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*IV ENIUGH Congress "Encounters, Circulations and Conflicts": Higher Education.* European Network in Universal and Global History, Labex TransferS Paris, 04.09.2015—07.09.2015.

**Reviewed by** Claudia Baumann

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## IV ENIUGH Congress "Encounters, Circulations and Conflicts": Higher Education

Historiographies of higher education have long focused on individual institutions and are typically characterized by a narrow geographic and temporal scope. Wolfgang E. J. Weber, Geschichte der europÃ¤ischen UniversitÃ¤t, Stuttgart 2002, p 9. Walter RÃ¼egg, who orchestrated a comparative study of European universities spanning four volumes over twenty years, stated that the first volume was of little difficulty to produce since medieval studies have always employed a European perspective. Walter RÃ¼egg, Geschichte der UniversitÃ¤t in Europa: Band IV, Vom Zweiten Weltkrieg bis zum Ende des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, MÃ¼nchen 2010, p. 13. The other three volumes, he conceded, had to be limited to the history of science and disciplines as the other topics that existed, however abundant, were too local and too national to be considered for the study. While Rothblatt and Wittrock noted the fluid character of educational and philosophical concepts in their study, the congruence of academic cultures and national frameworks remained a constant presence in their comparison of European and US higher education systems. Sheldon Rothblatt / BjÃ¶rn Wittrock, The European and American University since 1800. Historical and Sociological Essays, Cambridge 1993. This challenge of how to transcend borders in constructing a history of higher education has gained momentum over the last twenty years against the backdrop of developments in global history in general and the so-called âglobal knowledge societyâ in particular.

In that vein, the panel on âContemporary and Historical Higher Education Regionsâ emphasized historical perspectives as a means to explain todayâs phenomena in tertiary education. The European Higher Education Area was described as a regional and border-transcending project that echoes a similar form of university networks from the time of Erasmus of Rotterdam. It was further argued that the region played a significant role for wandering scholars in several different eras and that it was not confined to Europe. There was, for example, Xuanzang who travelled through what is today China and India in the 5th century or the scholars who travelled back and forth across the Red Sea in the Aksum Kingdom.

Branching out to non-European and non-North American contexts to research historical and transnational perspectives in higher education is still a novelty, as it was long unquestioned that universities are a distinctly European invention. In his path-breaking narrative on the 19th century from a global perspective, Osterhammel hinted at the existence of âpowerful institutionsâ such as monasteries, higher schools, or academies in âother civilizations such as the Chinese and Islamic where scholars met informallyâ. JÃ¼rgen Osterhammel, Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, MÃ¼nchen 2009, p. 1132.

[5] Yojana Sharma, Indiaâs Ancient University Returns to Life, BBC, [accessed 20 July 2014], `http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22160989`. It is increasingly acknowledged not only in academia but also in a wider interested public that

these ancient seats of learning might have been institutions that were every bit as formal as their counterparts in Europe. The BBC, for example, in 2013 called Nalanda (in northeast India) a university Routes of Knowledge: The Global History of UNESCO, 1945-75, [accessed October 2014], http://www.unesco.aau.dk. , which until recently would have been unthinkable. This awareness that centres of knowledge production have previously existed in different places resonates within the circles of educationalists and historians.

It was therefore of great benefit that Kenneth Omeje focused at the congress on a region that is still all too often neglected in the studies of the history of higher education. He explored the role of university education in fostering peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, northern Uganda, Nigeria, and South Sudan by describing how peace promoting programmes with students from different backgrounds, whose curriculums include courses examining the recent and ancient past in conflict-ridden regions, could be a great benefit. He pointed out, however, that the curriculum design for such a transnational encounter in the classroom is no easy feat. The transnational regional dimension in higher education was also highlighted by Scott Schorr, who took a closer look at the transatlantic network by studying the circulation of patents, people, and policies and their transfer from places of study to places of commercial production, distribution, and consumption. His project investigated knowledge transfers from a quantitative perspective, as a result of which the data was visualized with the help of special software designed for this purpose.

Higher education history has recently been set in faster motion. The publication *Universities for a New World: Making a Global Network in International Higher Education, 1913â2013* reconstructs the history of âthe first and oldest global association of universitiesâ. The Association of Commonwealth Universities is depicted as the âmost capable of all the Commonwealthâs independent civil-society organizationsâ, which coincides with a new Commonwealth-wide interest in tertiary education and with a review of the role and future of the Commonwealth in 2011. History in higher education is interpreted anew, during which transnational and global aspects are occasionally retroactively added. At a time when competition in higher education âespecially in the anglophone realm â becomes increasingly stiff, reinforcing cohesion among the Commonwealth universities seems to have become a strategy. Appealing to history as a source of legitimation appears to be a pillar of this process.

In the panel âApproaches to Global History in France and Germany: Differences, Parallels and Misunderstandingsâ, it was concluded that history of the counterpart of the Association of Commonwealth Universities â the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) â has yet to be told. The AUF looks back on nearly 50 years of promoting francophone study programmes, especially in the field of the French language. It has a widespread network of regional offices all over the world, and with â¬40 million possesses a relatively small but still quite effective budget to finance the mobility of students and researchers. Due to its central character, the AUF might have had just as much an impact on higher education as the ACU, but for now there is little interest in conceptualizing the French institution historically. A large part of the explanation to this observation is the fact that the AUF is meant to be an agency that mainly promotes the learning of the French language and not one that addresses transnational challenges in higher education. Just as Francophonie stands for cultural diversity and the fight against a perceived dominance of the English language, so too does the AUF. The focus lay and still lies on education rather than higher education, an observation that was also made at the ENIUGH congress.

An example of this focus were the panels: âEducational Media and the Cold War: Civil Society, International Organizations, and Nation-statesâ, âConnecting Histories of Education: Colonial, National and International Trajectoriesâ, and âLes internationales de lâÃ©ducation: Acteurs, initiatives, impacts, 1919â1939â. Two aspects might help to understand this concentration: Firstly, education and schooling expanded throughout societies in the 19th century when it started to be seen as means of freeing men from the grip of religious authority, much earlier than higher education, which became accessible only during its expansion in the 1950s to 1970s. Second, education has always been an arena of ideological conflict used to steer the masses in certain directions, whereas higher education was perceived largely as an elitist project relevant for just a few.

Higher education is thus a fledgling topic in both the history of globalization and the ENIUGH congress. Whereas research on higher education is strongly represented in the discipline of sociology through empirical and methodological examinations of student cohorts, organizational structure, and teaching, the historical perspective could and should be strengthened. It remains to be seen however if the community of scholars interested in global history (and they are not âjustâ historians) is also interested in the ideas and results that higher educa-

tion historiography can contribute to the discussion.

At the Dresden conference in 2008, higher education (or any type of education) was not included as a topic. At the London conference three years ago, the topic popped up in a few panels and one panel even dealt with it as the main subject (âHigher Forms of Education and their Construction, Development and Diffusion of Useful and Reliable Knowledge in the East and the West Before the Industrial Revolutionâ). At this congress, there was one panel entirely dedicated to the topic. One can thus reasonably presume that there is a slowly but steadily growing interest in higher education history from a global perspective.

The history of science and the even broader history of knowledge, by contrast, seem to be better integrated. Casper Andersen from the University of Aarhus, for example, contributed valuably to the panel of âThe Global History of UNESCOâ by analysing the birth of the union of international engineering organizations. The panel presented results of a five-year research project (to which Andersen is associated) on the impact of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on âthe mindsets of the first generation after World War II (1945â75) and to get an impression of the way in which globalization works in practice.â[7] Another example is the presentation of Michaela Hampf from the Freie UniversitÃ¤t Berlin in the panel âBiopolitics and Visual Materialsâ Circulation: A Global Exchange, 1900â1955â that dealt with knowledge production through visual materials. She showed how a transnational network of scientists in Europe and the United States debated about the direction eugenics should take (âEugenic Photography: Evidence, Excess and Archivesâ).

The history of science and knowledge production is, however, often characterized by a Western bias. Discussions about origins and concepts are highly political and often emotional, challenging imaginaries that once were taken for granted. Education and especially higher education offer the potential to understand âtransnationalâ and âglobalâ in both historical and contemporary contexts by acknowledging different epistemologies in the world and embracing academic exchange between them.

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