

Access to the Greek University

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Abstract

In this paper, the issue of *access to HEIs* is treated from a different perspective. We describe it from the point of view of the Higher Education Institutions referring, particularly, to the Greek University. We lay emphasis on three elements, which seem to be threaded together into the concept of access: level, selection processes, population. Therefore, in the course of this study, we have set out to examine the scope as well as the means used for the implementation of policies regarding *access to HEIs*, in the context of Greece's participation in the EU. Furthermore, we have attempted to identify the potential points of access in the Greek University and highlight the Greek singularities in this matter. Finally, we are interested in exploring the impact of *access policies*, or at least, in the context of this paper, the levels, the *loci* of that impact in the Greek University.

Mots clés

Greece, University, Selection Process, Europeanisation, Access Policy.

Introduction

The Council of Europe was definitely one of the first and probably the only International Organization, which suggested a concrete definition of the term *access to Higher Education Institutions* (HEIs). In 1997, the Convention on Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) defined *access to Higher Education* as “*the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education*” (<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm> retrieved June 17, 2014). A year later, in 1998, the Council of Europe, in the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to the Member States *on Access to Higher Education*, described *access policy*¹ as one “*that aims both at the widening of participation in higher education to all sections of society, and at ensuring that this participation is effective (that is, in conditions which ensure that personal effort will lead to successful completion)*”.

The OECD policy documents seem to lack a specific definition of *access to Higher Education Institutions* (HEIs). The term *entry rates* is used interchangeably with *access to University level education* to “*represent the proportion of people of a synthetic age-cohort who enter the tertiary level of education, irrespective of changes in the population sizes and of differences between OECD countries in the typical starting age of tertiary education*” (<http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/search.asp>, retrieved June 17, 2014). The European Union (EU) has also avoided describing *access to HEIs per se*. Instead it has favored the definition of a broader term, adapted by UNESCO (1995), describing *access to education and training* as: “*Conditions, circumstances or*

¹ In both documents, the term *admission* was described as: “*The act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme*” (<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm>, retrieved June 17, 2014).

requirements (e.g. qualification, education level, competences or work experience, etc.) governing admittance to educational institutions or programmes” (CEDEFOP 2008: 13). The Ministers of Education, participating in the Bologna Process, in their Communique, in 2007, in London, agreed that “*the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations”* and emphasized that “*students [should be] able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background”* emphasizing the goals and objectives of the social dimension that have been defined within the Bologna process.

Indeed, the term *access to HEIs*, seems to be used, by most people, to describe *entry to HEIs*. A term, which refers to the transition of pupils from Upper Secondary Education to Higher Education by a process which is, more or less, regulated by the State. To a lesser extent, *access to HEIs* is also used to refer to study programmes, i.e. Master Programmes involving adults and/or graduates, with no references made to research. This approach, evidently, has a sociological origin -the study of inequalities in *access to Higher Education*, social (re)production, production of social disparities etc. It is related to the demand concerning the massification of HE, especially in the context of a national, formal, education system comprising three consecutive levels. However, what seems to be implied by the use of the term in everyday parlance does not fully correspond to the range of definitions that might be attributed to access, especially in the case of adopting a different point of view. Accordingly, the use of the term requires coherent interpretation and explicit description in what concerns, what are, each time, considered to be, its constituent elements. In this paper, from the point of view of HEIs –and as far as the case of Greece is concerned- the term *access to HEIs* is used to

describe the potential of qualified candidates² to apply and be considered for admission³ to all educational activities⁴ offered and/or research carried out by HEIs, Departments, Faculty Members⁵ (FMs), individually or in collaboration with others, leading to formal accreditation by the host Institution (certification, degree etc.). The particular description, beyond the contemporary use of the term, emphasizes three elements -level, population and processes of selection- which have been found to lie at the phenomenon's core, through the examination of the recent relevant developments in Greek HEIs in relation to access.

Particularly, a HE Department in Greece (e.g. the Department of Primary Education) does no longer comprise one, undergraduate, programme of studies leading to a Bachelor degree. The programmes of studies offered, address different levels of education (undergraduate, postgraduate) and/or training and may be organized by an individual Faculty Member (FM), on an interdepartmental basis, or even by a partnership of different HEIs, nationally or internationally. The same occurs as far as research is concerned. Individual FMs, Departments, and HEIs formulating international project partnerships, take part in various research projects, funded by public and/or private organizations, national, subnational and/or supranational. Accordingly, *access to HEIs* has been enriched in terms of the population involved: On the one hand, the *users/consumers⁶* of HEI's services, who pursue dissimilar goals and,

² Irrespective of their age, gender, nationality etc.

³ Either to use and/or consume educational services at all levels or seek employment opportunities following differentiated selection processes and entry requirements.

⁴ Irrespective of their level (graduate, postgraduate, further education programmes of studies, training seminars or other educational activities).

⁵ Meli DEP in Greek.

⁶ Students, trainees, etc.

definitely, maintain differentiated educational needs, vary in age, ethnicity, gender etc. On the other hand, a job-market has been formulated concerning individuals who seek out employment opportunities as educators, researchers, programme managers etc. (Stamelos et Vassilopoulos 2004; Stamelos et Karanatsis, 2002). Finally, the processes of selection and entry requirements along with the agents/actors responsible for them have been differentiated, in relation to the past, according to the programme and/or activity.

Obviously, in this paper, the interest lies, mainly, in the scope, means of implementation and, finally, impact of (supranational) policies regarding the matter of *access to HE*, and the Greek University, in particular. Therefore, in the course of this study we have set out to examine the scope as well as the means⁷ used for the implementation of policies regarding *access to HEIs* and, unquestionably, identify the potential points of access, particularly, in the Greek University. We are, specifically, interested in exploring the role of the European Union (EU) in the formulation and implementation of policies regarding *access to HEIs*⁸ and in underlining the singularities of Greek policies on the matter. Finally, we mean to discuss their impact on the Greek University, especially, under today's conditions.

⁷ Much of the discussion on the matter will be drawn from the literature on policy transfer (Benson et Jordan 2011; Stone, 2004, 2000, 1999; Dolowitz et Marsh, 1996).

⁸ Greece has a member of what was then called the European Economic Community (EEC), since 1981 (http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/greece/index_el.htm, 07-09-14).

Access to HEIs as a policy priority

Europeanization, this vast political unification project (Bulmer et Padgett, 2004), has enlarged proportionally during the last 20 years –especially after the Maastricht Treaty and the launch of the Lisbon Process. Hence, policies⁹, which have been mutually agreed upon, may influence political decisions at the national level in areas which were considered to be a taboo until most recently –i.e. what was described as a national education system (Asderaki 2009; Vassilopoulos 2012; Stamelos, Vassilopoulos and Bartzakli, 2012). Bearing this in mind, in this part of the paper, the main objective is to highlight the reasons for which *access to HEIs* has become an integral political issue amongst the EU Member States¹⁰ and identify the trigger for this shift along with its target group. In parallel, we are interested in the process of implementation and application of this policy initiative amongst the member states and the changes, which may have been induced after the introduction of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Surely, the identification of the primary players, at least at the institutional level, is also a concern, whether that is situated at the European or at the national level.

⁹ The EU Member States, formulating their commonly agreed policies, take into account a wider exchange of ideas taking place globally, *international pressures* as Keeling, 2006 (pp. 203), put it. The OECD, World Bank and the Council of Europe are other key players in this process. We cannot describe this process, in the context of this paper, nor does this belong to our interests anyway. However, and as far as the study is concerned, especially, in the EU Member States and the University the EU and the process of Bologna should have the leading role (Keeling 2006; Tsaoussis, 1995).

¹⁰ The Lisbon Process signaled the unification of all actions and initiatives originating from different directions addressing various categories of the population. Such a case is the Process of Bologna. Especially in what concerns the University, and *HEIs* in general, policies developing at the level of Bologna are supported and complemented, at the EU level, by the Commission (Pepin 2006). In fact, Keeling (2006: 203) argues on the matter, that *the Commission dominates the Higher Education discourse in Europe, since its dynamic association of the Bologna university reforms with its Lisbon research agenda and its successful appropriation of these as European-level issues have placed its perspectives firmly at the heart of higher education policy debates in Europe.*

In relation to the first, *access to the HEIs* has become an implicit and/or explicit policy priority, at the European level, in order to basically serve the primary objective of the EU regarding the competitiveness of its economy. *Access to HEIs* facilitated, the free movement¹¹ of people, a major prerequisite in establishing a common market within the EU¹² –as stipulated in the Treaty of Rome. In addition, the establishment of an “*internal research market*”¹³, a central dimension of the European Research Area (ERA), has been one of the Union’s main objectives in terms of developing the quantity and quality of human resources in the areas of Research and Development (R&D) and ultimately, the enhancement of competition in an ever more globalized economy (Commission of European Communities, 2000).

As far as the second question is concerned, one may notice that initially, the EU used direct and, probably, more coercive methods in order to enforce its policy concerning *access to HEIs* in the Member States –European Court of Justice Judgments, Regulations and Directives on the part of the Commission, and Council resolutions.

¹¹ The cornerstones of the single market are often said to be the “four freedoms” – the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. These freedoms are enshrined in the EC Treaty and form the basis of the single market framework (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/top_layer/index_en.htm, retrieved March 14, 2014).

¹² Today, various references to the “*knowledge society*”, technological achievements and the changes in production in combination with the changes in labor synthesis in Europe accompanied almost every reform concerning *access to the University*. In Brussels they are also concerned with the fact that large proportions of the population, for example women, are left unemployed in a period when it is Europe’s duty to exploit all possible human resources. In any case, those references emphasize the vital role that HEIs may play in renewing and upgrading vocational qualifications of existing labor via continuing (vocational) education and training as well as enriching the qualifications of new labor entering the market via initial education and training. From then on, actions aiming to facilitate student mobility, language acquisition, together with every similar coordinated effort, serve the promotion of the European Dimension amongst the other member states and eventually, Europe’s goal regarding its political unification.

¹³ In which the free movement of researchers amongst European Universities will be endorsed (Commission of European Communities 2002; Commission of European Communities 2007).

However, after 2000, the adoption of the OMC¹⁴ led to, seemingly, at least, more voluntary methods for promoting policy initiatives, which seem to be mutually agreed upon in Brussels¹⁵. Funding, on the other hand, has always been a primary medium that the Union has used in order to promote and apply its agenda among the member states.

In particular, ever since 1957, the need to enhance the free movement of people in order to establish a common market has been evident¹⁶. As far as the role of education is concerned, the European institutions adopted a slow but, judging from the results, successful and strategy towards this end:

¹⁴ Particularly, the OMC seeks to underpin the process of reform and change, with its success being largely dependent on the determination shown by the Member States in putting it into practice at national level (Pepin, 2006, Veiga et Amaral, 2006). The OMC provides a new framework for cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this intergovernmental method, the Member States are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice play virtually no part in the OMC process (http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm, retrieved April 24, 2014). In a nutshell, ever since 2000, within the OMC, the European Council – that is a European inter-governmental institution – decides on either policies and/or policy priorities incorporating schools at the level of compulsory education and the Commission – a supra-national institution – monitors and reports on the level of implementation of these policies on the part of the Member States while the other European Institutions – the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice etc. – also retain their own special role in this process. The OMC provides a new framework for cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this intergovernmental method, the Member States are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice play virtually no part in the OMC process. The Open Method of Coordination takes place in areas, which fall within the competence of the Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, youth and training. It is based principally on: i. jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council); jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines); benchmarking, i.e. comparison of the Member States' performance and exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission) (www.europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/open_method_coordination_el.htm, retrieved April 2, 2014).

¹⁵ To put it in a simplistic manner, the commonly agreed, at European level, strategies regarding LLL – that is also education at the Primary level – have been transformed – through the OMC – into national goals being implemented in a very tight monitoring context.

¹⁶ Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community.

- They managed, initially, through the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to extend EU jurisdiction to vocational education¹⁷ (Judgment of the Court of 3rd July 1974, the Casagrande doctrine).
- They then established its equivalence with University education (1983, 1986, Gravier & Blaizot Judgments¹⁸ respectively).
- Some years later, on that firm basis, the Commission launched the Commet I & II programmes (Council Decisions 86/365 and 89/27 respectively) and the Erasmus Programme (Council Decision 87/327) exerting direct policy regarding the University, which was acknowledged as a vocational education institution. To the same end, the Commission issued Directives 89/48, 92/51 regarding the formulation of a general system for the recognition of HE diplomas awarded on completion of vocational education and training of at least three years' duration.
- Finally, the Commission presented and explained the position of the EU on issues regarding the role of Higher Education in the Memorandum on Higher Education in 1991¹⁹ resulting in the foundation of the European Education

¹⁷ In 1974, the European Court of Justice ruled that the prohibitions against discrimination covered by the European Communities' treaties extended to persons in the education system. Thus, the children of migrant workers should gain access to education (and provisions therefore) on the same basis as host country nationals. Respectively, the court's interpretation included not only access, but also general measures intended to facilitate educational attendance (paragraph 9).

¹⁸ Gravier Case 293/83 Gravier v City of Liège [1985] ECR 593,

Blaizot Case 24/86 Blaizot v University of Liège [1988] ECR 379

¹⁹ This memorandum presents and explains the position of the Commission of the European Communities on issues of HE. In establishing the context for the memorandum it notes population and labor market changes. This memorandum identifies a series of actions, which could be taken and raises a wide agenda of issues, which argue for a stronger European dimension in planning and functioning than had previously existed in HE. It also identifies the Commission's role as a catalyst and facilitator of cooperative and common action in accordance with the principle of subsidiary and respecting a diversity of provision. Critical areas discussed include participation in and access to higher education, partnership with economic life, continuing education, open and distance education, and the European Community dimension. The contours of the European dimension are defined and include student mobility, cooperation between institutions, Europe in the curriculum, the central importance of language, the

Policy, which became official with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 highlighting *access to HE* as a concrete objective and ambition of EU policy.

After 1992, the EEC financed *access to University*.

- Especially, in what concerns education and training it funded a series of Programmes²⁰ and Initiatives, which included exchanges of students, educators and/or instructors (Commission of European Communities 2001). In addition it facilitated the development of international cooperation between both Member and non-Member States. (Leonardo, Socrates, Erasmus, Tempus, Alban, Alfa programmes, etc.),
- During the same period of time, it also funded five-year Research Framework Programmes (FPs 6th & 7th).
- Funding through the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Fund for Structural Development (EFSD) were (and still are) of vital importance referring, mainly, to informal vocational education and training where State recognition of diplomas does not constitute a primary concern.

Finally, after 2000, Lisbon's Strategy altered both the content and implementation of European policies in relation to education and training regarding, specifically, *access* in a crucial manner²¹. With the introduction of the new, Open Method of Coordination

training of teachers, recognition of qualifications and periods of study, the international role of higher education, information and policy analysis, and dialogue with the higher education sector.

²⁰ The official declaration of an EU Programme constitutes a Council Decision. This, therefore, renders it obligatory as far as its implementation is concerned. Moreover, their central coordination is the responsibility of the Commission and its designated delegates in each member state, meaning that nation States are limited to the role of an observer, regarding their implementation. Accordingly, the Union collaborates, directly, with educational bodies and institutions, i.e., the University, at all levels promoting its policies.

²¹ At Lisbon, in March 2000, education saw the development of Community coordinated strategies for greater convergence of national policies (through the Education and Training 2010 programme) with employment (through the European Employment Strategy, ESA) and the economy (through the Broad

(OMC), European cooperation in areas related to vocational education, training and research in the Member States was fundamentally changed. OMC allowed for the formulation of a compact, a solid policy framework in sensitive areas –like education– without negatively impacting national interests²². On that basis, the Programme²³ Education and Training 2010 operated as an umbrella programme under which either national or, mainly, European level initiatives were developed aiming, primarily, to enhance and facilitate access to education and training. In parallel, *access to University* at the levels of both education and research continues to receive funding with the introduction of a new series of Programmes from 2000 to 2006 (Leonardo, Socrates Programmes, etc.), the launch of Life Long Learning Programme (for the period from 2007 to 2013) and the Structural Funds.

Access points to the Greek University

Access points to the Greek University, in the context of the country's participation in the EU, got multiplied, at least at the level of legislative provisions, from the moment that the Greek State provided FMs, acting as members of their Institution, individually

Economic Policy Guidelines, BPEGs). Accordingly, European education and training systems gained a new pivotal role in what concerns the renewed prosperity of the EU. What is more, the desire concerning the formulation of the European Life Long Learning (LLL) area in conjunction with the OMC provided the Council with both the context and the tools to design policies involving all institutions of both (vocational) education and training in the Member States at all levels – including compulsory education – not to mention all types of learning activities – formal, non formal and informal.

²² In other words, according to the process of Lisbon and OMC, the mutually agreed educational goals become national objectives which are closely monitored (Commission of the European Communities 2005: 8-9)

²³ Program E-T 2010 is not an EU programme in the same sense as Socrates and Leonardo are. The EU doesn't directly fund it and nor are the initiatives negotiated amongst the involved bodies. On the contrary, the implementation of the process of OMC allows the member states to be present at all stages of its implementation.

and/or collectively²⁴, with the potential to develop study programmes²⁵ and carry out research projects on the basis of funding originating from both public and/or private bodies found at all national, supranational and subnational levels, mainly the EU directly (e.g. LLL Programme) or indirectly (the Structural Funds). In addition, entry to the University grew in numbers, on the basis of initiatives taken by the Greek Governments. Subsequently, access to the Greek University became differentiated in terms of level, selection processes and population.

Levels of access to the Greek University

There are currently two main access points, to the Greek University: study programmes and research.

In what concerns the second, Laws 1268/1982, 1514/1985, 2081/1992, 2083/1992, 2919/2001, 3653/2008 constitute the legislative framework for the formulation and development of research policy (www.gsrt.gr, retrieved June 17, 2014) in Greece²⁶. They provided for research and technology, linking it, mainly, with the country's economic and social development. As far as the University in particular, is concerned, they described the context regarding its partnerships in the fields of research and technology, the introduction of various research infrastructures (Research Institutes (EPI in Greek) etc.) and provided for the terms of public and/or private funding of the

²⁴ At the level of their institution, FMs from the Departments of Education developed programmes concerning the training of unemployed teachers who studied in Universities abroad. Individually, a FM from the Arisoteleion University of Thessaloniki, for example, supervised a teacher-training seminar, in 1999, on the *teaching of Social Sciences*. FMs may undertake a research project collectively.

²⁵ Alongside the undergraduate study programme leading to a Bachelor's Degree

²⁶ To these laws one should add PD 432/1981 regarding the administration of research funds within the Universities

University in relation to research: They assigned FMs with the opportunity to carry out research projects either individually and/or in collaboration with others. The provisions of the legislation formulated a distinct level of access to the Greek University addressing PhD students, researchers and other individuals who seek employment opportunities with differentiated selection processes and/or employment stature.

In relation to the first, various government legislative initiatives increased University access points at the level of education providing FMs, at the institutional level, individually and/or collectively, with a whole new array of opportunities to develop all sorts and types of study programmes available. To the same end, the Greek government attempted, unsuccessfully²⁷, to introduce new Universities and Faculties/Departments in the old ones, increasing further the number of students entering the University in Greece at the undergraduate level (programme of studies leading to Bachelor's degree).

Particularly, Laws 2083/1992 and 2525/1997, following two relevant unsuccessful attempts made by the Greek government (Laws 1268/82 and 1566/85), set the framework, irrespective of their shortcomings, for the development of Master Level Programmes of Study in Greek Universities. Accordingly, Law 3685/2008, attempted to further modernize legislation regarding this issue. Law 2327/1995 provided, specifically, for the introduction of post-graduate level study programmes in the Greek Departments of Primary Education. Didaskaleio of Primary Education was set up with the aim of further educating Greek teachers, allowing them to keep up with any developments in their field of study. Law 2009/1992 allowed for the foundation of Vocational Education Institutions by Greek Universities²⁸. In addition, since 2005, Law

²⁷ The Athena Project (2013) decreased the number of Universities and Faculties/Departments in the country in order to reduce the associated costs (Ministry of Education 2013).

²⁸ Their funding is mainly derived from EU through the Ministry of Employment.

3369/2005, article 9, has provided for the introduction of Lifelong Learning Institutes within the Greek HEIs addressing, mainly, Higher Education graduates²⁹. The Greek Open University has been granted the capacity (Law 2083/1992, 2525/1997, 2817/2000, 3027/2002, 3260/2004, 3577/2007 and 4115/2013) to deliver distance-learning under- and post- graduate level seminars in various fields of study. Furthermore, FMs, individually and/or collectively, within the provisions of the current legislative framework (mainly, Laws 1268/1982 and 2083/1992), were granted the capacity to develop study programmes funded by both public and/or private bodies at the supranational, national and subnational levels. Finally, the Greek government increased the number of students entering the University and introduced, in the last two decades, a series of new Universities, Faculties and/or Departments improving, considerably, their geographical distribution across the country. In 1992, Law 2083/1992 announced the introduction of the Greek Open University with the aim, *inter alia*, of delivering high quality distance learning at undergraduate level. To the same end, the Universities of the Peloponnese, Sterea Ellada, Western Macedonia and the International Hellenic University³⁰ along with the series of newly introduced Faculties and/or Departments allowed for larger numbers of students entering University in Greece. However, these past initiatives, on the part of the Greek government, resulted in the recent Athena

²⁹ Some Greek Universities – the Universities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Macedonia and Patras – also established Greek Language Schools focusing, specifically, on the dissemination of the Greek language, culture and civilization. Indicatively, during the 1990's the Didaskaleio of Greek Language, University of Athens, amounted to 1,000 (foreign) students (<http://www.greekcourses.uoa.gr/istorika-stoixeia.html>, retrieved June 17, 2014).

³⁰ Law 2413/1996 provided for the foundation of an International University of Olympia with the aim of promoting studies relevant to Greek culture and civilization. However, the particular provision has not been realized yet.

Additionally, the International Hellenic University in its eighth year of existence has developed ten postgraduate programmes. In this sense, it does not contribute to the number of students *entering* Universities in Greece.

Project (2013), which decreased the number of Universities and/or Faculties and Departments, in the country (Ministry of Education, 2013). In particular, the number of Universities fell from 24 to 21, and their departments, now amount to 250 (269 in 2012).

Table 1: Levels of access to the Greek University	
Education	Increase in the number of entrants to HEIs (undergraduate level)
	Introduction of new Universities, Faculties and Departments
	Postgraduate studies (Masters Level)
	Introduction of structures regarding vocational education and training
	Training activities organized by FMs
Research	Introduction of structures regarding research
	Research projects supervised by FMs
	PhD students

Entry routes to the Greek University

In what concerns entry routes³¹ to the Greek University, one may have to make a distinction between the various agents who may regulate access, the processes of

³¹ It is very interesting to note at this point that cultural differences exist with regard to age at entering higher education. The median age of higher education students shows that it varies from 20 years old in Belgium, France and Ireland to 26 years old in Iceland (Commission of the European Communities.

selection (exams, lottery, portfolio etc.) and, finally, the entry requirements set out for each point of access³².

The Greek State is the primary agent regulating entry to the, main, undergraduate programmes of study of University Departments leading to Bachelor Degrees. The various, different, systems of entry, according to the type of population they address, draw heavily on examinations³³. In particular, Greek secondary education graduates enter the University in Greece through a system governed by numerous *clausus*, i.e. students compete, by taking PanHellenic exams, for a fixed number of places, whatever the scale of demand (Law 2525/1997). Accordingly, foreigners and Greeks –various distinct categories of entrants³⁴– follow a similar process in order to gain a position to the Greek University (Laws 1351/1983, 2327/1995, 2413/1996, 2517/1997). In addition, HEIs graduates, either Greek or foreign, enter undergraduate programmes of study through a system of examination administered, however, by the University Departments (Law 1868/1989). Finally, the Greek Foreign Office and the Ministries of Economy and Education may grant scholarships to foreign students who wish to study at a Greek University (Laws 1673/1986, 2020/1992, 2127/1993, 2297/1995, 2731/1999).

2014). In this context, and in what concerns Greece, students are encouraged to start their HE programmes immediately.

³²The latter, normally, involves, among other things, bridging programmes and recognition of prior learning, especially for those that have failed, for whatever reason, to successfully complete the form of upper secondary education that may result in direct entry to the University. However, although the Greek governments, since 2003, have already made such provisions, regarding the use of professional outlines, they have not yet been institutionalized (Dimoulas 2010).

³³ Entry to the Greek Open University, at all levels, is based on the results of a lottery.

³⁴ Greek expatriates, children of Greek civil servants residing abroad, Cypriots –*until very recently*– and all Greek students studying abroad (Ministerial Decision 272/2007, 151.20049/B6).

The academic community is responsible for meeting with the necessary conditions³⁵ for the entry into the University, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, of all foreign students making use of the various mobility programmes (Erasmus, Socrates, Leonardo, LLL programme, ALBAN, ALPHA, etc.). It is based on a differentiated process which does not involve examinations. FMs do, also regulate, either on an institutional level or individually, all types of access to the University at every level – besides the main undergraduate programme of study offered by the Department leading to a Bachelor's Degree. They may define the entry requirements, describe the selection processes and, subsequently, decide on the population who will have access to the programme of study they have the responsibility for.

Finally, various, differentiated processes, exist for the selection of those, e.g. educators, researchers, and other staff, like project managers, secretariats³⁶, etc., who seek out employment opportunities, at the University, regulated by both the State and FMs, interchangeably.

³⁵ In fact every Institution agrees to sign the Erasmus Policy Statement and publish its overall strategy on its website within one month of the signing of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education by the European Commission. This policy statement describes the Institution's international (EU and non-EU) strategy, incorporating information on how it chooses partners, in which geographical area(s) and, the most important, its objectives and target groups of the mobility activities (with regard to staff and students in first, second and third cycles, including study and training, and short cycles). When applicable, the Institution also explains how it participates in the development of double/multiple/joint degrees. (http://erasmus.duth.gr/sites/default/files/Erasmus_Policy_Statement.pdf, 07-09-2014).

³⁶ In fact, there is a whole industry developing aimed at supporting research and technology developments, getting funds, organizing and managing large collaborative research, etc. (<http://www.arttic.eu/pages/en/home.php>, 07-09-2014).

Access to the Greek University in terms of population

Evidently, students entering undergraduate programmes of studies constitute the largest proportion of people attending University. They differentiate, mainly, in terms of gender and nationality³⁷ (Greeks, Greek expatriates, descendants of Greek civil servants residing abroad, foreigners) and to a lesser extent age (HEIs graduates who attend University study programmes at the undergraduate level). They are not the only consumers/users of the services offered by the University in the last few decades, however.

The participants in the postgraduate study programmes, either at Masters Level or at a training seminar for example, vary, considerably, in terms of age, nationality, culture, social origins and, accordingly, objectives and educational needs. They formulate another distinct category of population with access to the University conveying the need for the use of new tools and methods concerning University Pedagogy as Stamelos et Karanatsis (2002) have termed it³⁸.

Finally, people (researchers, educational staff and project managers) who have gained employment in the dynamically developing, formal and non-formal, job market around it formulate the last category of population with access to the University in the last few decades. Those who have been employed by a Vocational Education Institute (KEK in Greek) or sign six-month period contracts with the University to offer their educational

³⁷ In 2010 there were 26,835 foreign students enrolled in Greek HEIs, which amounts to 4.2% of the student body. One out of two foreign students was of Cypriot origin whereas one out of five was Albanian. In the same year, 29,091 Greek students were studying abroad which represents 4.7% of foreign students ranking Greece in 9th place. This percentage is almost twice the European average (2.6%). Amongst the most popular destinations for Greek students are the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, France and the USA (KANEP – GSEE, 2013).

³⁸It should be noted, at this point, that a recent Law (4009/2011) provided for the development of part-time study programmes by the Greek University with the aim of facilitating attainment of working students.

services under the provisions of PD 407/80 constitute a formal category of employees since they have a relationship with the University, which is, formally, recognized by the State. They enjoy, generally speaking, better working conditions and have a well-defined set of rights and obligations towards their employer –the State- in comparison to those who gain employment in the context of a project under the supervision of a FM, where there are no guaranties in terms of working conditions, period of employment etc. In any case, for both categories of employees there exist other, equally, important issues surrounding their employment stature, which should also be examined and involve, among other things, their appointment, qualifications and precarious position (Stamelos, 1999).

In short, the constituent elements of access to the Greek Universities, described above, are summarized in the following table (table 2).

Level	Education & training, Research
Population	Users/Consumers (Students – Trainees) Employees (Educators, Researchers, other staff)
Regulator(s)	The Greek Government, the University, the Faculty-Department, Faculty Members
Funding Bodies	The EU, The Greek Government, Private funding bodies originating at the supranational, national and subnational levels

Evidently, at the level, at least, of legislative provisions, the potential points of access to the Greek University have far exceeded, the undergraduate programme of studies

leading to a Bachelor degree. Within the last two decades, study programmes have been organized at the postgraduate level, while vocational education and training seminars may be introduced in the context of LLL. Additionally, research projects developed within the University grounds, also, formulate new points of access to the Greek University. The Greek State has stopped regulating access to the Greek University, exclusively. FMs, at the institutional level, individually and/or collectively have assumed significant control towards this end. Accordingly, the funding bodies of access to the Greek University may be public and/or private originating at the supranational, national and subnational levels. Finally, the issue of access involves not only the users/consumers of the University services but also those who seek employment opportunities thus generating a vigorously developing, formal and informal job-market around the University. Subsequently, the population addressing the Greek University has been substantially differentiated, in comparison to the past, in terms of age, nationality, social origin, objectives and educational needs.

Discussion

In this paper, the issue of *access to HEIs* was examined from a different perspective. We attempted to describe it from the point of view of the Institutions referring, particularly, to the Greek University, emphasizing elements which seem to be threaded together into it: level, selection processes, population. Hence, we did not center on the impact of policies regarding, mainly, increases in the number of students entering HEIs³⁹. Instead, we set out to examine the scope of policies regarding *access to HEIs*⁴⁰,

³⁹ Aimed at combating social exclusion, enhancing social mobility and tackling inequalities.

⁴⁰ As defined here, in its wider sense, i.e. including vocational programmes, research and employment.

over the recent decades, together with the means used for their implementation. Furthermore, we attempted to pinpoint, on the one hand, the variations in the Greek University *topology*, the points of *access to the Greek University*, in the course of the implementation of such policies and explore, on the other, their impact, or at least, in the context of this paper, the levels, the *loci* of that impact.

So far, we have made extensive references to the scope and means of implementation of policies regarding *access to HEIs* and have identified the potential points of *access to the Greek University*, at the level, at least, of legislative provisions. We will now turn to summarize the Greek singularities regarding the implementation of such policies and, what is more refer, concisely, to their levels of impact for the Greek University.

First of all, the Greek governments are committed to expanding *access to HEIs*, primarily, in the context of the country's participation to the EU. However, at the same time, they also managed⁴¹ to satisfy longstanding public demands of various kinds and types⁴² together with other local economy needs⁴³. Towards this end, they made an attempt to increase the number of students entering HEIs in Greece and introduced new Universities, Faculties and Departments. Moreover, they attempted to formulate a new, legislative framework favorable to the expansion of access points to the Greek

⁴¹ To the same end, the multiplication of access points to the Greek University allowed FMs to satisfy their personal drive and potential besides providing the University, *inter alia*, with useful resources.

⁴² For example, the government's initiative concerning the introduction of new Universities, Faculties and Departments, together with the fact that it oriented, all the more, Secondary Education pupils towards Technical (vocational) Education allowed it to satisfy, at least for a very short period of time, a demagogic, according to Dimaras (2000), promise that there will be a place in HEIs for every Upper Secondary Education graduate. The Greek government, at least in theory, managed to abolish *numerus clausus* for the entry to HEIs and, consequently, the expansion in the number of students entering HEIs from different social origin!

The introduction of Didaskaleio, another example, for the teachers' training allowed the government to satisfy a demand posed by the corresponding syndicates.

⁴³ The expansion of access points to the Greek Universities boosted the local communities.

University⁴⁴. Finally, they called for⁴⁵ initiatives on the part of FMs, at the institutional level, individually and/or collectively, to structure points of access, principally, at postgraduate level and/or for research. They used, for this purpose, resources, funds originating from both private and public bodies -primarily, the EU either directly, e.g. FP 5, 6, 7, or indirectly, etc. As a result of these policy choices, the Greek State ceased to be the only regulator of access to the Greek University. Instead, it kept under its jurisdiction the provisions concerning *entry* to the University; the transition from Upper Secondary Education to HEIs. All other points of access to the University are structured and, most importantly, regulated by the FMs, either as members of their Department, Faculty, or University, at the level of their Institution, or individually and/or collectively. They do that on the basis of both public and private funds originating from all national, supranational and subnational bodies, primarily the EU.

Accordingly, one may come to the following conclusions regarding the *loci* of impact of the above mentioned access policies for the Greek University:

- University Departments may, potentially, offer many more educational and research services than the ones implied by their title, which corresponds only to the one undergraduate programme of studies leading to a Bachelor degree. Accordingly, they address, in contrast to the past, a much more divergent population in terms of ethnicity, age, social origins and most importantly, objectives and educational needs⁴⁶,

⁴⁴ Laws like 2083/1992 concerning the development of Postgraduate Studies in Greek Universities or the legislation about the Greek Open University (Law 2083/1992, 2525/1997, 2817/2000, 3027/2002, 3260/2004, 3577/2007 and 4115/2013) seem to be moves in this direction.

⁴⁵ On the basis of the existing legislative framework.

⁴⁶ They, in turn, may reshape what has come to be called University pedagogy.

- FMs, individually and/or collectively, institutionally and/or autonomously, have in comparison to the past, many more opportunities; they hold much more power to shape their Department's policy and orientation not only in terms of the selected educational services offered and research being carried out but also as far as their content⁴⁷ is concerned,
- To the same end, funding of the newly introduced activities has become a very important issue⁴⁸, especially in a period characterized by reductions in spending in HE⁴⁹,
- Accordingly, the job-market developing around the University, addressing educators, researchers and project managers etc. needs immediate monitoring and regulation,

⁴⁷ FMs may organize study programmes, in the form of training seminars, and undertake research activities, on the basis of their personal potential and interests –irrespective of their Departments' scope– in accordance with the available funding opportunities, abiding by the needs of the economy. Hence, browsing funding opportunities and applying successfully for research funding seem currently to be highly important skills and competences. Relevant at this point, is the notion of *academic capitalism*, suggested by Slaughter & Leslie (1997), describing a modern state of employment for the academic personnel of public Universities competing in a very antagonistic environment using their own personal capital and potential: *academics acting like capitalists of the public sector, publicly funded entrepreneurs*.

⁴⁸ We have already made references to the Athena Project and the reduction of Universities, Faculties and Departments due to lack of available funding. Other access initiatives have also been abolished due to lack of funding. Furthermore, all the more, postgraduate study programmes, demand tuition fees. Hence, the average level of tuition fees paid by Postgraduate students in Greece is higher than the European, 3,625€ as against 2770€, (KANEP-GSEE, 2013). In any case, an alternative, dynamically developed formula regarding the funding of Greek University seems to be the development of both educational (LLL) and research services addressing *clients*, the EU, Greek Ministries, Local Communities, and industry, focused on the needs of the economy going beyond the Greek market to Europe and the world.

⁴⁹ The last official data available for Greece refer to the year 2005. According to those data funding per student was 5,043€. For 2008, KANEP-GSEE (2013) estimated funding per student at 5.310€, which is 57.4% of the European average, ranking our country in 19th place out of the 26 member states (KANEP-GSEE, 2013). Moreover, and in relation to research, from 2001 to 2011, GDP investment in R&D within the 27 states increased by 8.6%. At the same time, Greece invested 1,341.6 million € in R&D which is the equivalent of 0.6% of Greece's GDP, putting the country in 24th place, one of the lowest in Europe. The majority (70,1%) of this investment stemmed from the Greek State recording a slight increase of 3,4%. Private funds invested only 28.6% in R&D ranking the country amongst the lowest in Europe, in the 24th place (KANEP-GSEE, 2013).

- Finally, policy initiatives regarding expanding access have gradually introduced the Greek University into a highly competitive European space of both educational (LLL) and research activities. The extent to which the Greek University is ready to cope with this development is a dubious matter dependent, more or less, on the use of the funding it has received so far.

The contemporary role of the *University* in the light of these developments has become an issue, which is open for debate. It might be preferable to discuss *Universities* referring each time to the source *par excellence* of the national elites, or highly regarded research institutions, or huge educational institutions, or even providers of qualitative vocational education and training services.

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