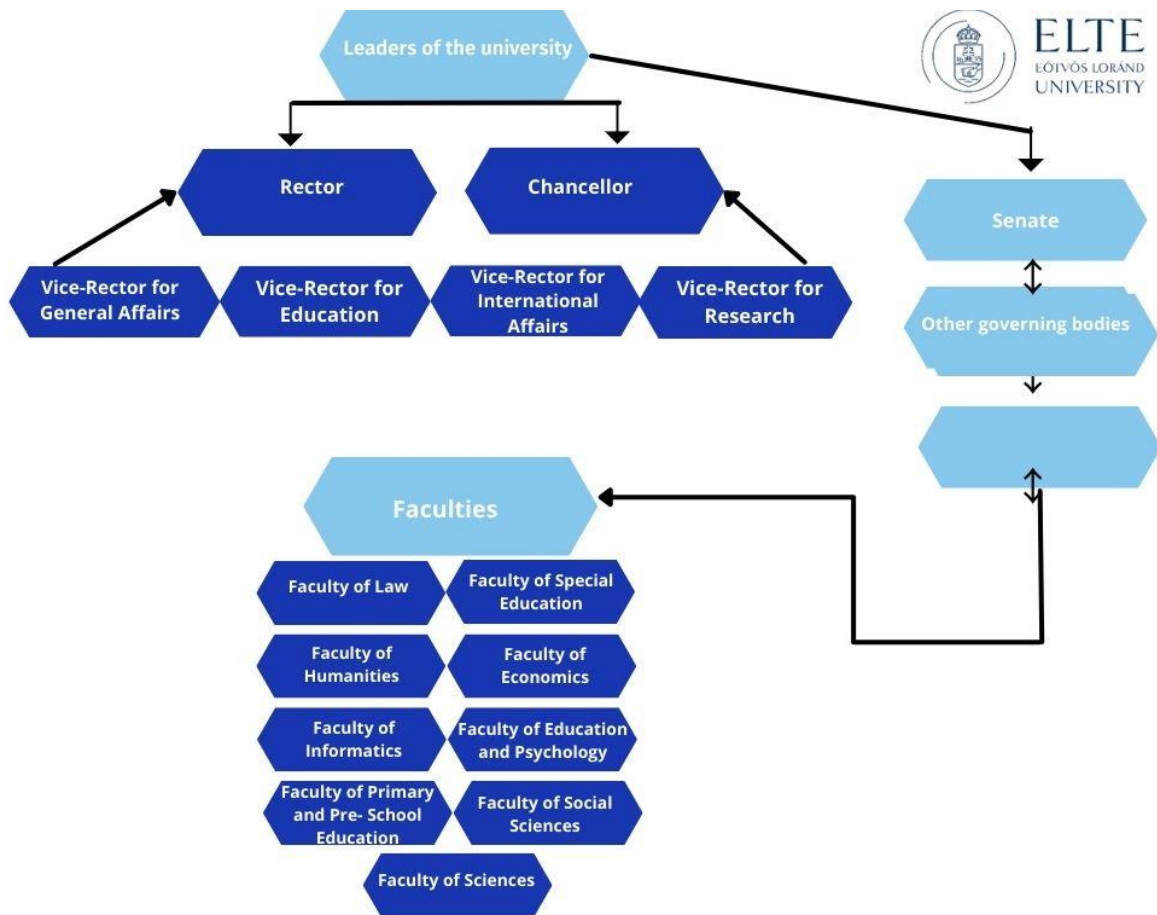


Figure 9: Organization chart of ELTE. Adapted by the author from the ELTE website. Source: Governance (elte.hu)

As mentioned before, the institution's highest decision-making body is the Senate. It is the Senate's job to set university priorities, particularly in the areas of teaching and research, and to keep an eye on how successfully those priorities are being carried out.

In terms of internationalization, it is one critical feature of HEIs; thus, we discovered some commitment at the national level to build national and international cooperation as the rector's responsibility, such as “*maintaining domestic and international relations and cooperation in the field of education and research, ab) ensuring the compliance of the institution’s educational programme with the applicable legal provisions*”(Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 13).

As mentioned before, de-nationalize curricula and incorporating European elements into them, however, would require mobility projects in Europe, where the European Commission only had limited authority over HE and was required to respect the variety of national HE systems and the subsidiary powers of governments and institutions. There have been some changes to curricula to make room for international students, but educational institutions have maintained their autonomy in curriculum reform and have made these changes more in response to "entrepreneurialism" than to promote European ideas (Van Damme, 2000)

In recent years, Hungary has an increase in the number of international students. Tempus Public Foundation (TPF) serves as the national coordinating organization in the development of an international network of diplomats that could result in knowledge diplomacy. Most foreign mobility initiatives and grants in Hungary are managed by TPF, including the Study in Hungary project, which aims to promote Hungarian HE abroad.

TPF added a special focus on the role of national agency and foreign embassies' collaboration in supporting HEIs' internationalizing operations, which summarizes the major trends and changes in the internationalization of Hungarian HE (Kovacs & Tweneboah, 2020).

From the micro level perspective, we had a student who went to the UK and compared it with the Hungarian HE system:

“It's an Erasmus experience. So, obviously the best experience of my life. It was very fun. Not much to worry about it. Therefore, I can just tell you about some differences between the English education system and the Hungarian education system because we got the same education as a normal English student. And the system is very different there. And they just record every lecture, anyway so you can just watch it online which is a very good point for me, probably is the best that if you want, you can just go there and ask questions from the detail, but if you are not going, you can just watch it online, which is a very good point. And then they have seminars, and the structure person seminar is very different. (...) You don't even want to answer questions because the end is everything is just in the slides. In England, you are talking about the stuff that you read the teachers are asking questions, and then you're answering, it is way more interactive” (HU Student 8).

The autonomy of learning is something that some students value, as is the participation of students in class and outside of class with reading assignments. The Hungarian student expressed his/her opinions on this traditional way of teaching that is still connected to the Hungarian educational system.

According to some participants studying abroad was the best experience in their lives.

I spent one semester abroad in Germany. And I think it was the best semester of my life ever, much should I tell you (HU Student 1).

Studying abroad is another critical tool for broadening the scope of one's educational experience. While ELTE can point to a number of its student mobility programs that have had a significant impact, others deserve mention.

“When I started my bachelor, because I moved to Budapest, I left my hometown. And, you know, I moved to Budapest, I didn't really know a lot of people here. And I thought it's a good opportunity to make friends meet new people, and you know, progress, in many ways, for example, English, language, skills and stuff. And I stayed there because the community was very good. And, for example, because of ESN, I participated in a lot of conferences abroad, and the university gave me scholarships. I could go to Madeira. I went to Warsaw; I went to Turkey. These were really good opportunities. I mean, you were working for free, the whole year, and these little, like nice gestures, were really good that you can travel, participate in a very good conference and collect some nice memories about it” (HU Student 2).

“Stipendium Hungaricum mentor program, or ESN, it's almost the same but for Erasmus students. I also participated in some parties, which was organized by the university and sometimes these after-class events, which was like also like a lecture, but it was more like non-formal, you know” (HU Student 1).

Hungarian participants mentioned the Hungarian HE system and aligned with the legal document that highlights international cooperation as an essential part of the governance of the HE.

“I think it's improved a lot in the past few years. But we also have things to work on. I mean, we should increase a lot of things in the higher education system. For example, we should care more about international students. And we should listen to them more carefully in the upcoming years. (...) Because I really think that internationalization also means quality. I mean, if we got a really diverse group in a university, which is completed by students, it makes the Hungarian higher education system more flexible and welfare, I think it improves the quality in our system as well” (HU External Policy Maker 2).

For these interviews, the participants discussed real examples of initiatives that help strengthen this collaboration among the EU member states, such as Erasmus scholarships and the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship. In the dimension of teaching, learning, and research, we will speak more about their perceptions.

Universities, for instance, could provide opportunities for students to learn about other cultures as well as international social programs that are oriented toward both domestic and international students.

“One example to mention is that Stipendium Hungaricum program, that is a state-funded program. And so this is a state-funded program and I think it's a very good and relevant program and helps universities to develop their internationalizing activities and strategies, but it's very dangerous because it's a state funded program, and maybe this program will be finished, at one point, and universities will miss this fund. It's a dangerous situation as well. Yeah, it's important that this program helps universities to improve their activities, but it's important that universities have to learn how they can manage these activities after the Stipendium Hungaricum program finishes” (HU External Policy Maker 3).

I was always excited about it, about telling about the Hungarian culture and everything, because I can identify with it so much. And yeah, I just told them personal stories, what I experienced here in Hungary, and I asked them how is in their country? And we compared, we compared to different countries (HU Student 1).

This is an example of IaH, where the participant had the opportunity to be a member of the Stipendium Hungaricum Mentorship Network, which is characterized as the integration of international components into the experience of HE (Knight, 2004). This integration of IaH into HE comprises formal, informal, and hidden courses (Leask, 2004, 2009).

There was some discussion regarding the importance of teacher mobility as a strategy for internationalizing the curriculum. According to the teachers who have received short-term support from the Erasmus program, this mobility helped them to improve their classroom activities and bring in new methods and activities for their students.

Then somebody mentioned that we could do this as an Erasmus exchange and that was so good, that was just before the pandemic that we discovered this. So then he stayed for a week and we were able to do more things because he had the opportunity to stay and it was fine. He even gave lectures to a wider audience, so that was really successful. That was my experience with the exchange (HU Teacher 12).

Another illustration of IaH, this quote shows how a teacher was given the option to bring a foreign colleague at ELTE to participate in the Erasmus exchange program.

On the question of data protection is part of one ELTE program, it was mentioned by one of the interviewees:

“(…) we have a program on data protection and data security. And we have a national authority of data protection in Hungary. We are in this field, and when this whole distance learning came, and distance examination came into scope, many questions around that arose. And in Hungary, we had to print a lot of diplomas as well, to hand out to students and where you have to do somehow within the pandemic situation to send the diploma to someone whom you don't know who they are and how you identify people in this whole procedure. And this raised a lot of questions in the data protection authority and [despite that] we already had a good relationship with the authority, they got to the point where we have to give answers. And they asked about our systems, how we are doing it, what we are doing, how we work, and why we are doing some things, how we deal with personal data. And so that's how it works together. I mean, we were able to influence their opinion, because we have the prestige to influence, and we have a relationship to it as well” (HU Staff 1).

On the institutional level (in terms of data safety and processing), this is an example of ELTE practices and good relationships that precede their reputation in the country.

In terms of the case of the German education system, comprehensive transformation in the governance of universities started in the early 2000s, following reforms and increasing freedom and autonomy of the institutions to choose the respective system of internal quality assurance and the instruments, strategies, and procedures to assure quality in their practices (teaching, learning, research, and management) (Serrano-Velarde, 2008). The federal government provides the bulk of the funding for German HE through the budget of the member states (salaries, materials, and running costs). It is because of this that each federal state has its unique way of distributing funds and resources (Hartwig, 2006). When it comes to developing new facilities and purchasing large-scale scientific equipment, the member states and the Federal Government work together to share the costs, which shows how HUB organized the funding system (See Table 6).

Proceeds 2016	€ 397.749,7 thousand
of total: government funding	€ 234,353,0 thousand
of total: third-party funds	€ 111.340,0 thousand

Table 7: HUB University budget. Source: [Facts and Figures — Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin \(hu-berlin.de\)](https://www.hu-berlin.de/facts-and-figures)

Recommendations of the Science Council guide all funding decisions. Additional responsibilities shared by coworkers include funding for research, which encompasses both the vast extra-university research market and Germany's primary public funding body for academic

research, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Peer evaluation is used to ensure that these scholarships are given to worthy candidates (Hartwig, 2004).

The legal framework of the federal states in Germany regarding the HE structures unfold similarities in the restructuring of the institutions, knowledge production, and the role of the institutions in society. The HE bodies are composed of the rector/president, vice-rector, Senate, university council, and faculty dean. However, according to the data studied in the institution's plan, and the state supervision undertakes activities, the institutions should send reports and development plans to the Minister responsible for conveying public transparency, thus sharing their financial investment, academic achievements, and outcomes in an accountable manner during a specific period at the institutional level (Van Damme, 2000).

At the State level, Berlin HE Act states: "*The Universities are public bodies and equal state institutions. They have the right of self-government within the law and regulate their affairs through the basic order and other statutes*" (Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law- BerlHG) as amended on July 26, 2011, p. 7).

Berlin State HE (2011) also specifies that international cooperation is crucial in regulating the HEIs "*the universities promote international cooperation, particularly European cooperation in higher education and exchanges between German and foreign universities*" (p. 9). We can conclude that the state regulations are closely related to the supranational policies discussed in the preceding chapters, strengthening the partnership with the European higher education community.

Student and teacher success in internationalizing their education opportunities is more challenging to measure and is a continuous process rather than an event. The University has established an academic atmosphere that encourages curriculum internationalization and collaborations with other schools, among other things.

"The cooperation between Hungary and Germany, in my opinion, is excellent, Germany when it comes to economic cooperation. We have more than 600 cooperation's ongoing between German and Hungarian universities. And I think on a very high level, talking about quality" (GE External Policy Maker 2).

"Humboldt is very special; I think there is a huge amount of international activities provided. We have a lot of partner universities, which is certainly to do with the location in Berlin. Berlin is very interesting for partner universities. You have kind of a pivot to the city, and it's a very multicultural city, one can say, you have a lot of young people here working in a huge variety of areas. (...) But about the Humboldt University, yeah, I think,

what I really like is that we are really working hard to have long holding partnerships and are looking in every area if it is about student exchange is it is about scientific work, and on which level research or maybe also the area of working together with enterprises” (GE Staff 1).

Some of the participants shared comparisons of their academic experiences abroad:

“I completed all of the degrees at Humboldt. I will complete all of the three degrees here, but I also studied abroad, So, I studied at a small liberal arts college in the United States, where I was also a teaching assistant, so I got glimpses into both worlds, sort of speak. And there was a very different experience just, you know, different student experience coming from a very big university with over 30,000 fellow students would I mean you don't meet 30,000 students because the campus is spread out throughout the city. But still, you know you have this feeling, you have a medical department and so on. And I was then moving for almost a year to a very small town with a college with 1800 students. And, of course, it was much more personal. But then again, it was also an interesting experience speaking about quality because their quality in the US system is also measured differently and measured against tuition rates, for instance. They had liberal arts, which only grants, bachelor's degrees, and a very high tuition rate. And, yeah, of course, there were smaller classes; there was more one on one tutoring, they had different resources. Yeah, very individualized programs. You could even create your own bachelor's degree. I mean, of course, faculty had to sign it off, but you could suggest, well, you know I just don't want to do education, but I would rather do education with a focus on gender studies or whatever part of your interest” (GE Student 3).

It was interesting to see how the HE systems in Germany and the United States varied; one has a defined curriculum, while the other is more flexible.

One of the interviewees brought up the DAAD and Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship when discussing German-Hungarian collaboration activities.

“We have a lot of applications and talking, for instance, our Masters' scholarship we have a scholarship for a two-year grant so people Bachelor students are ready can do their Master entirely in Germany, in German or in English, we have a lot of applicants for this program, a lot of applicants from Hungarians that we get it from Hungarians and also from people who are students who are studying with a Stipendium Hungaricum come and doing their bachelor this space of Hungary and then further on they want to move to Germany to do their Master in Germany. The application procedure is through a national committee; we have a Hungarian pre-selection and then an interview with the German and Hungarian professors” (GE External Policy Maker 2).

In regards to institutional governance and management:

Higher education institutions are governed by a full-time head, a president or a rector. This function may also be carried out by an elected presidential committee consisting of the president, the vice presidents and the chancellor (chief administrator) ex officio. The chancellor takes care of the administrative matters of the institution as a whole and is in particular responsible for the budget. According to the tradition of corporate governance, there are collegial bodies at different levels of the institutions that have the right to participate in academic matters (senate and assembly at central level and department councils at decentral level) (Hartwig, 2004, p. 7).

A summary of the HUB governance can be found in Figure 10, which includes the election, information exchange, and decision-making.

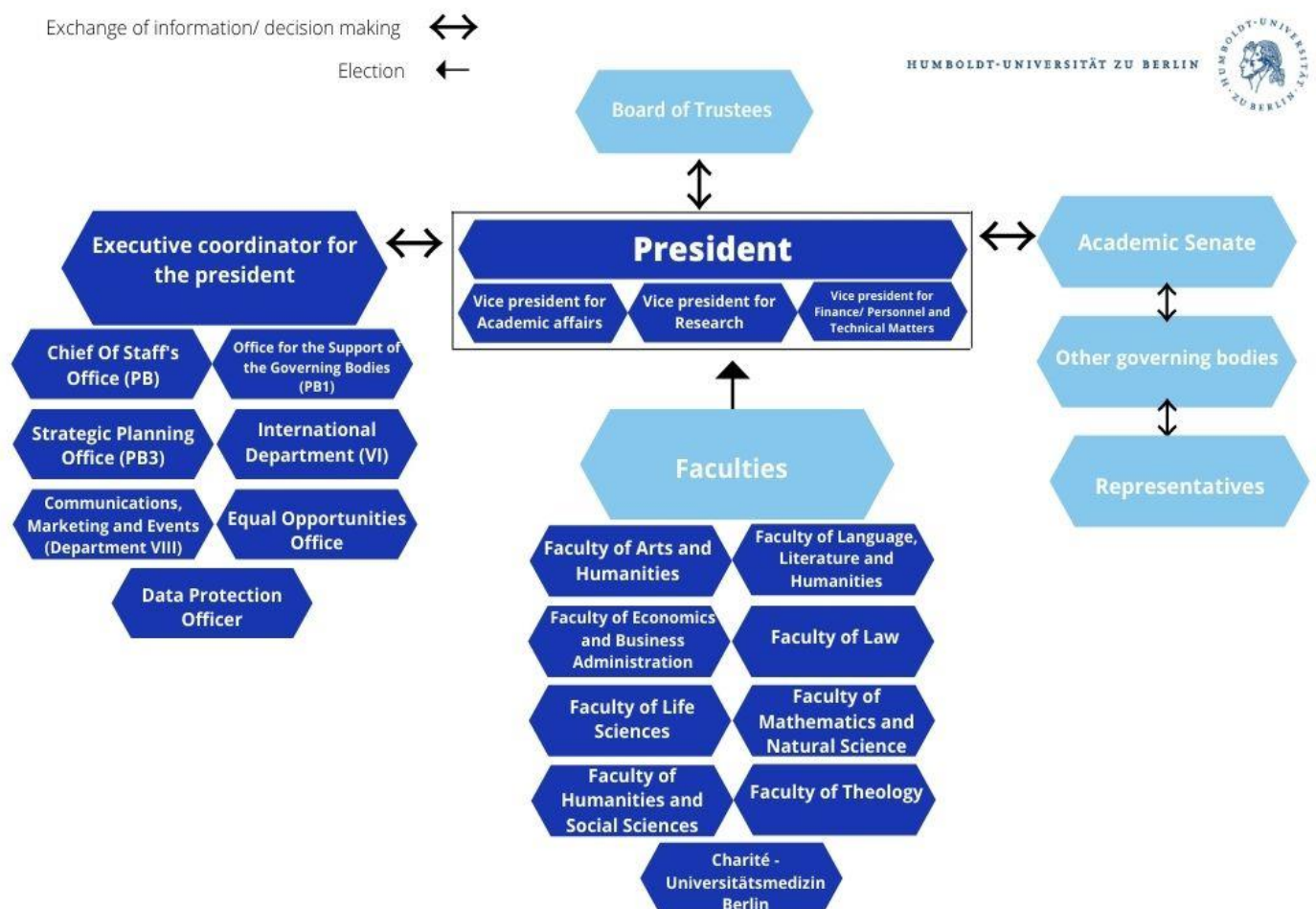


Figure 10: Organization chart of HUB. Adapted by the author from the Humboldt University of Berlin webpage (hu-berlin.de)

Among other things, the board of trustees is accountable for implementing the university's proposed budget, maintaining, changing, and diluting faculties and central institutions, creating and canceling courses, nominating professors, implementing regulatory fee requirements, and recommending meetings to the presidency.

The nine members of the board of trustees are all elected. Due to their position, the Berlin Senate's representative for universities and the university's president are on the board of trustees. The Academic Senate selects the final set of members.

In recent years (Re) evaluated the privacy practices at HEIs regarding data, particularly the handling of personal data. HEIs based outside of the EU will need to assess if they are affected by the new legislation and, if so, take the appropriate steps. At the federal level, there is one crucial document, the Federal Protection Act which states:

“(…) is necessary for reasons of public interest in the field of public health, such as protection against serious cross-border threats to health or to ensure high standards of quality and safety in healthcare and medicinal products and medical devices; in addition to the measures referred to in paragraph 2, the professional and criminal law requirements for the protection of professional secrecy shall, in particular, be complied with.” (Federal Data Protection Act – BDSG, 2017, Article 2)

At the micro level perspective, during the German interviews, the participants discussed the positive aspects of German HE, including preparing for the world and going beyond the academic area, and the differences between German HE and international experiences.

“I would say it's pretty high, but it's pretty like you have a lot of possibilities, a lot of situations and I think especially in the university system where you tried to teach the students to like study themselves. It's basically when you compare it to, for example, the United States, where you have a college system where there's a lot of handholding like people are basically like our babies a little bit, I would say in like their like freshman year, and then a sophomore year in the US, you're like a baby like everybody is like helping you and all that. In Germany, I think in the university system, specifically, you have like a lot of people that help you too, but then you're on your own. So, you get support, and you get lectures, and you can always ask questions, but it's less of a hands-on approach. So it's like, I think that's what, like, is important for the German system because when you compare to others they are relatively unique I would say, and I would love to believe that even with bachelors and masters that it's still a system where you are not just going for the degree to become a certain profession, but to actually to grow as a person, you know, like so university education and higher education is not just to be available for the market, but actually to become a person and to learn skills and to use those in like certain fields

later, like, whatever you want to do with your life but that's what I hope it is" (GE External Policy Maker 1).

"Germany is the leading country in the world in matters of Science and Industry, and in many other fields in the first place. I would mention again, Democracy and values of human rights, which are actually playing, even though in the educational, legal or field, a very critical rule" (GE Student 1).

This angle is tied to academic freedom, in which students can be autonomous while being prepared for life after graduation. The Paris Communiqué of 2018 is also a supranational commitment to elaborate new and inclusive approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching among the EU members with respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy (P. Communiqué, 2018).

In terms of governance, one interviewee underlined the importance of third-party funding and who is responsible for their salaries, which plays a significant role in the German HE system.

"Third party funders are not the government; strictly speaking, they are independent organizations, but they are financed by the government. So yes, we get special general regulations from the Berlin government, it's not the German government because education in Germany is decentralized, and the main political party who can tell us what to do and what not to do is the Berlin Senate because they are financing the state-owned universities. (...) To be more specific, we had to adapt the regulations the Berlin Senate gave us for the everyday life of our university; this holds for the building and the campus and the cafeteria and everything. So, they gave the overall educative regulations, and we adapted them. As for the money, money was paid every time, so nobody had to be afraid of not getting the salary, and the salary comes from the Berlin Senate too. And the third-party donors, like DAAD or the German Research Council. They propose some alternatives, how to spend the money, organizing digital events, sometimes it worked, sometimes not. But everyone tried, but everyone was limited to find real solutions" (GE Staff 2).

One participant mentioned the city's central location in the capital, financial support, and they have more chances in Berlin.

"So probably we have better circumstances than other universities in Germany because we're very prestigious, we have the capital. Say we have a lot of money. So, I'm not sure if it's really characteristic for the whole of Germany, but I think most of these seminars that we have I remember met those quality standards that I've just mentioned before and identified some of the time the researcher assistant, I think, are not as good, prepared as they could be prepared because you feel that there's a lot of stress that the researchers assistants and the professors are standing under because they have too much on their plates, thinking most of the cases, something that's stain off to the quality of teaching.

They don't have in mind to really follow up. I think there's not enough space and not enough. Then you put into teaching. Therefore, sometimes there's a lack of motivation or lack of preparedness. Due to the high-stress level of the professors I was standing under” (GE Student 2).

The German student mentioned that the precarity in German HE is a result of the workload, the reflection on teaching approaches in the classroom, and the effect of the institutional structures (Gallas, 2018; Garcia, 2020).

Summary	
Germany	Public University
	Decentralization
	Third-party funding
	Internationalization
Hungary	Public/ private university
	Centralization
	Internationalization
	TPF
	Teacher mobility

Table 8: Data analysis summary for the Governance

Germany and Hungary both displayed diverse approaches to the governance of higher education institutions while they were both members of the EU. The first one resulted in a public university that had fewer restrictions placed on it by the state. Nevertheless, support from third-party funding is an essential component of the research done in Germany.

On the other hand, the most recent reforms in Hungary demonstrated a centralized approach, in which the state plays a significant role in organizing HE practices and activities.

Both institutions, ELTE and HUB, aim to develop their internationalization practices. At ELTE, the TPF is a significant organization in promoting grants and increasing the number of international students in Hungary. At HUB, the Erasmus program is one of the successful programs with established partnerships worldwide.

One of the essential factors in HE is internationalization, a well-defined fundamental goal of student and teacher mobility. Faculty participation in teaching mobility programs is more difficult for universities with a lower strategic internationalization emphasis. Our research has also revealed a correlation between academics who participate in teaching mobility initiatives and

their willingness to return to their home institutions, which is a result of their employers' favorable attitudes toward internationalization (strategic focus, organizational support).

6.3 Institutional autonomy

It is important to note that institutional autonomy directly depends on changes in the sector and whether the state intervenes. It may strengthen or decrease the influence of institutional leaders in decision-making in the institutions' operations (Karran et al., 2017).

Institutional autonomy in budgetary, academic, and scientific matters gained considerable interest in the German HE documents, as evidenced by their presence in legal documents. In other words, the HEIs of the member states have the autonomy to manage their programs and activities, either academic or financial. They can choose to regulate the state budget's learning materials, programs, and funding. In the fields of science, academia, research, and the arts, institutions, and stakeholders have the following degrees of freedom:

(...) the internal freedom of science is adequately secured; in particular, academic self-government must have a significant influence on the appointment and dismissal of university management, and autonomous decision-making by academic bodies must be guaranteed in the academic core area; The members of the university must be granted the right to participate in the design of the course following the principles of this law (Law on Universities in Baden-Württemberg (State University Law - LHG) 2005, Section 70).

It is noteworthy that the policies emphasize the importance of institutional autonomy and academic freedom to respond to democratically compressive discourses while also acknowledging the diversity of HEIs.

Regarding the state level in Germany, the Berlin State Law states:

The universities are in charge of preserving and furthering knowledge in science and the arts and preparing students for careers in such fields. To maintain the democratic and the social rule of law, they help implement constitutional value decisions and implement those decisions. Through the research and teaching of universities, we are able to better our lives and the world around us. They consider the ramifications of their research decisions in light of their social and environmental responsibilities. (Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law- BerlHG), 2011, p. 9).

The autonomy of institutions in devising programs, managing their resources, and establishing their most basic operations is an important part of democratic and social viewpoints.

Berlin HE acts also recognized the “*Freedom of research, teaching and study, in accordance with Section 3 of the Higher Framework Act, does not relieve us of the obligation to respect the rights of others and the regulations that cohabitation in the university ordinate*” (Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law- BerIHG), 2011, p. 10).

The interviewees mentioned institutional autonomy and academic freedom in their respective roles in Germany:

“In Germany, you don't have the same academic freedom, everything is default academic freedom is constitutionally protected. (...) You're not an academic, and you're employed at a university, and also in third party funding, you don't have the same rights as a professor, and one part that is completely forgotten is student's academic freedom. The Humboldtian idea was that the freedom to learn and the contrast between the *Bildung* and skills. For example, you choose to study, and this has completely changed, mostly due to the Bologna Process and the whole modernization and one skills-oriented education system. So, the way they understood academic autonomy at the beginning of the Bologna process was that it was more institutional autonomy. So, autonomy of the institutional organization, university, but not of the people within the university or the persons within the university. So for me, the new focus is that institutional autonomy is not the same as academic freedom but can go hand in hand with strong institutional leadership or to protect academic freedom, but it might also be that strong institutional leadership hinders or contradicts academic freedom” (GE Teacher 4).

The German interviewee claimed a narrower definition of autonomy. The four models presented by Kováts exist only in theory, but they show that a university with nearly complete autonomy can tolerate a low level of academic freedom (See Table 7).

	Academic freedom is low	Academic freedom is high
Autonomy is low	<i>Napoleon model</i>	<i>Humboldt model</i>
Autonomy is high	<i>Corporate model</i>	<i>Balancing model</i>

Table 9. Modeling relationship of autonomy and academic freedom. Source: Kováts (2013, p. 53)

With a growing emphasis on managerialism, the corporate model has taken root, while political restraint often results in Napoleonic-style solutions. Academic freedom can be jeopardized if adequate safeguards aren't in place or if those safeguards aren't applied correctly. In fact, institutional management's actions against academic freedom are not adequately restrained if legal safeguards are limited to institutional autonomy (Kováts & Rónay, 2022).

Academic freedom is not possible without the participation of the academic community in its governance. Self-governance guarantees that the environment for academic labor is such that academic and professional factors – rather than, for example, economic and political considerations or the utilitarian expectations of external stakeholders – are given the proper weight they deserve (Kováts & Rónay, 2021).

The data concluded that academic freedom is different for a professor and neglected for students or employees in different roles at the institution. Furthermore, a significant point raised in this discussion was that the system does not consider the Humboldtian concept in existence as a result of the BP. We recognize the importance of academic freedom and the right to pursue academic interests (independently of their job description). In other words, if you are an employee but not a member of the academic community (you are not a lecturer, researcher, or anything like that), but you are a member of the administrative staff, academic freedom does not apply to you.

From a Humboldtian perspective, the ‘schoolification’ of higher education is the essence of the transformations taking place. The academic freedom of the students and of the faculty – as they have to adjust to new modes of teaching and evaluation of students – is considerably reduced due to the study reforms (Kehm *et al.*, 2010, p. 242).

It is essential to shedding light on the German context, which adjusts academic freedom in conjunction with the recent changes in the HE sector.

In terms of academic freedom, at the Bachelor's and Master's levels, all new programs must be accredited before they may be presented unless a university is permitted to self-accredit its programs. Universities may establish new doctoral programs without first obtaining accreditation. Degree programs must be terminated by discussion between universities and an external body. Institutions can now seek system accreditation under the new law.

Universities can thus choose internal quality assurance procedures and a quality assurance firm, which is an improvement over 2010. Universities are free to design the content of their degree programs. Universities can select the language of instruction for all Bachelor's and Master's programs.

There are no notable changes in university autonomy in Germany on a national basis. A reform in constitutional legislation has resulted in permanent federal/national support for universities. This gives the legal foundation for the government to maintain the Excellence Initiative, a significant program whose second funding round was set to finish in 2017. The major

recurrent financing of universities in Germany continues to come from the level of the respective state, and the critical regulation on university governance and autonomy are established at that level.

In the Hungarian case, no findings in this research regarding institutional autonomy and academic freedom were shown. Conversely, it was shown how the government legitimated regulatory tasks to strengthen the establishment and operation of the institutions under their guidance although, on the national HE act, it is mentioned that the maintainer will not affect academic and financial affairs:

The maintainer shall exercise control without prejudice to the higher education institution's autonomy in matters such as the academic subject and content of education and research. Upon the decision of the senate of the higher education institution, the rector may seek a judicial remedy against the maintainer's decision within thirty days of the notification thereof, requesting the court to establish that the autonomy of the higher education institution, which is to be ensured pursuant to this Act, has been prejudiced by the maintainer's decision (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 75).

We have shown two examples of how the Hungarian government affects academic and scientific matters when abolishing programs in the HE system (Kováts, 2015).

Interestingly, Hungarian law does not utilize the term "*academic freedom*." Since phrases like "*freedom of teaching*," "freedom of learning," and "freedom of research" are employed, it is unclear to what extent they are the same as "*academic freedom*." Academic freedom, for example, includes the freedom to talk publicly and privately within the university, although this is not included in the freedom of research or instruction (Kováts & Rónay, 2021).

Consequently, driving a strict regulation on the operations and financial matters is contradictory to the common agreed fundamental values declared in the Magna Charta Universitatum (1988) or UNESCO statement (1997) when stated:

- (1) Hungary shall ensure the freedom of scientific research and artistic creation, the freedom of learning for the acquisition of the highest possible level of knowledge and, within the framework laid down in an Act, the freedom of teaching.
- (2) The state shall have no right to decide on questions of scientific truth only scientists shall have the right to evaluate scientific research.
- (3) Hungary shall protect the scientific and artistic freedom of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Arts. Higher education institutions shall be autonomous in terms of the content and the methods of research and teaching; their organisation shall be regulated by an Act. The government shall, within the framework of the Acts, lay down the rules

governing the management of public institutes of higher education and shall supervise their management (The Fundamental Law of Hungary, 2011, Article X).

The problem is that in the case of state HEIs, the Fundamental Law protects the government's interests.

In terms of academy autonomy, the Hungarian case displays the same perspective, each new program at a university must be accredited before it can be launched, and institutions are unable to choose external quality assurance procedures. Since September 2015, the law has allowed colleges and universities to select their own foreign accreditation bodies for their undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The HAC or any ENQA member organization can accredit courses.

The HAC still requires that doctoral programs receive accreditation. Universities can design the content of degree programs (save for regulated vocations) without restrictions. Universities can choose teaching language for any of their undergraduate or graduate programs.

In the Hungarian context, the interviewees evaluate the challenges of the institutional autonomy implementation:

“In the old system, I mean in the higher education system. I think that challenges are, for example, academic and institutional autonomy and participation in a policy decision making process, (...) how universities, define their own quality concept. And how universities, define what the learning is and teaching means, how they approach to the lifelong learning concept and so on. So, there are many challenges in the field of quality, I think the whole system (...) it is a big issue in recent days. So, it's very important for universities to have their own institution and academic autonomy. So, I think this is the key to create their own goals and to organize their activities and develop their teaching and learning activities and the research as well. I think this is the key dimension of quality. And this is a big issue in Hungary now” (HU External Policy Maker 3).

It has already been mentioned that changes to the Hungarian HE system, including the budget, the implementation of Chancellor systems, and, more recently, the privatization of HEIs, appear to be leading to less participation of stakeholders in decision-making, including in the funding, operating, and developing academic matters, more important for this study it has an impact on the quality.

Also, we have a teacher that discussed the freedom of teaching and its connection with the Hungarian HE system:

“Unfortunately, the kind of a traditional thing in higher education, Hungarian higher educational system, that we are still thinking about autonomy as something individual, something that creates isolation, something that creates the concept that it's my own job, you should not be interested about what I'm doing, I close my door, in my classroom, and what I'm doing in a classroom, it's my duty and nothing to do with you. So in that sense, I think there needs to be a lot of development expected in the future, to give the real meaning of teaching autonomy in Hungarian higher education and going towards more of a team autonomy or autonomy within a team, sense of the concept” (HU Teacher 1).

This statement emphasizes that academic freedom should be regarded from individual and collective viewpoints to have a holistic perspective.

In this dimension, quality assurance is inextricably linked to scientific freedom, research freedom, and the freedom to choose instructional methods and content. Institutional autonomy is a critical factor that must be taken into consideration by quality assurance systems. As a result, we can draw conclusions about the disparity between the principles of legal discourse and real-life experiences in the context of HE in Hungary and Germany.

The ability of an institution's academic community to define the broader and more specific conditions of teaching and research within the institution is emphasized as a critical aspect of institutional autonomy in this section. Internal decision-making processes and the division of authority within the institution are both important considerations. A measure of institutional autonomy is one thing, but a measure of self-governance is quite another (Kováts & Rónay, 2021).

Summary	
Germany	Self-evaluation
	Several accreditation agencies
	Balancing model
Hungary	Accreditation regime
	Corporate model

Table 10: Data analysis summary for the Institutional autonomy dimension

To summarize, both nations are required to comply with the accreditation requirements for their respective programs. Academic freedom is high in Germany because of the country's well-balanced model, which enables institutions to self-evaluate and choose the organization responsible for providing certification approved by the German Accreditation Council.

In contrast, just one agency in Hungary is responsible for accreditation at the national level. The current reforms in the HE sector demonstrate a corporate model, indicating that Hungary's academic freedom level is relatively low.

6.4 Internal and external evaluation

Quality assurance requires more rigorous and comprehensive procedures, strategies, and values to assess the quality of studies, teaching programs, and research activities at the national and institutional levels. The tendency found in the analyzed German legal acts was to consider the self-evaluation integrating the teacher, researcher, student, and all the actors involved in the institutionalization of the quality assurance in the view of this 'soft law' to promote a community network (Mikulec, 2017).

The university is developing a system to ensure the quality of their work and should provide external evaluations to carry out. Universities and external evaluation bodies may carry out the necessary surveys and other data processing to fulfill this task. (...) conducts the day-to-day operation of the university and is responsible for establishing principles for evaluation and quality assurance (Bavarian Higher Education Act (BayHSchG), 23 May 2006, Article 10).

At the Berlin State:

Universities are obliged to submit the results of the evaluations and accreditations in accordance with paragraph 2 to the Senate administration responsible for universities without delay. The Senate Administration responsible for higher education institutions may, based on the result of the accreditation, revoke the approval of courses of study, conditional on the implementation of the accreditation result or, for this purpose, extend the term of the accreditation. (...) The results of the teaching evaluation and accreditation must be made public university internally appropriately. (Law on Universities in the State of Berlin (Berlin University Law- BerlHG), 2011, p. 16)

As reported by the interview, there is the complexity of external and internal review processes in Germany:

“The quality system in Germany is kind of complex with several regime program accreditations, so I guess. It very much depends where you are and what accreditation and quality assurance regime that institution has. It has to speak about Germany because the Lander is very different and the institutions. They have different profiles and different ways of doing quality assurance” (GE Teacher 4).

As indicated earlier, Germany is home to various accreditation agencies, some of which are run by foreigners. The registered agencies currently active in Germany are summarized in the table that can be found above. Accreditation has been granted to a total of 15 different agencies.

Agencies
AAQ - Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance
ACQUIN - Accreditation, Certification, and Quality Assurance Institute
AHPGS - Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences
AKAST - Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany
AQ Austria - Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria
AQAS - Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes
ASIIN - ASIIN e.V.
FIBAA - Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation
ZEVA - Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency
evalag - Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg
CTI - Engineering Degree Commission
EAEVE - European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
MusiQuE - Music Quality Enhancement
NVAO - Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
Unibasq - Agency for Quality of the Basque University System

Table 11: Registered agencies operating in Germany. Adapted by author. Source: <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/country-information/country/?id=64>

Since February of 2008, Germany has held the position of Governmental Member within EQAR.

In regards to internal evaluation and creating a quality culture, as mentioned before, it is essential to include the stakeholders in the process. Some participants never participated in such quality committees to discuss improvements in the different areas of the university.

“Quality Management. Not really. We had meetings about change management, but it is not the same, of course, because we had some changes to the structure of our department and the financial processes. And that's what you're asking, no quality assurance seminar or meeting, no. I mean, we tried to identify those KPIs to make sure that we could somehow measure our success. That's not very special also. But of course, most of the KPIs we did not meet this time because they exchanged numbers, we could not realize this year. But, oh you're, you have a point here, we did not have special quality assurance meetings or seminars or lectures” (GE Staff 2).

“There's a committee, or I don't know what the board for the Institute with elected members is called, I think they discussed the whole evaluation system and how it's going to be implemented and what the consequences should be, and so on. But it wasn't an open discussion” (GE Teacher 2).

The participation of the stakeholders in developing a quality culture is absolutely necessary. This is one area in which decision-makers have room for improvement in the years to come.

Few participants mentioned the quality committee, the different kinds of panels, and how they must meet the university's management, students, teachers, and everything in line with the ESG.

“I do permanently on that because I'm in various councils. I mean, but not really on teaching, not on the quality of teaching; it's indirect. Yeah, I remember, part of my work is to work in the Staff Council. And like this, you are. My role is to observe in order. I frequently look at the Academic Senate, but not too much in what to do with teaching.” (GE Teacher 1).

Quality management systems enacted in the faculties demonstrate the strengthening of quality-driven operations in its institutional growth plan. A process will ideally result in the faculty adopting a mature quality concept (Mikulec, 2017; Orsingher, 2006).

In the context of Hungary, the EQAR is a very recent development; Hungary became a Governmental Member of EQAR at the beginning of 2021. This makes the EQAR an extremely recent development in Hungary.

In regards to the institutional level, Hungarian document only mentioned the accreditation evaluation of the courses and the role of the independent agency in evaluating the institution's programs, courses, and professor candidate's performance:

The HAC is an independent national expert body established for the purposes of the external evaluation of the quality of educational, academic, research and artistic activities performed in higher education and the internal quality assurance systems operated by higher education institutions, and the provision of expert services in the procedures related to higher education institutions, as provided for in this Act (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 70).

It is relevant to underline the internal and external quality assurance mechanisms and strategies that are an important aspect to boost educational activities, curriculum, research, and teaching practices. The importance of having agencies evaluate academic affairs is to support the improvement of education (Van Damme, 2000).

ELTE has established an institutional approach to developing standards, principles, and performance indicators based on the instruments that have been identified.

“The institution, the university, should have a strategy. For example, what we had in 2020. So now we are in the situation where we have to rephrase our strategy, we have to launch a new strategy. If this strategy would highlight a goal like we would like to have much more interdisciplinary research, and interdisciplinary programs, then it's quite clear that we can measure these goals, why the number of programs why or the amount of research we have already done, then that's a kind of feedback on it. When it comes, we have many programs, and we are facing the question of quality” (HU Staff 1).

Implementing the satisfactory student measure on the services and the quality measurement survey, which is sent out to students annually, are two quality strategies developed by ELTE.

The following is what the interviewees had to say about the ELTE surveys:

“(…) we have these ELTE questionnaires’, they asked, what we liked about the course, and about the teachers and what we didn't really like. And there are options from one to five; we can rate the whole course and everything, which was related to the course. And I always fill that after the semester” (HU Student 1).

“Yeah, I'm using it, but I think it's sometimes pointless, like you can say anything, but you won't see the change. Like you can have an opinion, but it won't affect others” (HU Student 10).

“There is a quite a bureaucratic and overarching strategy at the institutional level. For example, they want to ask from every student, on every course, in every semester, their feedback, but in a quite superficial level, it's a couple of questions that the students have to fill in. This is the institutional level, and it's also a compulsory issue. You have to collect students' feedback, it's regulated by law, and they should be involved some kind of quality management work, there should be some committees and so on. (...) there is a lot of data collection but, we are not really moving to the next steps. When you based on what you collected, you give some feedback to the practice, and then you can change something, we are not in that stage at the institutional level” (HU Teacher 2).

As we observed in both remarks, the student and teacher mentioned the improvement component of quality evaluation, which is not present in the real-world practices of the participants (S. J. Ball, 2001; Gibbons et al., 1994).

Besides just bureaucratic execution, the participation of stakeholders in the review process is critical to establishing a quality culture. It involves teamwork, mutual goals, and a shared commitment (Hopbach & Serrano-Velarde, 2007).

“I am also a member of this quality management, and now I think it will change the name to quality Development Committee at our faculty. (...) there is a strategy at our faculty where the teachers will be evaluated based on research, teaching, and third mission activities. But only the research pillar was developed and introduced now, and the other two will be introduced later. And I think it's always a problem that research has this kind of leading role. And in the end, won't support the quality development, which is in the main goals, and they have just last one last comment” (HU Teacher 2).

On the other side, the following is the teacher's point of view on accreditation:

“In an accreditation process, the quality is very often investigated based on the relevance of or the existence of different documents, or the place the status of higher education institution in the ranking lists, etc. And in an accreditation process, it's very difficult to show what other microelements like embedded elements are building depth quality within the education. And what I also feel is that we are in a schizophrenic status of mine, in the sense that we are working in a Germanic tradition of quality of very strict rules and statuses within. However, we are longing for more of an Anglo-Saxon type of higher education quality, and this what I would say like this is double-mindedness and makes it sometimes very confused” (HU Teacher 1).

“There was an accreditation process in autumn this year. And I was involved in the discussion, one of the discussions because it's an external evaluation. And the external expert asked about these questions that were based on the previous accreditation, there

was something about that based on the data, we will improve something, (...) that's about the institutional level, so I think it's more about data collection and collecting all the feedback and not doing so many things and still working on these procedures that we have to do. We have to work on that all the time. And I think on the smaller level, so I don't think it's an individual level in that sense, but more like it's more that communities, I think it's different, so it depends on that small communities, so they can do nothing, or they can even develop a very detailed system if they want, it depends on them" (HU Teacher 2).

The historical background of the chosen countries showed that the other models had influenced Hungary. As the interviewee mentioned, the Hungarian HE is also influenced by the Anglo-Saxon model, mainly after the regime change in 1989, making the definition of quality and the implementation of quality procedures difficult; as we mentioned in the contextual framework, this model is less developed compared to the other models (Arthur et al., 2007).

Regarding the rankings, another question posed throughout the interviews was why they had picked this particular university and what criteria they had utilized to select these specific institutions.

"I have a long history with Humboldt. And I started studying here with my Magister, which would now translate to a bachelor's degree. And that choice was mostly made by proximity to where I lived, so it was one of the well-known universities, and I applied to many, and I chose programs first, so I decided on which subject to study and then I looked around which universities are close to home and which ones I know. I wouldn't count quality as in itself, as one of the most important things back then, I am talking about 20 years ago. And then had several stages in my career and then returned to Humboldt. Not really on my own choice, but because my boss got a better position, I was happy to follow him. So again, it was not an actual choice that I made, among others, but was , since I lived in Berlin, even when I worked in other cities, so I was happy to follow back to Humboldt back then, and but related to your topic, it was very attractive to go to Humboldt university, where you know, that people know the name and kind of get some light of this shining on the whole institution, or you get some, you know, like, people recognize the name. And if you go to international conferences, then it helps that they don't have to ask back, like it again, with the standard or whatever. Most people know about institutions" (GE Teacher 2).

"Because they took me, I applied to a lot of universities. I wanted to go to Berlin. I wanted to go to Freie University, but they didn't take me, but Humboldt took me. So yeah, that's how I got into my bachelor, and then I already started working at Humboldt and met the people in the department of Higher education, and I knew what I wanted to do and also what I wanted to in terms of research, and so I wanted to stay in this department to my masters" (GE Student 4).

"Humboldt University wasn't really a choice for the university; it was rather a choice for the program, for the project and the one who Julian Harman who's supervising the project. So, my decision wasn't really aimed at the university but rather at the subject of the

research and the persons I'm going to be working with. And, it was not also completely my decision because I applied, and I got accepted” (GE Student 5).

When deciding which institution to attend, the Hungarian participants had a distinct point of view.

External Policy Maker in Hungary says that in terms of worldwide rankings (QS, Shanghai, TEG), ELTE is one of the leading institutions in Hungary and that it's normally in the top a few hundred institutions (HU External Policy Maker 1). According to one student, ELTE's quality is directly linked to these rankings (HU Student 9). Also related to the prestigious that it has in the Hungarian HE context (HU Student 7).

“Oh, I feel that there are sure a couple of institutions, one of them being ELTE, that offer high quality of education. And also, not just studying, you get a high value of education but also working there. At least that's what I think, for sure” (HU Staff 3).

“Well, I chose out because that's the best university in Hungary. At least that's what they say. And even by international standards, it's a good university. And I think it's a good university, but there are some flows. But yeah, so that's why I chose it and, and geology was only in ELTE, I think for, and I live in Budapest, so it was obvious for me that I didn't want to go, I don't know, Debrecen or Pécs” (HU Student 3).

“If you just look at the school rankings, Hungarian schools are not doing too well on these rankings. But at the same time, I just know from law school because, as you know, I'm a law student. We get very good competition. You know if a school from ELTE goes to a competition, usually they do well, like once they want a very highly ranked competition. So, that shows some quality” (HU Student 8).

“I have chosen this institution by rankings, and currently, my institute is second in economic studies in Hungary, just as the Corvinus⁶. I wanted to get as good an education as possible” (HU Student 5).

The German interviewees appear to choose their universities based on their location or the likelihood of being admitted. On the other hand, the participants from Hungary chose ELTE because of its high rating and considered the best university in the country.

It is important to note that this Hungarian perspective is strongly related to history, as having a higher education degree for Hungarians equates to having a high social position, and it is still prevalent in the Hungarian psyche today.

⁶ Corvinus University of Budapest – Hungarian University

When one of the participants was asked about the evaluation, the informal, anonymous platform was emphasized to evaluate the teacher's overall performance.

“That other anonymous Mark My Teacher system, yes, several teachers or we have other teachers continually reviewing this mark My teacher, well, it's a more open platform for everyone. To be honest, I'm going to don't worry too much about it because if you have teacher evaluation, you should have student evaluation. I would like to leave an anonymous comment about such student-student” (HU Teacher 7).

Summary	
Germany	Complex accreditation – external evaluation
	Participation in EQAR – 2008
	University’s selection – personal
Hungary	National agency – HAC external evaluation
	Participation in EQAR 2021
	University’s selection – rankings and prestige

Table 12: Data analysis summary for the Internal and external evaluation dimension

As was said earlier, the process of adopting external and internal evaluation is comparable in both countries. It is essential to emphasize the fact that Germany has a complicated process of accreditation, one that involves national as well as international institutions that have the potential to provide quality assurance to the country's programs and operations. Since 2008, participation in EQAR demonstrates that Germany has been diligently working to develop a quality culture.

However, becoming a member in 2021 is a relatively recent event in Hungary. In addition, as was said in the preceding subchapter, the HAC is the only accrediting organization.

6.5 Learning, teaching, and research

The quality assurance policies translate the balanced relationship among the learning, teaching, and research and their constraints and challenges as principles to improve and establish the quality culture in the HEIs.

The world in which universities now operate is not merely one of increasing complexity and flux; rather, it is a world that is becoming increasingly supercomplex. The state of things we find ourselves in when our fundamental frameworks of knowing, being, and acting are tested is referred to as super complexity. It is the phenomenon of the unabated growth of super complexity and the maturation of the ability to maintain balance. The university is up against being, to some extent, a product of its own actions, but due to globalization and detraditionalization, it is also generated in and all over the rest of the globe. Teaching can be thought of as the interpersonal production of super complexity, in contrast to research, which is the public production of super complexity (Barnett, 2000).

As mentioned before, both countries analyzed in this research are European Union members, and to be part of the community level, it was essential to reform the HE sector to 'catch up with this comparable market. One crucial aspect found in the documents was the commonalities regarding implementing compatible and transferable curriculums within the EHEA credit system influenced by the BP in exchanging knowledge and creating networks (Mikulec, 2017). The bachelor's and master's studies should be structured according to the BP agreement that can be organized in a two-cycle model or single-cycle extended programs (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 3).

Learning and research are intrinsically linked to the quality of the programs provided by HEIs. These reforms in the HE systems aimed to create the EHEA guidelines and standards in educational development, and cooperation plays an essential role among European members to share innovation and build a knowledge network in these dynamic national systems. A common aspect mentioned in all the legal documents is the partnership between the state's national and international institutions between educational subjects and within the business, non-academic institutions, and non-state actors.

Considering that international and national networks and cooperations established are the basis for quality in research and teaching. (Hopbach & Serrano-Velarde, 2007).

In the Hungarian HE Act, “*Universities and university faculties that deliver programs of outstanding quality and gain recognition from the academic community may be classified as a “research” university or faculty under the conditions defined by the Government*” (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 3).

Regarding quality, HE in Hungary is regulated by a government decree that establishes guidelines for the country's HE quality excellence. Student groups (tudományos diákkor) and post-secondary institutions (szakkolégium) can grant recognition and financial assistance to the best students, faculty, and researchers under the terms of the same government regulation. Students' organizations (tudományos diákkor) and advanced studies (szakkolégi) excellence scholarships provide financial aid to eligible students as well as teachers and staff) are also supported by the government (Horváth et al., 2020).

In learning, there needs to be a cooperative shift in organizational, conceptual, and pedagogical orientation to have a successful student-centered approach. There are benefits and challenges for the teaching personnel as a result. The research has revealed several common problems: inadequate preparation, conflicting schedules, pushback from other staff members, student resistance, and a lack of confidence. As a result, any effort to restructure the curriculum should concentrate on identifying the elements that encourage a positive working relationship between the teacher and the student.

The perspective quality is associated with the teachers or even the activities offered by the university.

“Higher education institutions have different ways of ensuring that teachers and students are of high quality. Teachers are selected on the basis of their academic achievements, possibly they are outstanding researchers who have projects in their field. And students are also selected. You know, this is the ideal world. Dedicated and keen to learn about a particular field. So, theoretically, best instructors and best students are selected to ensure the best possible quality of education in that particular field” (HU Teacher 12).

These statements align with Harvey and Green's (1993) point of view the quality of teaching is related to the recruitment of qualified teachers.

In connection with this, the student connects with the value of the knowledge learned at the university and the teacher's participation.

“(…) to talk about my quality of education, then I guess it’s the knowledge that I can use for my whole life. I can like, go back to my notes and be like oh that teacher gave me good knowledge and notes, so that I can now go back to it if I need it” (HU Student 7).

In support of the view, one educator highlighted the importance of knowledge and teaching quality in preparing students for the future labor market.

“(…) But when it comes to teaching, I think quality means how you provide students with better knowledge, which they can sell to the labor market. At the end of the day, you would like to hand over that diploma, allow the student to certain jobs in certain positions, and the skills knowledge they have to fill the position to get the position. But when it comes to the university’s quality, it has a more complex definition or because the universities themselves have three main, from my point of view, three main activities. One activity is education itself. The second is research. And thirdly, this is a field of social networking and social interaction” (HU Staff 1).

Concerning the strategy taken, the teacher discussed the engaging tool and how it will encourage active learning.

“Of course, when it comes to quality, it can be measured in this sense based on the assignments that the students complete during the lesson. I always want to make sure that towards the end of the lesson, we have an interactive exercise using, for example, Kahoot or Mentimeter to review the material to see how much got through to the students, how much they understand, or at the beginning of the next lesson as well. And then when it comes to assignments during the semester like presentations, written assignments, online assignments or, in some cases when it's a compulsory course, maybe an entrance test again to measure the quality of the lesson, how much did the students learn” (HU Teacher 11).

From the teacher's view, many participants mentioned the feedback from the students or the peer review activity among colleagues as an essential element for their quality point of view.

“And this is what you are offering; when I'm talking about teaching, the quality of the teaching is a kind of a question where you have to decide your goals, you may have a view on yourself having a good quality when you have positive feedback from the students, but maybe this quality means no more than you are popular amongst the students, because you have good words, you are joking, and you are really nice to them” (HU Staff 1).

“(…) quality in higher education for me, starts at the micro-level of teaching and learning. When teaching teachers, instructors of higher education institutions are responsible for their work. They are dealing with and caring for their own development, that contributes to the whole quality of higher education as such, and responsibility, I think, is one of the crucial things that makes quality in higher education on all, an overall sense, and responsibility in the sense that people, participants of an institution are related to that institution, and are feeling that they are autonomous” (HU Teacher 1).

One teacher recommended conducting their own self-evaluation at the end of the course in order to collect their comments and improve their teaching approach.

“At the end of the course, I handed out an A4 sheet, and students could write whatever they wanted. Now, of course, we can't because this is the third semester that I haven't met the students at the end of the course, but now I use different methods. Now I use a Redmenta test. It's a platform that allows me to conduct online tests, which I do for practice and for assessment, and I include a question about feedback about the course. And I do take into consideration what they say. It's usually not so surprising what they say, and so far, I haven't had to change things drastically, but I'm always interested in feedback. It's always good to know, and it's kind of reinforcing that what I'm doing is good” (HU Teacher 12).

From the external stakeholder perspective looking for feedback from students may improve their practices.

“We are continuously monitoring the students. So, we have conducted many surveys of students, especially international students, international students and Hungarian students. And so, we have relevant feedback from students, and if we identify a problem based on these surveys, we always send it back to the universities. For example, I mentioned the mentoring program, this project was based on the results of our survey. Students said that they are not satisfied with mentoring or buddy programs. And we created a capacity-building project based on their feedback. And then so on. It's very important, but students say what their opinions are. And so, to be honest, this is the first part, this is a priority for us, so it's important” (HU External Policy Maker 3).

This survey evaluates their perception of quality and their level of satisfaction.

Only a few students responded that they had contributed suggestions but would not tell if the improvements were beneficial until after the fact. However, the student sees a favorable shift on the side of teachers.

“You know, usually when we have a course and then we give our feedback. And then we never meet the teacher again. So, it's a bit hard to say. For example, now I have a teacher saying that she got the feedback that she's never speaking. Only the students are making some presentations. But, because of that, she speaks more now. It worked for him, so yeah, there are good examples we're changing upon this. I don't know how it's good receive remarks from the students” (HU Student 8).

In regards to the teaching, it is essential to shedding light on the difficulties that the teacher encountered in the HEI setting.

“One example that I clearly can say makes a difference is the number of students we are teaching. I'm still struggling, and sometimes I experience myself as a teacher quality and non-quality when I'm teaching huge groups. Still, as a teacher, I have to learn how to give quality content, quality teaching to a hundred people in the same classroom, and it's not easy at all. And I'm not sure that what I'm providing for my hundred students in my classroom is high quality. (...) These days, they want more interaction more dynamics in the classroom, and we have just to reconceptualize what we think about teaching huge groups. (...) And again, isolated alone, with hundred students and struggling with my own teaching problems, week by week, and not sharing with anyone not getting ideas on how to improve in and in-depth” (HU Teacher 1).

In this statement, the teacher points out the number of students in the classroom that may contribute to a certain extent to a non-quality, as well as mentions the challenge of creating learning materials that is interactive and engaging. Solo work for a teacher is a problem when too many students are in the classroom.

In connection with enhancing the quality of teaching, learning allows students to participate as a vital component. The quality assessment standards must consider stakeholders' perspectives and conceptions of quality (Elassy, 2015).

Teaching, research, and social contact all directly impacted the quality of the participants' experiences, and quality was primarily defined as "excellence" and autonomy in their activities by those who were interviewed (Harvey, 2007; Harvey & Green, 1993).

The quality of teaching discussed in this interview below is connected to the infrastructure provided for them to carry out their jobs.

“In our college we have difficulties that result simply from the lack of money, to give a concrete example last year the projector we have here in the room was damaged. The university took a semester to have it repaired. Hence, it is true that during the same period we had a mobile projector that we could use, but imagine that at the beginning of each class we had to arrive early to put the projector here, put books so that it is quite loud, and then put everything together at the end of the class to disassemble everything, return the projector, so I think it's not a very good thing. And yes, so we have this lack of material, for example from spring when we move on to online teaching from one day almost to the other, I used my internet at home that I paid for, I used my computer, my camera, so I had here to use my materials and to be able to teach my students. So we have this difficulty which I think is a pity, for example, we have these whiteboards at university, but if I want to write I have to buy the proper pen because the university does not give us, I think this is very sad here in Hungary. And I think it's an unwillingness on the part of the government to support universities more” (HU Teacher 6).

Another measure mentioned is the lack of maintenance on infrastructural or operational systems.

“It is also a question of the quality of our university that we have technical issues as if we live in the middle ages, the email system was already unbearable in the 2000s, early 2000s before entering college, when we were the students of the college we already had a better email system, that is 20 years ago. Imagine that we are wasting time and nerves using terrible systems, Neptun and this internal email system of the university that is obligatory, official affairs can only be handled through this channel. And then I'm going to tell you something that not long ago, they called me to be secretary of the committee for an aggregation exam there. (...) The email systems, the Neptun system, everything is so old. I think my comment is this” (HU Teacher 7).

We completed the switch of the email system to the Microsoft Outlook platform in 2021, which was a fantastic undertaking to keep up with the changing needs of society.

Another issue that has been brought up is the shortage of finances.

Of course times are changing, students are changing everything is changing and we have to respond to the new times, but I think in terms of quality, there is still this dedication of people who could be working maybe elsewhere for a higher salary, and they still keep working at the university and do their job as best as they can (HU Teacher 12).

At least, we have received constructive feedback regarding the financial situation from teachers who are committed to doing their very best for their students while receiving a low income.

“I would say that, unfortunately, in Hungary, very many educators and educational systems still follow the frontal kind of traditional education, where they give facts and knowledge to the students who are then expected to know what they are supposed to know. And I think that it would be very important to have a lot more practice-oriented components, where we help the students learn how to use their knowledge. It's very difficult to balance between the two. In Hungary and I would say Central Europe, Eastern Europe, there is a very long tradition of rote learning: learning facts, learning things by heart. And that is when a lot of people think that they know something, but that is not when they know something. They know something when they can use it and use their knowledge. And I think that we are not good enough in enabling empowering our students to use their knowledge or to learn to use their knowledge” (HU Teacher 9).

Another problem that was brought up in the interviews was the bureaucracy that existed inside the ELTE administration.

“One of the challenges is that the administrative process at ELTE is very slow and very bureaucratic. So if there is a student who would need any kind of equipment, for example,

which we could borrow, it takes more than a year to get that, which means that the student can finish the studies by the time, for example, we also have outside services, I mean, not inside ELTE, for companies, associations, foundations, for example, accessible vehicles to transport the student. Okay, but if there is a big no, and the student's phone us and ask for an accessible vehicle, we have to find the outside partner. It's okay. But we have to write a contract first. We cannot just order. It's almost impossible because you don't need help that time immediately. There is no excuse. We cannot just order a service, that's the problem with a bureaucratic process, it takes a very long time. So sometimes we cannot help at the right time. And this is something we cannot change, unfortunately" (HU Staff 4).

"Yes, the bureaucracy of this University makes everything hard for me" (HU Student 10).

"The bureaucracy, for example, when I was a freshman again. In the last semester, because I get into university, I have to write to every teacher that I want to go on their course or lectures and agree with it. I just get the courses on Neptun when I end this September. So that's what I'm thinking about the bureaucracy that could be better if the logistical things would be better" (HU Student 9).

This point must be brought up because it is a complaint about the general nature of bureaucracy.

In addition, the data collected enabled us to determine that when it comes to scholarship and social support, domestic students can attend HEIs financed by the Hungarian government either entirely or partially by sponsors.

According to the interviewees, receiving government assistance has aided them in achieving higher academic achievement levels. Those students who have to juggle school and work must make sure that they participate in both activities, which in some way or another contributes to the quality of learning and teaching.

Some of the students who applied for the scholarships had unfavorable experiences.

"I think because my grades were very good. And I got the regular scholarship, but it was very funny, when I had an even higher average, I didn't get a scholarship. I was kind of hurt when, I had a four-point, I don't know, two. And I didn't get any scholarship, even though I had like 42 credits, which is a lot in one semester. I don't know how it works" (HU Student 3).

"From the government, my mother and me, we are getting money, because I count as an orphan or half orphan. And we are getting money for some for it. The University was providing funds too in the last year, but I did not get it the first time because I did not have enough points, someone who had less points got it. But I did not, so I can't understand this. I mean, the guy who got it was a guy like everyone else who's family is making six figures at least. Both of his parents are alive. He lives in Budapest. But for me, I live 200 kilometers away, with one parent who has raised me. And if our family makes six figures,

that's one salary, so when you calculate, this guy is about 70,000 a maximum of 70,400 per person in better doff. So yeah, equality, a chance for everyone” (HU Student 10).

These students complained about the evaluation criteria process to get the scholarship, which was important for continuing their studies. In their interviews, a few students admitted that they do not know exactly how much chance they have of receiving the scholarship each semester; some received it while others did not.

During the interviews, the subject of government aid and scholarship was discussed.

“It is a governmental program. The Stipendium network is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. So, we received our budget from them, and we need to apply for these budgets year by year, it is mandatory that we have this money. We need to complete a thoroughly complicated application process” (HU External Policy Maker 2).

As mentioned before, as an internationalization initiative, the government of Hungary has established a scholarship program to encourage students from developing nations who are not citizens of EU countries to study at one of Hungary's institutions for the bachelor's, master's, or doctorate levels. Students who meet the requirements are exempt from paying tuition and are awarded a stipend instead.

In terms of collaboration, the participants perceive that much more could be done in terms of interdisciplinary work:

“But this is also a question why we would like to have more interdisciplinary efforts works. And when we can answer it, then we can set goals towards it. And then we can start to measure it. But first of all, we have to decide whether we would like to do something like this and why. And I'm quite sure that this kind of interdisciplinarity comes and you can get it and find it in each and every faculty. But this final thing is that our relationship, for example, legal faculty is towards the market and not the IT faculty or the psychological faculty or so on. And then also, IT has a good relationship to various legal professionals, but not to verse our legal faculty. So, if we would like to create something out of it, first of all, we have to design our goal, what we would like to reach why we would like to reach and then have it and then when we have there, we may measure the quality ” (HU Staff 1).

“Hungary is not a big market for higher education, people who were socialized in all traditions of higher education still feel that they can have the ownership only on those things that they create, they keep, they store, and they dive in, or they retire with. And that's why it's very difficult to create a real interdisciplinary connection between faculties. And another thing is that I think the notion of interdisciplinarity is still in a very early stage in Hungarian education compared to, for example, the Anglo-Saxon higher education, or the western higher education, and disciplinary is the high word, the

buzzword. These days, I think we need a little bit more time to discover how important it is to create interdisciplinary education in higher education because this is kind of a key for survival for many disciplines” (HU Teacher 1).

Collaboration, research, and learning can all benefit from interdisciplinarity.

In terms of social support, as a result, the university is under pressure to provide a comprehensive education that meets the demands of a globalized society while catering to students' needs and upholding democratic principles, all while fulfilling its institutional mission in service to society.

Mentoring programs and the promotion of equal opportunity can be implemented. *“Higher education institutions shall offer mentoring schemes for disadvantaged students to help them fully develop their talents”* (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 3).

In addition, the promotion of equal opportunities is critical:

The Government shall ensure equal opportunities for a) disadvantaged students, b) those who are on unpaid leave for childcare purposes, or receive maternity benefit, childcare assistance, child-raising allowance or childcare benefit, c) disabled applicants, d) minority applicants, paying special attention to the groups of students referred to in points a) to d) when defining the higher education admission procedure and during their studies in higher education, and to the group referred to in point d) when determining the number of students who may receive full or partial Hungarian state scholarships. (Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 3).

ELTE has created a Disability Center called SHÜTI as part of its commitment to ensuring that all students and employees have equitable access to and participation in the university.

Participants spoke about the opportunities provided by ELTE's disabilities center, such as the English club sports activities, where Hungarian students can meet international students; they also have table games and board games for blind people, and they also provide individual counseling to students with disabilities.

In the same vein, we believe that the institutional strategies identified above aim to hold those with decision-making authority accountable since they are steppingstones toward creating a university that is in compliance with society and promotes students' holistic development, as well as promotes inclusion and equality which is related to social quality. (Abbott & Wallace, 2012).

Ministers made a compromise on the employment of students in the supranational plans.

The following was mentioned in the Hungarian HE Act:

Students may work under a student employment contract: a) at a workplace outside the higher education institution during the completion of a dual study programme, or at the higher education institution or a business organisation established by the higher education institution or a workplace outside the higher education institution during the completion of a practice period or practical training organised in the framework of or as part of the educational programme, Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Article 3).

To statement relates to what the student participants mentioned:

“It was enough to pay for my apartment, but I had to work before, and I work in general beyond my university studies, but it's a student job, and at this point, I don't work 40 hours like that” (HU Student 6).

On the other hand, one student said that this is a long distance from reality because most employment contracts have no connection to the institution and the time spent working is not considered in the course work.

“It has a negative effect on my studies too, but I can't do much because if I'm not working, then I won't be able to study because I did not pay for the dorm and stuff and the letters will come” (HU Student 10).

In Hungary, your rights and responsibilities differ based on your nationality regarding part-time jobs. Students' working hours from EEA countries (EU members plus Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and Lichtenstein) are unrestricted, although they must present a registration card. Non-EEA citizens can work 24 hours a week during their studies with residency permission for study purposes and 90 working days outside of their studies to be employed with an employment permit for study reasons.

At ELTE, a career guidance and counseling center assists job seekers by maintaining available positions, organizing recruitment events, and providing career planning and management services.

Another topic brought by the Hungarian participants was the comparison before BP and after:

“(…) before Bologna was more closed, I do not remember perfectly in which year our university happened to be part of the Bologna process, but it was in the early '90s, yet everything seemed more promising. Since then our conditions here in Hungary have not changed much, so we had higher expectations for the change, but I think we continue to be, at least I think that about my university, our university continues to be, especially the faculty of Humanities, it seems that it was the first faculty among the faculties in Hungary this past school year, and continues to have a good reputation” (HU Teacher 3).

We would like to bring to the research the future perspective, namely what the students expect as soon as they complete their education.

“If I stay in Hungary, I will stay at the university to teach, like part-time, or teach some courses, you know, just with the contract. But if you'd like to work in a university to do, you know, because my field of interest, my research topic is students living with disabilities studying in higher education. This is what I would like to do, being a special education teacher at the university and support the students living with a disability, and maybe teach at ELTE, but I'm not sure that I'm going to stay here forever. But if I leave, or, for example, I moved to Finland, or I moved to London or somewhere else, I would like to do the same. I would like to be a Disability Support Center member or something like that, you know, they usually call it, so this is what I would like to do. And they don't really want to stop doing research or stop teaching about it, kind of” (HU Student 2).

“I think that abroad it gives me more possibilities than at home. If I stay in Hungary, it's just the same as I did my bachelor's or even if I don't have a bachelor's, it's the same. Because in Hungary, it's mostly about the connections you make between people. And it's not just about if you're a good student, or you're, you're good at something. You have to like, talk to either teachers or other students, and get good relations with everyone. And I think that's very hard because if there is a job opening in Hungary, that doesn't mean that the best student gets the job. Instead, the best student who has got good relations who's got protection to get the job. So yeah, but abroad, it's I think it's much more possibilities at least I hope” (HU Student 3).

“I also don't want to stay in Hungary. I want to live somewhere else. I don't know where” (HU Student 7).

“No, it depends on if I get a really good job, maybe, but I just want to travel around the world and find my country where I can live. Because I think the Hungarian people's thoughts are not similar to me because they are racist, for example, and they are anti-Semitic homophobic, and I'm a really open-minded person, so I'm not part of the Hungarian peoples, I think” (HU Student 9).

The interviewees mentioned above claimed they would go overseas to have a better life; however, none of the German students mentioned that they had or would like to live in a nation other than Germany.

In the same perspective, the HE in Germany is offered at three levels of qualification:

Bachelor's, master and doctorate.

In the national context, in regards to teaching in Germany, a Teaching Quality Pact (Qualitätspakt Lehre) of the Federation and the State was officially launched in 2010 as a development programme to improve the strategic framework for teaching at HEIs, for example, in the field of student/lecturer ratios, and to support HEIs in addition to current methods of ensuring the highest possible standard of teaching (such as teacher in-service training or the use of performance measurement). In the Teaching Quality Pact of the Federation, a significant obstacle that educational establishments must overcome at HEIs is the digitization of classroom instruction and the concomitant incorporation of aspects of digital learning into the standard course of study (Deicke et al., 2014).

In terms of teaching, the Federation and state Innovation in HE created an accord, which was made official in June 2019 as the predecessor to the Teaching Quality Pact that aims to encourage the advancement of the improvement of teaching in HE and its reinforcement in the HE system starting in 2021. Appropriate financial structures are developed to encourage tertiary education institutions to maintain their initiatives to enhance the quality of the teaching they employ. In addition to this, networking and information sharing among relevant actors are going to be encouraged.

In the legal document of the HUB, each unit is responsible for looking after the teaching and learning matters, one unit for each research aspect. The documents from the state level or the institutional level are divided by study, teaching, and research considering all the aspects of the university's mission (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013). It is possible to observe that the HUB has autonomy and is responsible for taking care of these matters.

The HU-Q program offered by HUB serves as the foundation of the endeavor and is specifically designed to advance research-based learning as its primary objective. The letter "Q" acts as a conceptual symbol for the question, query, quest, and qualification in contexts where students are motivated to generate their own research questions, question the conventional knowledge of their respective fields of study and start on a quest for explanations (Deicke et al., 2014).

To measure the improvement of the institutional document brings the importance of the teacher's evaluation (in the teaching and learning aspect), as well as in the research activities:

“(…) evaluation procedures according to (teacher survey) data according to no. 3 sentence 2 as well as information of the teachers on learning and qualification goals, on the teaching and examination burden, on the effort for advice, supervision, research, and university self-administration, on the effectiveness of the quality assurance measures, on continuing didactic education offers, on decisive factors for the quality of teaching” (Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin, 2013, p. 3)

One important point mentioned by the teacher in terms of quality is the teaching and research coming together in her practice. In a student-centered approach, the student is free to choose topics and explore with the teacher's support.

“(…) this is the Humboldtian idea and research coming together. And I would consider that a good quality education course. I think a lot comes from motivation and also the question of diversity and having diverse voices and opening spaces to people who have been marginalized are still much fewer positions. So that they also can take part in it and so that we all can learn more about that would also fall into this quality category for me. And it's not so much about, like, the end product. But it's really for me, it's the process that I'm very, I love the process, guidance, where it's needed, but the freedom and the space of those who are more advanced to do their work on their own and just check in once in a while. I don't know, did you find interview partners or just check-in, if they're on their way, and if they don't need my help and want my help? Giving them the space to discover it on their own. And I was lucky, I don't think that it is a feature of the German system in general, but it is, especially a feature of my department, that I feel very encouraged. I had several occasions where I had to make decisions, and I am sure where to go which way to follow” (GE Teacher 2).

Quality involves the empowerment of the students in their learning process, which is the key to this success (Freire, 1985).

The support to maintain most of their financial support comes from the State and third part-funding projects.

“The institute I work at is mostly funded by third parties. So that's the large part right now, my position is funded by the institute, but the next project I was said in December will also be based on third party funding. Also, if you are in the postdoc phase if you want to become a professor, you need third-party funding, two chances to become a professor, kind of part of the kind of quality regime that you have to be an assessed over and over and over again in the job in the German higher education system” (GE Teacher 4).

The selection of international collaboration partners is critical in a research university like the HUB, known for its cutting-edge research. At the state level, the Berlin Act expresses this commitment in explicit terms:

Research projects that are of importance or in which scientists involved in several specialist departments/disciplines can be recognized as research priorities. The universities should aim to develop research priorities and include them in the development plans. In particular, attention should be paid to the development of interdisciplinary research priorities. (Berlin Higher Education Act 2011, p. 37).

One theme that came up in the discussions with the German participants was the precarious nature of academic work, mainly to rise to the rank of Professor in the German academic profession is quite competitive.

Complementing this idea, one teacher at HUB mentioned that the German HE system has a rather low number of professorships. As such, if you are allowed to be hired as a professor, you should seize it, regardless of whether it is at Humboldt University in Berlin or somewhere else in Munich or Hamburg. A professorship in the German academic system can only be achieved by taking advantage of every opportunity that comes your way (GE Teacher 3).

In addition to obtaining a Professorship, the interviewees noted that maintaining a post in that institution requires support.

“(…) precarity of the German academic job market. That is a challenge, so you can consider yourself lucky when you have a position for more than two years (...) I mean this is a challenge for everyone, and it's always also been a challenge for me. So precarity is certainly a challenge. And another challenge would probably be like juggling the different tasks I have as a professor teaching, research, administration, writing reviews. Obtaining third party funding and stuff like that saw” (GE Teacher 3).

“Germany has this six-year limit of research, which I am already over the six years, but because of third party funding, I can stay longer. The only problem is, of course, that if you always have three years and then you know that your future. You're sure the future is just three years, so living like that is quite difficult. If the opportunity comes, I would just try to find a permanent position, which is extremely difficult, and if that doesn't come, I will also apply for a professorship. My plan for the future is to get a permanent job. Yeah, I think that's for everyone” (GE Staff 3).

“The working conditions kind of precarious because you have to manage so many different competitions at the same time simultaneously. For example, the competitions for positions or for grants. Since the contracts here are usually just temporary contracts, is that the right word? There's always like this extra additional work to start applying for the next position. This is one of the multiple competitions that we are researching. It has to do something with precarity, even though it's not exactly in the project description” (GE Student 5).

Greater global competition for international recognition has resulted from higher education's neo-liberalization and globalization. This has enabled the marketization of academic

institutions through private-sector money, government performances, and dogmas, which have been attributed to new managerialism. In addition, it indicates that academic institutions must adhere to marketplace standards. As a result, the mechanisms of the new managerialism have been created to allocate resources on a national and international scale while also maximizing their efficiency. Therefore, the management of academic institutions is similar to that of a company; they must audit their competencies, productivity, and standing through performance indicators to achieve increased knowledge creation. However, measuring their research and performance should be given priority, emphasizing publication and journal rankings, citation index, and funding success, with teaching and related activities being given the bare minimum of attention (Gallas, 2018; Garcia, 2020). In the same perspective as ELTE, the participants from both countries agree that the bureaucracy of the system is its most challenging issue and leaves the most room for improvement:

“Another aspect is that the university administration, where I am right now, currently everybody's struggling with a pandemic and with Corona and some administrative or bureaucratic processes are not as quick and fast, as I would like them to be as a researcher. So for some decisions you have to wait longer than I would like, so this is another experience I'm highlighting, that the current situation with the pandemic is slowing things down in administration and maybe thirdly, another experience is that the teaching quality is pretty high so what I'm experiencing right now is that most students. I'm teaching you are very engaged and very interested in discussing different perspectives, and, working hard and so teaching this far, the level of teaching is a pretty high burden I would say, or in my institution, I can only speak for my university” (GE Teacher 3).

“I think part of the problem is that the administration, sometimes it's not as dynamic as ideas and developments are, like the structure is sometimes a little bit too slow” (GE External Policy Maker 1).

“Germany is a country in some areas where a lot of bureaucracy is going on, and that can be simplified. That would really making things much easier for us” (GE Staff 1).

We can see the bureaucratization of ELTE and HUB through three variables, which shed light on how and why the operation impeded democratic principles. Democracy is undermined by the bureaucracy that "inevitably follows" it every step of the way. At the same time, bureaucratization facilitates passive democratization through the "levelling of equals" that it achieves through its operation. With a focus on the university process in Hungary and Germany, Weber's analysis provides insight into how culture quality may be affected in a bureaucratic environment (Haukland, 2014; Weber, 1978).

The participants expressed their perception of the overall quality of teaching.

“(…) That circles back to my own teaching now, when what I consider good quality teaching is that I always try to, like have the frame fixed and have literature on different levels for students at hand. But first, let them more or less choose what to do and give them I don't know assignments and on topics where they have their own space and can, like find their topic related to their lives and interests, and not everything they know, until now to build on that and to expand and because I believe that it's very important to not just like memorize stuff, and then write it down in a written paper, but to really, like digest and feel connected and have a stand on things. And I'm trying to do that now in a Bachelor's course (GE Teacher 2).

According to the study, the best indicator of teaching quality is feedback, which instructors commonly mentioned as an essential aspect of evaluating their work and the capacity to improve one's practices in the classroom.

“I'm trying to be open and tell the students, they show me what is wrong or what is good, and we often do a sort of project daily like evaluations where everybody says what he or she likes, and over the time this leads to openness. It has to do with trust, and if I have time, I try to make a qualitative evaluation in the last session, which is not easy now; video feedback is not such feedback. But, but usually, a work kind of analysis. But let's say after 15 years, the feedback is sometimes the same. It is the student project that is important. It's really important to talk about the themes and get some ideas, but also during the, I mean, I tried to something comes up, which is not good, then to change it somehow, we have to discuss. And so, I think a qualitative evaluation is worth something. And then when you have things you can do earn some points” (GE Teacher 1).

“I received two forms of feedback. One is that the online platform I'm using for my teaching, Moodle has an option that lets students evaluate my class by filling out the questionnaire, and so they have, so I don't know, like half of the class have half the students said on this questionnaire and the questions were like, I don't know. Did you receive sufficient hand from a teacher if the class's content was good, and stuff like that? And so, this is like a systematic questionnaire about the class. It lets us hear anonymously from students, when they fill out the second form of feedback I received after my classes were individual feedback by students who wrote me emails and said thank you for this great class, I learned a lot, and I'm looking forward to your next class in winter. All forms of feedback are very important for me to improve my teaching” (GE Teacher 3).

Some teachers have expressed concern about bad criticism they have received, such as:

“The most negative feedback I received. It was something along the lines of the amount we had to read for this class was too much. There was too much reading. And it would be better to read less in the next class, but that's about it, I would say; otherwise, the feedback was mostly positive” (GE Teacher 3).

Another important aspect of the teaching and learning components is the importance of mentors in integrating new students into the HE system. The work of mentoring appears to be gaining in importance in this context.

“Yes. There was a lot of mentoring that was offered. The offer did not decrease in time, but I think most of us took advantage of it during the first year. Because also, after the first year, the next semester, some new students came to University, and they took the offer once again and so it was mostly I think it was mostly over a period of one year” (GE Student 4).

In point of fact, the mentorship program is one of the programs that receive the highest number of recommendations from students.

Summary	
Germany	Excellence Pact for teaching
	Academic freedom - learning and teaching
	Precarization of the German labour market
	Feedback and interdisciplinarity
Hungary	Infrastructure
	Financial situation
	Knowledge – labour market
	Feedback and interdisciplinarity
	Mentoring – teacher and student

Table 13: Data analysis summary for learning, teaching and research dimension.

In a nutshell, the two nations are working to execute the BP process and develop efforts to deal with the quality of learning, teaching, and research, in addition to the feedback and transdisciplinary topics discussed. On the Hungarian side of things, however, there is a need for more development of the interdisciplinary work.

There is something called a Teaching Quality Pact in Germany, whose purpose is to enhance and strengthen the teaching in HEIs. The interviewers of German teachers brought up the idea of academic freedom, in which both the teacher and the students are encouraged to participate in research activities and to take an active role in the learning process.

It was also emphasized that the precarization of jobs in the German employment market is an issue, particularly concerning professorship posts. The same thing happened with the

Hungarian, who brought up the subject of how difficult the current economic climate is for the instructors working at HE.

Mentoring programs were created at both institutions to enhance the educational opportunities available to pupils. It was said that mentoring teachers is a strategy for enhancement of the teaching perspective from the Hungarian point of view.

6.6 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other social, political, and economic developments, this section discusses how these developments have affected the stakeholder's experience. One important aspect is the accessibility to HE and the institutional strategies and policies created to tackle this challenging situation.

The following part of this dissertation describes the meso and micro levels in greater detail. In this sense, concentrating on participants' experiences rather than the national or global experiences with the pandemic, looking at potential opportunities for positive change during and since the pandemic.

At ELTE, a vital body established in the few years was the Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body (JOKT) in 2021 in response to the pandemic. This body provides information on all obligations and calls for required vaccination against COVID-19 for the community at the university, as mandated by that directive. This body exercised all of the senate's authority, citing the urgent need for immediate intervention to halt the spread of the epidemic and ensure university citizens' safety and acting as quickly as possible. Senate approval was required for this body's directives.

In the same year, another institutional document was created to cover academic operations' fundamental features during this challenging moment, mainly focusing on the training and examinations for the current and upcoming semesters from 2020 to 2021 (ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body, 2021).

ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body met academic and exam responsibilities by establishing policies and procedures.

Emphasising this existing basic principle in the present Regulations is especially important because certain situations may arise when the Regulations do not provide a detailed guideline. When finding a solution in such situations, cooperation between the parties involved in the education process is especially important (ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body, 2021, p. 1).

The institution enacted the authorization of directive to summarize all requirements and requests about required coronavirus immunization for University citizens.

On 28 October 2021 the Government of Hungary issued Decree No. 599/2021. (X. 28.) on the mandatory vaccination against the coronavirus of the employees of state and local government institutions. The scope of the decree applies to the employees of higher education institutions covered by the law CXC. of 2011 on National Higher Education. The cited government decree stipulates the mandatory vaccination against the coronavirus in those higher education institutions which are covered by the decree, including our University. This Briefing serves as the institutional implementation of this legal obligation (ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body, 2021, p. 1)

In the Hungarian case, ELTE created an institutional document: *“The semester will begin with a distance education arrangement, which will remain in effect until further notice. At the proposal of the University’s Rector, the institution manager has granted permission for certain courses to be conducted in person (including hybrid courses)”* (ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body, 2021, p. 1).

ELTE had a week in the spring of 2020 to convert all of its classes to an online version. Make sure to get all the resources needed to deal with the crisis. Due to their lack of preparation, some teachers found it difficult. On the other hand, some teachers felt at ease incorporating technology into the classroom. Due to the tiny size of the department, each faculty devised a strategy for dealing with the epidemic.

One significant initiative created was the mentoring program to help teachers and provide regular support, primarily using digital tools and sharing best practices.

In terms of restrictions during this period, the university established that the use of masks in public places had been loosened in the spring semester of 2021/2022 as teachers return to face-to-face instruction, or hybrid one, according to their preferences.

Some surveys were distributed to ELTE students during the lockdown to better understand their experiences and keep an eye on their health.

“We already questioned and asked our students how they were comfortable with distance learning. How they could use this distance, did they have any problems, did it mean much more or less effort to get the same results for the quality outcome of the training or not, and they gave quite good feedback. We in Hungary as well, and with the expectations towards ourselves, we got a good final exam or a good final result from the students. So they were satisfied with how we did it” (HU Staff 1).

Some individuals described the pandemic condition in their workplaces.

“[The] Pandemic situation has a great impact on our work, because we are working together with the universities and universities are in a very specific situation during the pandemic. We have many activities that we have stopped or finished. During the pandemic, some of my colleagues are responsible for International Student Affairs and international conferences, and these events were delayed or postponed in the last year. And it was difficult, but my tasks are the same tool being harnessed. So, to be conducted more surveys in these in this period. But my work is the same I think it's difficult because universities are closed. We have more events, more workshops and more monitoring or evaluation process. And these activities are postponed” (HU External Policy Maker 3).

One example of how the pandemic impacted international projects is how their connections with institutions and programs had to be delayed or transferred to online platforms.

One of the teachers who participated in the interview stated that one of the challenges they faced was maintaining a relationship with their students that was distinct from the in-person one.

“I think that maybe we are having more difficulties. When it comes to quality because we don't have this personal connection with the students now. We are not in a classroom. So that would mean that you have a lot of breaks when it comes to the class, and maybe that makes it more difficult to cover all of the material that you initially planned to cover during the lesson because there are so many breaks, switching from one website to the other switching between devices. That's what you would be able to achieve in the classroom in 90 minutes in the virtual environment, and you might achieve only around 60 or 70% of it because of these technical difficulties that could also occur” (HU Teacher 11).

Personal interaction and involvement with students cannot be replaced by any other approach, online or otherwise. As the interviewees point out, this is better than not meeting because they can still connect in small groups.

In connection to in-person connection, from the teacher's perspective, the pandemic also impacted the research activities.

“I just started a research project, and in every meeting for this project has to be online, so I have never met the people I'm working with in person. I had to appoint new research systems, and I have never met them in person, the job interviews, everything was online, I mean, obviously, one major thing that has changed is that most things have moved to the virtual or digital space right now. First of all, it was a challenge. I mean, I've done work online before. There's also training internationally. But, of course, not to this extent (HU Teacher 10).

However, one of the teachers stated that the institution chose the platform and that it was not the instructor's first choice to utilize in the classroom.

The second thing was interesting because, of course, the university for a long time prefer teams. It's just now, looking into zoom, that kind of half-heartedly. I very early on decided to get the professional version of zoom because it's the only program that really allows you to work very easily and interactively. For me, the breakout rooms were lifesaving. Because, you know, from the word go. I learned to create my own small groups, and basically work the way I normally do, meaning to work a lot of inductively getting students to come up with ideas and then sharing them discussing them, offering them to the inventor of theory” (HU Teacher 10).

In relation to this, one of the students brought up the challenge posed by the various platforms the instructors used.

“I was really, I just felt kind of lost. It's still kind of like there is still a problem because at another university teachers have the liberty to choose which platform they want to use, which is okay. Probably I mean, from their point of view they can choose what they're comfortable with, but I have to remember different sites. I don't know where to go and where to be. After a week they would like take it down and if you forgot to download it, which happens sometimes, I really felt like it was going to be horrible” (HU Student 7).

Another challenge in the interviews was that the internet connection was slow during the pandemic and before when they were required to attend the classes, which was one of the aspects of the infrastructure discussed in the prior dimension.

“Another thing about the quality that is terrible, is that in 2020, before online teaching, now until this week we took the classes in person, most of the studies were in person, but certain online classes, that is a hybrid modality. And the wi-fi in our building is not working, imagine the student will have their first online class, and cannot, because the wi-fi does not work, and with the teacher, this is the same thing” (HU Teacher 7).

“At our faculty, sometimes there are no internet connections. A small thing, but it's so useful nowadays, especially in the Corona time, when the classes are online. And it happened already that there was no internet connection. And for example, that's not a quality way at the university” (HU Student 1).

ELTE's infrastructure, such as providing teachers and students with a high-speed internet connection, should also be considered.

However, one student mentioned that the dormitory offered by the university had a better connection, which positively impacted studies.

“I would say Microsoft Teams, but thanks to living in a dormitory, my internet connection is not the best. And it's a big software, but I kind of like it because you can upload your files, videos, and you can record the classes. You can use FaceTime or web cameras too. I think it has everything that the teachers need and also Canvas regular” (HU Student 10).

Like ELTE, the HUB has set up a ‘Pandemic operation’ with all the necessary information for employers and students to learn about the university's response to the outbreak. It informs about their current obligations and how they work from home on their profile. With the help of the Charité Medicine Center and COVID- 19, the institution is offering free vaccinations to all the community of HUB (Humboldt University, 2022). It is vital to emphasize that this Pandemic operation did not have the same power, compared to JOKT, which is actually a body in the institution. According to the interviewees, the most frequently stated aspect in this dimension was the HE system in Hungary and their impressions.

Students and members of the community at HUB can answer their queries about the university's Pandemic Operations on the FAQ section of their website.

Academically, the interview focused on Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT):

“In Germany, the summer semester started in the middle of April, and people had more time to prepare, and universities were looking to arrange to bend new systems to deal with the pandemic. University settings were more strict about using platforms. Data Protection was always an argument student were protesting, and they wanted a kind of free semester without access” (GE External Policy Maker 2).

In the German HE sector, another participant emphasized the necessity of digitalization:

“That is a very important point at the moment, and digitization becomes more important day by day. And here we are also making quick progress, though they are of course difficulties, but, probabilities, we are mainly working with move on and this is a database

system for the management of mobilities and international relationships, which is more on the technical level, but we have also been able to say improve the quality and the intensity of exchange programs. We have been able to simplify processes, so we can okay quicker and communicate with our partners, we have the information ready at all times. And this also helps us to improve, say exchange programs, but also kind of research relationships, and all kind of aspects are now much easier to assess.” (GE Staff 1).

While attending HUB, they were compelled to deal with this problem. Internationalization, partnering, and the IT department's database were all discussed in this case, and an online learning agreement to speed up the process.

“The task force at the level of the university readjust everything, so our business trips, foreign students, home students, scientists, and communication and decision making was realized by those task forces on the department level and on the university level. There was a general task force for the pandemic, and there was a special task force for student services, and we had regular meetings and discussed how to pay money, and scholarships, how to make sure that the medical assurances are in place, how to provide the students with lectures. By the way, this was a great problem because even if you have digital lectures or seminars, they are not open for an indefinite number of participants, but the numbers are limited, especially in the seminars, and we had the problem that students could not find places in the seminars they choose because they were overcrowded already. Yes, and we tried to speak with the faculty” (GE Staff 2).

In contrast to ELTE, at HUB, they could plan and communicate with students more effectively because they had a class vacation. In the semester of 2021/2022 spring, teachers can return to face-to-face classes or continue with the online platform, according to the interviewees.

It was also emphasized that teachers have the freedom to choose whether they want to teach online or in-person:

“In Germany, we had completed the summer semester a couple of weeks ago and, and the next semester is going to start in a week, we are in the middle of a break between semesters, and for the next semester in winter, my institution encourages researchers to do classes and teaching in person. But they offer that if you would like to stay in the digital space, if you would like to keep your classes online, then you're free to do so. In fact, it would perhaps help some students that cannot attend classes in person because they couldn't be vaccinated yet to have some classes online, and my teaching will be fully online in winter as well. I think one of the few people that did not change the teaching to in-person teaching, but that stays online” (GE Teacher 3).

Some participants reported their impressions of the pandemic situation at work and the impact on their research activities and the learning and interaction with the student, and the Hungarian teachers shared the same view.

“In terms of research, there was a big change because the channels are not possible anymore. (...) It is a loss of interaction and of learning, I am pretty sure because it's not in there's no interaction; the interaction is nearly completely impossible. Deeper interactions or whatever. I mean, there are possibilities to organize that making group works, making breakout rooms, partly also have the visualization of the group work (...) It's frustrating not to see the students. In second, it's frustrating not to have feedback and interaction” (GE Teacher 1).

Disadvantages of digital education were found not just in the classroom but also in research and daily life activities:

“It affects everything. And that is mostly because I have a small child at home and I had to deal with child-raising, and I did not have Kita, so the childcare institutions were closed very quickly but on the other hand, the demands and everything stayed on the same level. I had to teach, and I had few weeks only to prepare an online course, which I haven't done before. I had several writing deadlines last year as well. Articles and chapters that I promised to write. I felt a lot of pressure, and it was very hard to keep up the quality of my writing and my teaching. We had learned a lot and the learning curve was big for everyone. It affected my research as well because I originally planned to start a new research project with colleagues from Sweden who wanted to interview and observe staff in early childhood education centers” (GE Teacher 2).

In contrast to ELTE, which created a mentoring program, at HUB, a teacher mentioned that the university offered minimal assistance in this particular situation:

“During the pandemic, there is little support for the specific situation during the pandemic, so there are some resources online on how to teach online, for example, and which platforms to use and which software to use. There are some resources online, but there is no actual teaching that I could receive on how to conduct online classes. I'm just expected to do this. I have a mentor, whom I can talk to when I have specific questions on my career development and the goals I have, and stuff like that, and I can do workshops and classes on pretty much every aspect that concerns my career so there is a strong interest I would say in Berlin, to develop researchers, and to invest in the human capital that researchers add to their institution. There's a general support structure, but the support, the specific support we need during the pandemic, is not really extensive” (GE Teacher 3).

As seen through the eyes of students, online education was not beneficial:

“[the] Pandemic, it hit me indeed and many others in a hard way. I don't really think that I am a person who could spend a lot of time in front of the laptop when it is not very necessary to do and to get my seminars and lectures through zoom is something not suitable for me, but I am forced now because of a pandemic to do that. I have been trying since for half a year already, almost to overcome these obstacles, and in matters, I feel the pandemic very well. Unfortunately, it hinders a lot of my progress in studying but still doing my best work level, and I think it is still doable. And for a long time, and I must do everything, almost either through zoom or emails, which is not satisfying for many people, and for me, also, but we need to keep the good work. We need to carry on. And that's what motivates me more and more. I mean to go further in this form, but the pandemic is something very harmful. It is also for me” (GE Student 1).

The student felt that changing to an online platform and spending an hour in front of a computer was not advantageous.

Some students, on the other hand, may be able to cope well with the situation:

“Fortunately for me, it doesn't matter so much because I took most of the classes that I had to take which were mandatory classes, so I could choose freely between classes from other Institutes. Also, I took many history classes during the pandemic. And I chose them by accessibility because I took some classes in digital humanities, which were, of course, much easier to take from home and much more digitalized. I only have to hand in written work. So, it really does not affect me” (GE Student 4).

“It was probably the best time for me to go into a lockdown. They fit quite well together. Yes, after a while, I mean, just things that everybody else experienced. I think that being at home for such a long time was kind of hard after half a year or more. But I was lucky enough to always be able to go to Bureau at the university, where I could work. So that was really lucky, and since I mean yeah, libraries were closed. Usually, there was no room to work for anybody, so I was pretty lucky to have a room for myself at the university and right now as well. So that was pretty important, I think, for my well-being as a researcher. Yeah, but, like, apart from that, it didn't really affect me. Maybe I was a little bit more productive” (GE Student 4).

We saw how the experiences differed depending on the context. The most discussed topic in the Hungarian setting was the infrastructure provided for digital education and instruction, and the most crucial part had the necessary equipment to carry out the tasks.

Summary	
Germany	Pandemic treated locally
	Challenges with digitalization, research
	Research
	Lack of support for the pandemic
Hungary	Pandemic treated as regional operative body
	Challenges with digitalization and research and infrastructure
	Mentoring

Table 14: Data analysis summary for Pandemic dimension

Both organizations had difficulty digitalizing their processes and systems, which posed a challenge. It was extremely evident how each institution dealt with the pandemic issue at HUB on a local level, and it was also very evident how each faculty dealt with the situation on an individual level.

At ELTE, this meant adopting a regional focus and establishing a governing body to bring all academic and administrative processes to a centralized location at the institution level.

At HUB, the lack of support from the university in this unique circumstance regarding teaching methodology and how to improve teaching practices in a digital context was cited as a barrier that needs to be overcome.

On the other hand, at ELTE, a mentoring program was developed to assist the teachers during this shift. The most difficult obstacle brought up in the interviews was the influence that a poor internet connection had on the research activities and the infrastructure of the building, making it difficult for both instructors and students to attend lessons.

CONCLUSIONS

This research looked at the differences and similarities in views of the concept of quality mentioned in the guiding education policy and HE discourses, emphasizing the two universities' institutional strategies to leverage the qualification and improvement of training, as well the challenges of autonomy and globalization faced ideals of democratization.

The search for better education, quality, and management is part of the same process that involves places, meetings, debate, reflection, and planning collective actions to reach high levels of successful training in HE (McBurnie, 2001).

However, globalization is the engine that drives reforms in HE systems related to privatization, efficiency, accountability, accreditation, and internationalization. The implemented culture of quality is associated with autonomy, democratization, social support, assessment, teaching and practice, research, infrastructures, and, most importantly, the role of the stakeholders in this interplay. As a result of globalization, the term 'quality' encompasses many concepts, from academic excellence to national development to international acknowledgment. It is time for us to embrace a more flexible view of quality, qualifications, quality assurance, and collaborative recognition (d'Egmont, 2006; Elassy, 2015; King et al., 2011; Serrano-Velarde, 2008).

This study presented trends in implementing quality assurance procedures in HE in both institutions. Regardless of the substantial efforts taken to launch an EHEA development of what is often thought to be a part of the HE market, the recognition of the external evaluation through the national agencies, the supremacy of the national framework, and discourses of orientation within the data stated above are prominent.

This study found parallels in German and Hungarian quality assurance, presumptuous that both nations implemented the BP governance under the same supranational expectations to respond to the compatible recognition and international collaboration of EHEA.

Quality assurance from an external perspective in Germany involves a number of accrediting agencies, some of which are run by foreigners. Allow the institutions to choose which agency will execute the accrediting and obtain feedback for performance improvement in this situation. However, in Hungary, external evaluation is managed by a single agency that is also in charge of accrediting programs at the national level.

Direct concern about the positive and negative impacts of HE reforms on knowledge generation, whether oriented by a centralized or decentralized strategy, is expressed through these two European situations (Gibbons et al., 1994). The analysis of the legal policy documentation helped validate the relevance and complexity of developing standards for the required quality and perspectives on power, governance, sustainability, and responsibility.

A comparison of the policy documents leads to the conclusion that quality assurance systems, assessments mechanisms, and strategies depend on the ability of the national policies to advocate HEIs to engage in a culture of excellence, and good practices, drive innovation and enhance outputs, and to freely manage the transformation process in their operations and activities in an autonomous manner.

The study found variations between the two institutions in the extent of autonomy they allocate to HEIs in managing quality assurance prerequisites. Evaluating HE texts demonstrated the implications of varying norms of institutional autonomy in applying quality assurance requirements.

The scope for action of institutions in regulating quality assurance through data collection of these legal documents demonstrates that the two institutions have opposing approaches to HE governance, consequently affecting the decision-making in the operations of the institutions. The reforms are mediated by different national realities where changing quality assurance parameters affects the *status quo* of university governance policies. This study mainly indicates that in the Hungarian context, the changing role of universities illustrated limited institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

This approach was highlighted in the discussion phase, which took place at HUB, where they were a Quality teaching excellence agreement to enhance the teaching practices and invest more in this area. At ELTE, there existed an organization called TPF that is responsible for fostering internationalization through the provision of scholarships, workshops, and other activities in collaboration HEIs both locally and remotely.

The comparison helped us question the naturalness of accountability in today's educational context. The adoption of accountability at both the national and local levels affected students' and teachers' autonomy and agency. Cultural and infrastructural differences affect the teaching profession in different ways. Therefore, comparison studies may help reveal various modes of policy reception and different responses or alternatives to the same phenomenon. As a result,

looking at these two institutions in Hungary and Germany could provide insight into the global influence on national practices.

Over some time, Hungary's economy has grown considerably. They have experienced immense growth and development, which has exacerbated the need to advance in their educational sector. This is important to equip their students in higher learning education with essential skills that will make them fit perfectly in the job market. As a result of the documents, a more dependable system was created, whereby graduates are guaranteed good positions upon graduation through programs (Erasmus, Stipendium), sports activities, and inclusion practices (SHÜTI).

The national government's governance is centrally regulated and monitored in the Hungarian HE system. This direct state control reflects a lack of organizational autonomy of higher education institutions to organize academic programs and their resources under the restriction of the freedom of teachers, students, and researchers in their activities.

The Hungarian HE framework is *sui generis* since the centralized management narrows the quality assurance framework that is subordinated to a strong national administration that affects the responsibility of the university administrators (e.g., people such as the university's rector or chancellor). The Hungarian case is different from the German one.

The privatization of more of the former state institutions impacted HE because of the changes in funding and governance; institutions no longer have as much autonomy as they formerly did. At the same time, the shortage of resources in Hungarian HE is hampering performance; because of the existing model, universities will have less autonomy, which will be mostly "corporate autonomy," which is dependent on the diktats of management, i.e., the board of trustees, and the possibility of political involvement will increase, resulting in lower academic quality.

Hungarian HE and scientific research have become increasingly concentrated in recent years, at least as seen by academic groups. After the 2010 election, the government's need for direct control and readiness to take a dominant role became even more apparent. Some of the procedures had already begun in the early 2000s, however, when a restructure was offered, it was usually accompanied by a promise of increased financial support, which made it seem like a restructure was inevitable. Academic communities as a whole have lost much of their ability to make decisions. In many cases, financial and strategic decisions have been taken over by new

entities (board of trustees, governing boards) or players who have a substantial or exclusive effect on the composition and decisions of these bodies or actors. When it comes to academia, the ability of academic communities to make their own decisions and govern themselves is being eroded by an increasing number of external actors (chancellors, financial inspectors, and managers appointed by the board of trustees, for instance) who have limited the decisions that can be made in the field of academics. In the last year, the privatization of some institutions reflected an increased government control.

In contrast, the German HE system is decentralized, which allows the institution's constitutive states to determine how to implement quality assurance policies individually. The German law texts analyzed in this study emphasize the need to ensure the quality of learning, teaching, research, academic freedom, gender equality, and institutional autonomy (Pimenta et al., 2021). However, the lack of policy regimes in the national guidelines concerning quality assurance could reflect the difficulties in establishing a standardization quality evaluation that allows a comparison of German and other HEIs nationwide (Federkeil, 2003). The data collected in this study discovered the close relationship between governance and quality assurance in policies concerning the accountability of stakeholders, market transparency, and academic freedom (Pimenta et al., 2021). Even if professors have complete control over academic freedom, they would need to reorient the policies and practices to engage students in decision-making.

In the data collected, just a few teaching practices are in line with the Humboldt principle, largely because the BP does not consider this old model. The legal documents portray employability-related skills and competencies and various forms of entrepreneurship as areas where universities can directly impact the national economy. The European strategy recommends moving away from content-based instruction and learning outcomes-based instruction when the students' interests and labor market requirements are met. BP dismantles academic autonomy as a European creation in the goal, content, pedagogy, and institutional autonomy of HE. While some scholars believe there are no conceivable ties between Humboldt and Bologna, others believe otherwise (Dysthe & Webler, 2010; Moutsios, 2013).

All these reforms share the ability to achieve almost the same range of things in common. Countries, over time, have tried to come up with several reforms that they implemented in the tertiary institutions to advance their education department. Although there has been the

availability of reforms, financial restraint has had a significant impact on this. Some institutions have better financial capabilities as compared to other institutions.

In terms of the current state of the financial situation, the majority of the financial support for ELTE came from the government as well as several programs funded by the EU. At HUB, the majority of the budget comes from the state of Berlin, while the remaining portion comes from third-party organizations.

As a result of our investigation, we observed that the HUB approach gives the impression that, to a certain extent, national imperatives have been overtaken by EU imperatives, which is, in fact, the case. Given their history and geographical location, it is crucial to acknowledge that the nation and the institution consider membership in the EU and its initiatives to be more of a sense than an obligation, given their respective circumstances. However, over-reliance on the EU and the implementation of Europeanization standards are both feasible results. Following the available data, ELTE has attempted to meet national expectations while also complying with EU orientation at the same time. According to data collected, recent developments at the national level in terms of governance, on the other hand, reflect the difficulties that will be encountered in the following years.

Both universities should consider how a service/client-focused perspective may be broadened, with the resulting resistance against more traditional bureaucratic cultures in both the business and engineering departments and other areas. It is feasible that this strategy will be accompanied by a type of service-level agreement, clear and visible incentive mechanisms to encourage departments to operate in an interdisciplinary manner, and the development of linkages between departments and faculties to facilitate integrated work. To ensure that central units and faculties continue to function as proactive units and faculties, they must do so in an entrepreneurial rather than a bureaucratic manner. In the context of education, this may mean going beyond the facilitation to include the promotional aspects and achieve the democratization of the HE.

At HUB, interdisciplinary is already consolidated, and many examples of these practices were given in the interviews. However, at ELTE, the interdisciplinary needs to be further implemented in order to promote innovation and knowledge sharing among peers and stakeholders.

The findings of this study revealed that the subjects of this investigation believe that their education will not be completed upon receiving a diploma and that the vast majority of the students interviewed intend to continue their education through the completion of a master's degree, with the hope of working in their fields of expertise in the future, and even moving abroad to have a better life. When asked about the influence of this training on their future professional lives, the vast majority of students stated that the training would have a positive impact since it would provide them with the necessary foundations, whether on a personal or professional level.

Despite this trend in the data, the research revealed the need for institutional reflection, specifically in the areas of pedagogy, didactics, and curriculum (teaching practices and assessment methods), all of which were identified by the participants as being essential for academic success, satisfaction with the course, and professional activity. Quality has always had a social dimension, and we will continue to believe so. The study demonstrates that social quality is critical in promoting conditions for an education founded on democratic and equitable principles, which supports the development of a just and equitable society (Dias Sobrinho, 2013).

In more concrete terms, the students' arguments are consistent with some of the directives outlined in the normative documents, particularly those about the development of projects and programs that assist students in gaining admission to and remaining in HE. By constituting a mechanism capable of generating positive effects in people's lives and contributing to their recognition, these strategies also embody the fundamental principles of an equitable political system.

According to the findings, students, professors, and employers all have different perspectives on what constitutes high-quality HE. Teacher feedback, grants, and research projects were highlighted as necessary by qualitative data; students' methodologies, teacher practices, and international experiences were cited as quality by students; staff was asked about their daily activities, and external policy makers' projects and contributions to the quality of HE were discussed.

However, from the perspective of some Hungarian students, it is essential to set the requirement and be clear and transparent in the scholarship evaluation process, as some semesters are eligible for scholarships while others are not.

In both countries, the bureaucracy has been identified as a significant obstacle to achieving quality in activities such as scholarship applications, course registration, teacher evaluations, traditional practices implemented in classrooms, and contract signing in universities.

The opportunity presented in terms of quality improvement consists of the ability to digitize their data and move away from outdated methods and processes.

In the context of Germany, one crucial subject that emerged was the precarity of academic work, which means that only a small number of people will have the option to pursue a career in academia. The use of third-party funds is attributed to the new managerialism movement. Also implied is that academic institutions should adhere to the same standards as the rest of the economy. Modern managerialism has established ways for allocating resources on a national and international scale while also boosting efficiency due to this development.

The principle of putting people at the center of policymaking reveals the intention of promoting projects and programs from the perspective of continuous quality improvement while also serving as social action and practice contextualized to the people who participate in them. However, the data showed that only a small number of participants from both institutions were ever invited to quality activities or meetings to provide their feedback for the process of continuous improvement, as confirmed by Serrano (2008).

There are numerous frameworks under which institutional strategies might be analyzed. A narrow interpretation would focus just on the institution's purpose, aim, principles, and commitments. This may include student exchange, recruitment, international partnerships, cross-border distribution, sabbaticals, and other similar initiatives that may fall under this category.

Policies at the institutional level that take a comprehensive approach to deal with the effects of globalization would include declarations, rules, and planning accords. A comprehensive and long-term strategy for internationalization necessitates the adoption of a wide range of policy and procedure statements covering areas such as quality assurance, planning, funds, staffing, training programmes, admissions, research, teaching, educational support, agreement and project work, and so on.

Internationalization has played an important role in the quality implementation through programs such as Erasmus, ESN, and Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship that promotes an IA and IaH in both institutions focusing on teachers and student mobility (Knight, 2008; Leask, 2009).

Concerning the Pandemic situation, universities have played an essential part in this by giving students a chance to succeed, collaborate and demonstrate their strengths through extracurricular activities and group projects and by providing the infrastructure to cope with Emergency Remote Teaching. Both universities took a distinct approach to deal with the pandemic, with ELTE establishing an operational organization to oversee the crisis regionally. HUB used a local approach through the department and institutions to identify needs and give needed support.

While the findings indicate that there were issues with quality during the remote teaching, they also suggest that the quality assurance system should have been in operation and supporting and evaluating the processes from the beginning of the pandemic in order to provide the necessary infrastructure to the teachers and students in coping this crisis.

Every aspect of society has been affected by digitalization, including HEIs. Both ELTE and HUB had trouble switching between systems and providing support for staff and students in difficult circumstances.

The data revealed the challenges faced by the teachers in the transition to remote emergent education, forcing them to adopt more interactive activities supported by the use of the active methodology.

At ELTE, the interviews mentioned mentoring to support the teachers and have a smooth transition to the online platform. As a result, it was discovered that despite the teachers' lack of preparation for remote emergency instruction, they were capable of managing an online learning project.

In contrast, at HUB, the interviewees mentioned general support from the university but a lack of support in the special situation of the pandemic.

Participants at ELTE brought up the poor internet connections in university buildings, which should now be considered a crucial component of the infrastructure provided. In order to be able to accept and send more students to mobility programs, digitization was noted at HUB as a key tool for internationalization and the reduction of bureaucracy.

This study serves as a foundation for future research that will seek to further our understanding of students' perceptions of the various universities that make up the Hungarian and German academic communities on the quality of their education. It is necessary to maintain a training program founded on the principles of quality and social justice, and democratic values

throughout the duration of the program. To provide this type of training is to recognize that policies must be aligned with real-world contexts and must serve as an impetus for formative processes that allow for participation and critical thinking, or, in the words of Paulo Freire (1997), that can help to create a problematizing educational environment.

Recommendation

The findings and literature offered in this study support a clear policy proposal that stresses the importance of stakeholders involved in national and institutional policies, which is emphasized in this final section of the thesis. Findings from this study reveal that autonomy and agency (for all stakeholders) play an important role in ensuring academic freedom and institutional autonomy in HEIs in both nations.

It is a sound public policy recommendation to reduce bureaucracy at the institutional level and provide students greater autonomy and time to complete tasks that encourage them to learn independently.

It has been said repeatedly that teachers require time to prepare, collaborate, and share their innovative practice, which is especially true in light of the research activities performed and evaluated in educational institutions.

Elitism and the belief that it will not be able to cope with the changes brought on by mass education have already sacrificed the Humboldtian ideal. As one of its objectives, the BP had the creation a Europe of knowledge to prepare citizens for democratic citizenship. This goal is in jeopardy because of the inevitable rise in bureaucracy that follows it. As well as being carried by it, however, in Weber's view, the bureaucratization of education after mass education violates the very nature of education. Allowing the democratic values of academic freedom to guide the process could help avoid this.

Creating infrastructure for students, teachers, and staff that includes materials, laboratories, and technical assistance (such as projectors, the internet, and other tools) is the current problem as we prepare to deal with the Emergency Remote Teaching situation.

To deal with the precarity of the HE system and make academic work more accessible, greater efforts must be made at the national level. According to the interviewees, there is a brain drain in both countries' public HEIs, with the majority coming from Hungary. This has ramifications, and it suggests that institutions should continue to investigate techniques for making the best use of academics' abilities and experience while also aiming to decrease their outflow.

Because autonomy and academic freedom are strongly associated with quality and vice versa, it was necessary to clarify how to ensure that all those involved in constructing the

university have equal access, achieve success in life, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the university collaboratively. Unpredictable, how can be the requirements of quality ensured in that Hungarian HE context, and policies are being implemented without consulting those who will be most affected by the transformations, in which operations such as financial, academic, and administrative processes were adversely affected.

Policy regarding social inclusion in reference to digitalization needs to also take into consideration a wide variety of challenges. These concerns go beyond the issue of unequal access to technology, also known as the "digital gap." Students who live in supportive learning environments benefit significantly more from online HE services than those who do not live in an environment favorable to learning.

Limitation of the study

This specific Ph.D. research reflects only the current cultural and political differences, such as a centralized HE system in Hungary and the decentralized HE system in Germany, which could be perceived as a limitation.

Additionally, the HE system in Germany is different, and each state has the autonomy to create its quality assurance, regulations, laws, and *Modus operandi*. However, in Hungary, the government centralized regulation, and HEIs follow the national demands, which affects the autonomy and system in general. The new demands on HE are felt and equated differently between countries due to the history of their education systems, organization, responsiveness, resource mobilization, and policy implementation.

Because the data for this study was gathered at only two universities, it is conceivable that the conclusions cannot be extended to all HEIs in Germany and Hungary because teaching techniques vary, as do operation and accessibility.

The implementation of university models in Hungary varied, e.g., the French, German and Soviet models, which might be a challenge to comprehend the mix of scientific structures enacted through the years. Another constraint was connected to the difficulties in data collection; we could not recruit as many participants from the German side as we would have liked. One of the factors limiting this investigation was the pandemic situation. Online recruitment and interviewing was a decision made due to urgent policy needs for this evidence, as well as for the health and security concerns during the lockdown in Hungary and Germany.

The scope of the study was further constrained by access to information about the quality document from the selected institutions, primarily because the document is not available at HUB and is only available at ELTE. To have a basis for comparison, documents chosen have a similar framework and procedure. Also noteworthy was the accessibility of the legal documents, which had to be translated into English before being appropriately analyzed.

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Institutional level - Humboldt University of Berlin

Constitution of the Humboldt-University of Berlin (Version of 28 June 2011)

Evaluation of Humboldt University of Berlin (2013)

Statute collection data thesis (2010)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Interview guide/script

Title: Attributes of Higher Education and Quality of institutional strategies in Hungary and Germany			
General goals: - Identify the concept of quality; -Identify the participation and experiences of the interviewee in the offer or the search for quality conditions in teaching/learning and institutional experiences (at the level of the services and institution infrastructures and the environments created). -Relate perceptions of quality and academic success -Establish relations between perceptions about the training and the institutional experience and the effects generated in the individual / in the people. -Categorize the value of the skills acquired throughout the training and the experience in the institution.			
Designation of blocks	Specific goals	Questions form	Comments
Introductory - Legitimation of the interview and interviewee motivation	-To legitimize the interview and motivate the interviewee	- To inform the interviewee, in general, the research work to be developed - Request the collaboration of the interviewee, claiming that their contribution is indispensable for the success of the work - To certify the interviewee of the confidentiality of his information - Request permission to cite, in full or small excerpts, his speech, while remaining anonymous.	
Quality Associated with professional expertise	- Characterize the concept of quality; -Identify quality characteristics associated with their work.	- Ask the interviewee to characterize the concept of quality; - Ask the interviewee to relate characteristics attributed to the concept of quality with situations experienced (examples of situations considered to be of quality and examples of situations that do not have quality)	
Expectations	- To know points of view about the type of	- Ask the interviewee to talk about their experiences	

<p>Associated with participation and institutional experiences</p>	<p>participation and institutional experiences in Higher Education; - Identify conditions that facilitate and/or obstruct the existence of quality in the higher education institution.</p>	<p>- Ask the interviewee to identify conditions that facilitate quality in Higher Education and obstacles/challenges to its implementation. Ask examples</p>	
<p>Initial formation Associated with quality and academic success</p>	<p>-Identify perceptions about the training that is being experienced in the teaching course; Relate quality perceptions and superior academic success.</p>	<p>- Ask the interviewee to characterize what is for her/him a quality training in university. - Ask to establish relationships between these quality characteristics and academic success - Ask the interviewee to comment on the impact they expect from hi/her work in people involved in the university.</p>	
<p>Capabilities Associated with the individual</p>	<p>- Knowing how the participants describes and appreciates quality as an integral part of their professional performance.</p>	<p>- Ask the interviewee to position themselves on a scale of 1-5 in relation to the acquired skills, explaining the reasons for their classification</p>	

Appendix 2. Informed consent form

Informed Consent and Description of Research (offline study)

You are to participate in a research coordinated by Carla Liege Rodrigues Pimenta (supervised by Dr Zoltán Rónay). The research is carried out by highly qualified psychologists/pedagogues and their assistants. The aim of this study is identifying the quality experiences in the Higher Education Institution and the data collected will be added to the data at the meso level (institutions) and at the macro-level (supranational and national policies), seeking to combine all the data to identify the consequences of these processes on individuals and systems. Participation is utterly **voluntary and anonymous**. It is possible to suspend participation so that it should not be tiresome. It is also possible to terminate participation at any time and to decline from answering questions without having to give reasons for this. Monetary compensation is **not due** for participation.

During the study the participant will be requested to reflect about their concept of quality, participation and experiences of the interviewee in the offer or the search for quality conditions in teaching/learning and institutional experiences (at the level of the services and institution infrastructures and the environments created), which will last for about 30-45 minutes. The results of this study will later be used in publications and will also be presented at scientific conferences. If requested, written or verbal information will be provided on these events.

All information collected during this research will be handled strictly confidentially. Data obtained during the research is stored as a coded information in a secured computer and paper-based material (e.g. questionnaires) is kept in a locked chest also in a coded format.

No medical or laboratory report will be prepared about the results of the study. Verbal account can be provided about the findings upon request.

Please sign the agreement below if you agree with the conditions outlined above and endorse participation in the study. We thank you for your collaboration.

I..... (undersigned) declare that I was given thorough information regarding the circumstances of my participation in the present research. I agree with the conditions and to participate in the study. I also give my consent to use the anonymized data collected during this process so that these may be accessible to other researchers. I reserve the right to terminate my participation at any time in which case the data belonging to my person should be erased.

I am not (and have not been) treated for any kind of neurological or mental disease.

Budapest,.....

date

signature

Informed Consent and Description of Research (online study)

You are to participate in research coordinated by Carla Liege Rodrigues Pimenta (supervised by Dr Zoltán Rónay). The research is carried out by highly qualified psychologists/pedagogues and their assistants. The aim of this study is identifying the quality experiences in the Higher Education Institution and the data collected will be added to the data at the meso level (institutions) and at the macro-level (supranational and national policies), seeking to combine all the data to identify the consequences of these processes on individuals and on systems.

Participation is utterly **voluntary**. It is possible to suspend participation so that it should not be tiresome. It is also possible to terminate participation at any time and to decline from answering questions without having to give reasons for this. Monetary compensation is **not due** for participation.

During the study the participant will be requested to reflect about their concept of quality, participation and experiences of the interviewee in the offer or the search for quality conditions in teaching/learning and institutional experiences (at the level of the services and institution infrastructures and the environments created), which will last for about 30- 45minutes. The results of this study will later be used in publications and will also be presented at scientific conferences. If requested, written or verbal information will be provided on these events.

Data will be collected anonymously during the study and no other personal data will be obtained either.

All information collected during the research process will be handled strictly confidentially. Data obtained during the research is stored as a coded information in a secured computer and paper-based material (e.g. questionnaires) is kept in a locked chest also in a coded format. The individual codes are provided by the assistant in charge, and these are accessible and known only to her/him. Data of the research are analyzed statistically during which no personal identification is possible.

No medical or laboratory report will be prepared about the results of the study.

I am not (and have not been) treated for any kind of neurological or mental disease.

By proceeding you agree that data collected on your person - which cannot be identified as those belonging to your person - may be used for research purposes and that these will be accessible to other researchers.

I reserve the right to terminate my participation at any time in which case the data belonging to my person should be erased.

I declare that I am over 18 years of age. I have received full detailed information concerning the conditions of my participation of the study. I agree with these conditions and I am willing to participate.

yes

no

Appendix 3: Dimension quality – interviews: Extracted from NVivo 12 project

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - External 1>](#) - § 2 references coded [24.26% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.63% Coverage

quality is something that has a high value in a sense, but the value comes not from the item itself but from, for example, what's behind it, like the work that gets into it, the thought that gets into it, like the process to produce something. For example, you have, I don't know like some kind of say your computer right, like if you have a high-quality computer, then all the parts are made really carefully, and not rushed, so you have like a development process behind it, then you put the parts together so you like research how like good well they work together so in almost like thinking that goes into it, the work, and then the actual product itself. So the whole process I think that makes quality, but the product itself, in the end, is of high value, but it's not a matter of not necessarily monetary value, because something can be of quality, even though it's like in the capitalist sense not like it doesn't have market value, it could still be of quality, like when you talk about objects and like products I would say, and then quality in.

Reference 2 - 11.63% Coverage

For example, in universities, what we look for example is that you look at, you want to have the quality of for example the format like the future teachers you want to have a high quality so you like make sure that the variation of topics that they're taught is wide, that they're, like, going deep into it, like you are a math teacher for first grade, you obviously don't need to do, I don't know to be numeric stuff with them, but you only need to do like one plus one and stuff like that but a quality teacher like knows way more than they're ever going to teach. And then that combined was, for example, the methods they know, like, how they teach, all that stuff like that goes all the way to it, so that makes like a quality teacher for example. So, so like, this is like how I would say it's like different delivery from a product because if there's no like certain market value, but it's still a certain type of quality that you can evaluate to a certain extent.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - External 2>](#) - § 2 references coded [6.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.56% Coverage

Quality in research for me is research and education is that the research education can be conducted freely and anonymously, that it is publicly funded. That gives the right to this equality, but it is assured by law. I am thinking about it more precisely, and this is really a philosophical question.

Reference 2 - 4.54% Coverage

In terms of quality, I had a good career as I like my education, I think it was really for quality I have the possibility studied German History and Italian. And I had the possibility to develop my

skills, my interests freely. In Germany, you can choose the subject, but then you can choose the courses on your own. So I think you can kind of freely structure your studies. I think this is an advantage and you have the possibility to get practical experience in my field in History, for example, I could work with books and papers from medieval times and study really be originals. I studied in Munich. I had a lot of excellent equipment and libraries around me. And I had supportive Professors who just showed me the right direction which I could then go on my own and develop my own strategies, goals, and ideas, always with the guided and right measurement of supervision.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - Staff 1>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.82% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.82% Coverage

The quality request includes so many aspects. Well, if I tried to bring it down means for me that it is, says this successful implementation or completion of tasks strategies efficiently and reliably, that is a very basic definition, better when it comes to my point of view

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - teacher 1>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.38% Coverage

I would define quality as an attribute of an item that describes, more or less, a relation towards an objective of this item. I have an objective with something, and the quality described somehow in how far this is met. This can be in terms of quality in a non-numerous, but it can also be numeric. That's why I think quantity is part of quality and the universal more quality is much, much bigger than the universe of quantity.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - teacher 2>](#) - § 2 references coded [1.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

I can't give you a definition. In general, I think it depends on the area to which you want to apply. Because quality is always the judgment. And then you need to know what to judge who is involved in the process and whatever.

Reference 2 - 0.54% Coverage

I guess it should be of good quality, something that I don't know, fits my interests and my desires, and whatever I want to do with the thing

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - teacher 3>](#) - § 2 references coded [6.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.01% Coverage

I think my notion of quality depends on whether we speak about quality in research or quality in teaching, or I do not know, for example, the quality of the support received from an institution. I think there are different forms of quality or different ideas of quality in different academic realms, sort speaking and teaching and research and administration and so on, and so my first thought is that we would have to specify, like, whether we're talking about research or teaching or administration to give a clearer idea of what quality is.

Reference 2 - 3.35% Coverage

I think, I mean, generally speaking, I think of quality as a script. There is a label or a judgment that is made by someone, for example, by politics that want to fund high-quality research, or by students that are supposed to judge high-quality teaching, or by my university that would like to fund me if I'm doing high-quality research. So, I think, in Germany, like for the German-speaking for the German higher education system, I think the quality is a label that is used in different discourses and by different participants when they want to describe something to research or teaching for example,

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE - teacher 4>](#) - § 3 references coded [4.46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.52% Coverage

it's something that you at the end of a process you decided this process went fine. Or if you have a product that the purpose and lasts long and doesn't. Well, last longer than a few days are fit for purpose and for art, or films that would be that there's something new or interesting about this, but let's think about it, You recognize that we put some effort in there making an offer.

Reference 2 - 1.52% Coverage

Well, I'd say from a student's perspective or a graduated perspective, it's kind of, you can assess the students who study. So you have the infrastructure, you have the courses you need. You have the materials you need, good curricula, and teachers that are supportive and well trained. And from an expert perspective as a graduate, you can have good chances in the labor market.

Reference 3 - 1.42% Coverage

I think, well, my quality is assessed by evaluation. But I think for myself quality is, if I did learn something from it, and not just the content of the seminar, is also something transferable for simply presenting skills, organizing skills, text analysis skills, things that they can use, regardless of the content of seminar that would be a sign of quality.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE- Staff 2>](#) - § 2 references coded [7.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.25% Coverage

Yeah. Quality is that a certain goal is to reach that the measures you will implement will have the necessary and wished results. It's about the comparison that in comparison to other, let's say, ordinary performances is a bit better than the average. Somehow that way.

Reference 2 - 6.14% Coverage

quality is achieved, or goals are achieved if students are a consultant and administrate completely if there are no questions left if they are prepared for any intercultural situation on the homeland, or maybe the guest land sorry, or the guest university. And if there are no locks in the administration process, if they are well informed, know how to solve problems, where to apply to. If something's wrong, they need help. That's the exchange column. The other column is strategy and politics. So here, our quality is secure the goals achieved, if we are already able to include stakeholders, let's say from my policies from the International, the foreign ministry, that's what I meant Foreign Ministry funding organizations like the DAAD. They are involved, if we can get external expertise for some questions we need if we contact with embassies, for instance of other countries is successful if you have the intercultural competence to answer in the right tone. And to some extent, to get what we want from them. And this is politics and another quality for in the strategy if this strategy fits not only for the university, the international strategy that is, if it's too for the university, as but for the individual researchers too, so the strategy has to be useful for both sides, the institution and the individuals.

[<Files\\Micro_level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE- Staff 3>](#) - § 3 references coded [5.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.07% Coverage

I guess it depends on what. So you can have a quality of teaching, quality of the infrastructure, quality of life inside the institution. So it will be quite difficult to describe all of them, in which sense was the quality, which was the human quality.

Reference 2 - 2.24% Coverage

the point is if I tried to make like an average of all the qualities that I already said. It was quite difficult because if I think if someone has been, like let's say in this case study is to study in different universities, then one cannot judge the quality because it has no comparison. But if I can compare, for example, the two German universities. So one that I studied my master's degree, and the Humboldt that I'm working now, then they are of the same quality. I don't know how good or how bad they are in terms of quality.

Reference 3 - 2.68% Coverage

I guess the problem is hard to say because quality is a little bit philosophical. So, the signification of the concept has not been described yet. So, it wouldn't be at that kind of vague to say but. And now I will compare, for example, for in general all these three quality parameters or four quality parameters. I will compare German higher education to Mexican higher education. I'm talking

about the mean of all this sort of quality of the building, quality of teaching quality of life during your studies. I would say that, on average, the quality of German institutions in comparison to the Mexican one is just slightly better.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE student 1>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.61% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.61% Coverage

quality should be a combination of a couple of factors. And the first one is for sure how professional your professors are, and the amount of knowledge in their discipline, which they have. This is the first thing that comes to my mind about quality in university, because, you know, we go to university to educate ourselves. And first, maybe the person whom we need to consider as an educational resource is the professor. And I think in this case, the first one, I could say, the quality of instructors in Germany and the professors at the universities, and yeah, I mean, that's the first label, which is very great. According to my experience in Germany, the professors are really very, they have very high standards in their explains, and what they teach, they are already masters in that, or over much over than masters in the same thing is for sure, their library, where we have to do our researches and get the books, and maybe we'll be benefited from the atmosphere of the university. And at the same time, this atmosphere which is transformed or transferred from the university itself to that library, and in the libraries, we find, actually so many great references about everything single detail. I mean, now in my explain in political science or social sciences. I can find almost everything I need for sure. It depends on the language, but I mean English and German. In the first place, even I can find some Arabic books. And that's great.

[<Files\\Micro level\\Interviews\\Germany\\GE student 2>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.54% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.54% Coverage

I saw which was a question, and those are the big questions it seems like quality. Okay, so maybe thinking about it. I think the quality is the things we study are up to date or are reflecting while taking in the current state of the art within as a field, and they have maybe transmitted us to us within our studies, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher who is motivated, didactical, capable of respecting current needs of the student body, good researchers nowadays probably they respect the identity specialties of the students and consider them. It's a simple point, but nowadays, people want them to address them with the correct pronouns and things like this. I think this main card of good quality teaching when you were respecting this. Maybe this state of the art. I think that's even there for this perspective.