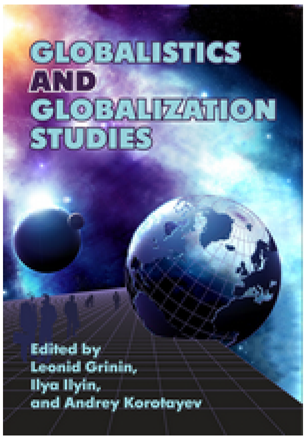
Challenges For Education In An International Setting



Third Level Education is in many respects increasingly changing in the light of two general developments: internationalisation and globalisation on the one hand, marketisation and commodification on the other hand. Whereas the first is apparently taking up on an intrinsic value of education ('universality of knowledge'), the second can be seen as opposing its values ('knowledge cannot be bought and sold as any other good'). However, the discussion of this contribution shows that in reality we find that on the side of implementation big business has a standing that finds its way much easier to the stage of implementation.

Keywords: third level education, globalisation, internationalisation, marketisation, educational values, legitimation.
This article goes back to the work of the authors in Connection with a Presentation to Conference in Shanghai, October 2016. The conference theme was about higher education in an international setting in which presentation included a wide range of progresses made and challenges met within the joint-venture programmes between western universities and their Chinese counterparts.
See: https://youtu.be/6FJxTwHuotI

Third Level Education is increasingly concerned with distinct, though mutually influencing aspects – they can be aligned along two dimensions: the first spans between development of personality and defining ones' place in professional terms; the other is about growing up in a new global scientific community. What had been for centuries a very privileged area for a few outstanding and lucky scholars, is becoming a field that is increasingly open for many, ready to engage at different levels, beginning with the bachelors degrees. Let us take Bangor College China as an example.

Bangor College China is a joint venture between Bangor University in the UK and the Central University of Forestry and Technology (CSUFT) in China. It was established with the approval of the Chinese Education Ministry in 2014 as an advanced model to facilitate the internationalization of Chinese higher education. A dedicated Bangor College China offers full degrees in China which is the first for a British university. It offers four programmes including BSc in Banking and Finance; BSc in Accounting and Finance; BSc in Electronic Engineering; and BSc in Forestry and Environment Management with more than 600 students in their first and second year studies. A team of dedicated and experienced staff of teaching and administration from both Bangor University and CSUFT were in interaction. Over the last two years Bangor University has invested heavily on Bangor College China. It is responsible for the quality of the programmes and ensures that the teaching standards, assessments and student experience are equivalent to those at the Bangor home campus.

– Although the running of the joint school in general goes smoothly with good intention from both universities in the UK and China, some major challenges lie ahead in the areas of the merger of different administrative cultures; the search for professional standards; the work towards a common professional understanding, making reference to wealth of different traditions; and the development of new ways learning.

– Remarkable new opportunities go hand in hand with grave challenges: as much as we find the strive for excellence as major field of competitive concern, at the very same time we find the incredible opportunities for smaller projects, such as Bangor College China, is an example that locates the challenge of development of personality and defining ones' place in professional terms in the context of a collaborative setting globally.

Defining the Field
International education – as matter of ranking and also cooperation and as matter of the excitement to explore new shores – experiences a kind of hype, easily overlooking the inherent contradiction. But can we really speak of an inherent contradiction? If we take things at the level of appearance, we find, of course, – and very valid – the feature of cutthroat competition – the winner gets all, at least the cherries of qualified staff and students and also the relevant resources.**[i]**

Although this is undeniably a strong force, we can take as well a more optimistic view – optimistic for those that are not in any relevant top-league, and – importantly – who are actually not seriously striving to gain entrance. Though it is often said that we do stand on the shoulders of giants, we also – and increasingly – are part of an overall team game – not least looking at the ancient Western cultures, claimed to be the crèche of today's enlightened cultures in the east and west, we know that the understanding was very much one of discourse – a discourse between 'experts' and between 'experts' and 'pupils'. The term 'scholar', referring to the learned person and the student alike, may give a hint, as does the term 'scientific community' – and it is worthwhile to mention in parenthesis that these terms are paradoxically loosing meaning at a time when scientific work can only be imagined as part of an undertaking that is social in terms of time and content – without denying the greatness, for instance of Isaac Newton. It did not require much more than a well-studied individual mind and the observation of an apple falling from the tree to find out about the law of gravity. However, using this law as crucial basic knowledge to the undertaking of flying to the moon or exploring other planets, requires the genius of many people collaborating, as also the academic labour is divided and a huge amount of resources. And let us be honest, and a bit German, by referring to the poet Goethe who states in his masterpiece:

Two souls alas! are dwelling in my breast;
And each is fain to leave its brother.
The one, fast clinging, to the world adheres
With clutching organs, in love's sturdy lust;
The other strongly lifts itself from dust
To yonder high, ancestral spheres
(von Goethe 1808).

Approaching things *sine ira et studio* (Tacitus), we are today caught in a structural condition that turns easily out as a potential deadlock. One important point is, however, if we truly ask the correct question.

The perspectives at stake are predominantly based on four principles:
– the globalisation of institutional education/educational standards;
– the globalisation of knowledge and its application;
– the limitation and also 'streaming/steering' of resources;
– the increasing renaissance of personal contacts as part of the establishment of networks as functional basis of the system – not least as matter of 'new princedoms' – of course, another issue that requires self-critique and kind of critical avowals.

Importantly, this structuration of the field allows us to gain a clearer understanding of the common denominator that defines a substantial perspective, going much beyond the formal and institutional dimensions of education in an international setting.
Underlying is an advanced understanding of standardised knowledge and education that is both, condition and result of a specific form of massification. Leaving the economic dimensions aside, the present focuses on the continuation of the eclipse of reason. Leaving the economic dimension of utilitarianisation and realisation of value again aside, we see the abstract issue that had been expressed in the words 'Economy of time, to this all economy ultimately reduces itself' (Marx). This is a point that had been made by Marx in the quoted form, but actually in a different way already in 1848 by J. S. Mills when he noted in his *Principles of Political Economy with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy* about the Stationary state and later by J. M. Keynes when envisaging the 15-hour-week, writing in 1930 about the *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren*. All such statements are, besides their central economic concern, focusing indirectly on education, to be precise: the purpose of education. Later, this will be taken up by exploring some aspects of legitimacy and legitimation.

It is easy to see that at least one version of such stationary society is the one where high degree of material wealth and wealth of general knowledge is achieved. Though society may then be still growing, the growth is based on a reflexive mechanism joining the many classifications of society under a single term, we may speak of an *autopietic algorithm society*: ones set in motion, the entire machine works independently. This is surely not happening independently from human beings – even on the contrary, it depends on the ongoing supply of functioning, i.e. executing actors. Already the wording should make us aware of what happens: the confirmation of the dominance of executive bodies within the system of third-level education. Thus, it will not come as a surprise that in some universities today income is not increasing for the cadres that are performing educational duties – dealing with students and content; instead, the flows are advantageous especially for personnel working in other areas of the same institutions (Grove 2016). So, we are not least facing a twofold shift.

The one is about the search for new borders. If we see globalisation as something real,i.e. also real in terms of reaching a qualitatively new stage, we are confronted with renewing the marks and standards, allowing orientation. The

easiest way of doing so is, of course, the strict orientation on manageable, administrable yardsticks.
The other is about the need of finding a way of redefining the object of standardisation – here we are confronted with a contradictory pattern. While, on the one hand, expectations are rising and many areas are increasingly professionalised, the formal transfer of training to third-level institutions of Higher Education does not necessarily mean that we witness a real academisation – actually we may well state the opposite, speaking of a process of delimiting professional 'areas', and undermining the orientation put forward by Tagore, commending that '[t]he highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence' (Tagore 2003: 76). Thus, we have to answer as well the question how the meaning of professional standards themselves changed in history: from a purely reflexive assessment, being caught in an autopoietic circle, to a self-assessment according to praxis orientation, further to a self-assessment based on professional standards as matter of subordination under praxis requirements.

Methodological Considerations
One of the major analytical problems is finding a suitable methodological instrument that allows (a) developing a clear analytical perspective and that furthermore opens (b) a way for elaborating a strategic move forward. This will be described very briefly in the following, suggesting that a system-theoretical approach and the theory of social quality offer a promising reference for such analysis.

Autopoiesis
One core aspect of systems theory – and this refers to some discussions in the 1960s–1970s, undertaken by Georg Klaus (1965) and the version that is linked with the work by Niklas Luhmann **[ii]** – is the process of self-referential reproduction and even production which became especially known under the term of autopoiesis. The launch of this perspective opened a clearer understanding of the openness and closure of systems. This can be described as generally open systems, sealing themselves off by defining the criteria of referential demarcation. The system itself cannot decide about the environment and which requests and requirements come from there. However, it does decide what it allows to cross the demarcation line and how it processes the intake.**[iii]**

We can also speak of a specific language that avails of a hegemonic position, considering that language, once established, is always a matter of structural thinking. This is in line with the concept of general media in systems theory – though there is a permanent development, this is in its mainstay following a once defined path, and faces the difficulty of translation. Or to be more precise: any translation will be specifically defined by that ‘tone’ that gained dominance. We may say that the language of international administration faces a similar fate as that of mathematics about which Hannah Arendt wrote, ‘If we followed the advice, so frequently urged upon us, to adjust our cultural attitudes to the present status of scientific achievement, we would in all earnest adopt a way of life in which speech is no longer meaningful.

For the sciences today have been forced to adopt a ‘language’ of mathematical symbols which, though it was originally meant only as an abbreviation for spoken statements, now contains statements that in no way can be translated back into speech’ (Arendt 1958: 23f.)
In other words, although the language of administration of international education emerged as a tool to foster educational academic needs, it emerged as language that is now requiring educational and other academic activities to adapt to it.

Social Quality Thinking
Social quality thinking (van der Maesen and Walker 2012) can be packaged for the present context as means that allows establishing ‘indications’ serving as a kind of general gateways for both, the process of demarcation of the system and the processing within the system. For our purpose, these indications are only taken in very loose terms, more on a formal level, or we may say: the level of a framework of which the substantial definition is at the heart of the processes of actual negotiations. The relevant parameters are, first, the two lines of dialectical tensions along which the international setting is established, presented in Fig. 1.

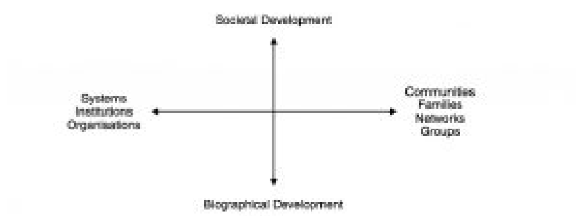


Fig. 1.

Figure 1

A more detailed and slightly substantial orientation is based on three sets of factors which had been systematically compiled as core of the social quality approach. This is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Conditional (Opportunities)	Constitutional (Processes)	Normative (Outcomes)
Socio-economic security	Personal Security	Social Justice (including Equity)
Social Cohesion	Social Recognition	Solidarity
Social Inclusion	Social Responsiveness	Equal value
Social Empowerment	Personal Capacity	Human dignity

Table 1

Legitimacy

The fact that the determinants of traditional structures of authority and government changed to an important extent makes legitimacy peculiar today. We can see a similar development as Karl Polanyi described it for the economy, contending '[f]or once the economic system is organized in separate institutions, based on specific motives and conferring a special status, society must be shaped in such a manner as to allow that system to function according to its own laws. This is the meaning of the familiar assertion that a market economy can function only in a market society' (Polányi 1944: 57).

Cum grano salis, this can be directly applied to the present context as matter grasping the detachment of educational processes, reflecting the hegemonic position of the market economy and the subsequent establishment of a market university, or in more commonly used terminology, the market of third-level education. The wider meaning, particularly geared to the question of legitimacy, is looking at the process of detachment, i.e. the emergence and consolidation of a systemic rule, colonialising the lifeworld (Lockwood 1964; Habermas 1981).

In any case, however, we should not forget that the fundamental parameters, as they had been systematically elaborated by Max Weber, are very much in place also today. So we are still dealing with the three patterns of charismatic, traditional and legal authority and legitimacy. It makes sense to qualify legal authority as matter of legitimation by procedure (Luhmann 1983), this terminology underlining the detachment from 'real social process'.

Paradoxically, detachment and alienation make legitimacy today even more an issue of political authority (understood in the widest sense), lurking around every corner, though veiled by market and procedural rules. Referring to William

Connolly (1984), Jacqueline Best states that '[l]egitimacy … while not an exclusively modern concept, became a more pressing problem in the modern age as tradition lost its hold on political life and the conventional character of social institutions became apparent. Political authority no longer appeared natural or divine but revealed its flawed, human face. People began to ask why they should obey …' (Best 2007: 471). An overly ambitious venture strategy may well be in danger of overwriting this paradox in a one-sided way.

A New Scientific Community?

Although we may say that many of the problems are not fundamentally different from those that are issued at least since the emergence of modern social science and its subdisciplines including sociology and political science, the secular challenge these disciplines actually try to answer is the relationship between 'Community and Society'.**[iv]**

And this leads to the present core argument: education in an international setting, and ventures like that of BCC have to be understood in the perspective of an emerging new scientific community. As such they are a gateway which has in particular two tasks. The first is concerned with the 'translation' from the side of the mode of living of communities into the patterns of society. The second is about the translation of societal conditions into specific life regimes of communities.**[v]**

This process involves the elaboration of (i) a new understanding of the meaning of national interests, (ii) a reconsideration of the role of the different agencies, not least the role of students, and (iii) a reflection of the position of mass education on the third level in the overall setting of education. All this requires a commonly accepted task to take the actual definition of the 'criteria' for what a scientific community is today.

Part of this is surely a systematic scan not of the implementation of accountability, but the systematic sophistication of their elaboration. The debate of Washington versus Beijing consensus finds surely its place in this context.**[vi]**

The Legitimacy Trap

Of course, talking about a strategic move forward is hampered by the very fact of the constellation in question. Already from what had been said, it is obvious that the core problematique is the juxtaposition of different agendas. The juxtaposition is characterised in different ways, of which at least the following need to be highlighted: the relationship can be (i) mutually supportive ('cross-fertilising'), (ii) hegemonically exclusive, (iii) hegemonically competitive, (iv) pushing towards border-crossing confederation and (v) neutral. In other words, it is about different interests for which the way of working together has to be fathomed.

1) Interests marking the legitimacy trap

Major relevant interest groups and interests respectively are those of traditional academics in the Weberian sense of science as vocation, those we may juxtapose as pursuing science as profession, the institutional agents, directly employed by providing the setting for teaching and research, the political agents that are determinant, students and parents, the various funding bodies, including the representatives of vested interests as industrial and professional bodies.**[vii]**

It should be clear that this is not an exhaustive list, and also that the groupings are not homogenous and that they have different powers and means of making themselves heard. Leaving these qualifications aside, the list allows at least having a glance at some major forces that mark the poles between which legitimacy is trapped. This can only be understood if we recognise that these interests are 'real', i.e. part of an overall hegemonic setting that exists in practice.

2) Legitimacy between elitist and mass education

One important aspect can be seen in the fact of the convergence around the issue of competencies/skills/aptitude/fitness – an orientation that is very much geared towards an extrinsic and instrumentalist understanding of acquiring knowledge. This is not meant to present a simple negative stance, though it surely is about a development that is representing a strong ambiguity: Science/academia is not only since recently a closed area, being sealed off by different, though always more or less strict gatekeepers. The discussion today, referring to suicide and prostitution as it had been mentioned earlier (see footnote 1), is surely pointing to important issues. However, it is equally important to understand the underlying mechanism. We suggest that it is not a structural closure, requiring an increasingly adaptive behaviour and moreover psychologically anticipating self-control according to the expectation of expectations. Instead, it is a mix of at least three core issues: (mass) reproducibility of results/focusing on evidence ('empiricism'); exact measurement of performance ('metrics-assessment'); and de-academisation / professionalisation of third-level education ('Bolognaisation'/'massification'). A decisive aspect of this is the continued split between a relatively small innovative and creative academic elite and a relative large number of foot soldiers – silent pathfinders and implementers – as much as they stand on the shoulders of giants, the later giants walk on the carpets they roll out before them. What really changed are two things: there is a stronger and more immediate link to applied science requirements and the overall increased number of academics.

3) Practice requirement as challenge for defining legitimacy
Many of today's complains are in some way an inversion of earlier complains – those by which the detached character of academia in ivory towers had been reprimanded. Academia itself, however, changed today also in its very own terms and emerged as immediate productive force. Amongst other things this means that academics and academia are standing more than before in the limelight. This, taken together with the fact of an increasing number of academics, academic institutions and the increased competition taking the form of contracts instead of being openly pursued by status,**[viii]** we still see very much a replication of the old patterns – apparent as a small elite and elite institutions (the widespread excellence initiatives) being the agenda setters, while the others are striving to follow. In some way we may summarise this cynically by saying that today, with the immediacy of the imperative publish or perish (immediately done, immediately seen) things are known before we are dead. Scanning publications and works of giants of earlier academics for plagiarism and self-plagiarism may not have shown so different results as what we find in academia today, if we relate them properly to the overall numbers of publications, etc.

This is also important in the context of international cooperation and ventures as we find today very much the replication of education as matter of vocation versus education as matter of professions. However, with science being now an immediate productive force, the bandwidth for manoeuvre is tightened. In this context it is interesting that we find today apparently very much the same patterns as we know them from earlier times: the academic giants of then and now have frequently a wide educational background, they are in many cases not narrowly professionalised and are often not pursuing the work in the areas which would today be seen as their 'major' – at least this can be said on an anecdotal basis for many. The difference, however, is that today many of these giants are more likely making a career in business and politics, remaining to a lesser extent in academia.

4) The time constraint
Talking about legitimacy, means not least to return to the definitive matter of social production, i.e. the production of society of which we know that '[e]conomy

of time, to this all economy ultimately reduces itself. Society likewise has to distribute its time in a purposeful way, in order to achieve a production adequate to its overall needs; just as the individual has to distribute his time correctly in order to achieve knowledge in proper proportions or in order to satisfy the various demands on his activity. Thus, economy of time, along with the planned distribution of labour time among the various branches of production, remains the first economic law on the basis of communal production. It becomes law, there, to an even higher degree' (Marx N.d: Chapter 3).

With the change of the productive forces, the patterns of work and consumption, societal structures and visions, it is also necessary to consciously consider this in the outline of third level education. This is a challenge that is faced also nationally, but on the level here under consideration it is even more virulent as challenge for structuring the processes.

Conclusions
At the early stage of European institutionalisation reference was frequently made to the Monnet method, namely, 'a concept that calls for small steps on the way forward in Europe, dealing specifically with the integration of Europe'.

– The concept is characterised by the fact that there is no defined end goal in advance but that the EU should act open mind and situation-specific reactive.
– After the Monnet method Europe must let actions speak for and represent the de facto solidarity through policy statements. In addition, large institutional projects and political progress must be considered together. Because they generally apply economics as an instrument of policy. The focus is on peace, whose observance is more important than securing prosperity in Europe.
– Especially France and Germany must therefore work together as a European core. Decisions should be made by elites rather than democratically what is often criticized. The European states should get more expertise to a limited extent'.**[ix]**

Cum grano salis, we can apply this also in the given context as a model for further discussion. Presumptions are: 1) we are witnessing a given, automatic push towards integration – against the odds of counteracting factors, emerging from varied **[x]** systemic forces, and as result of centripetal forces; 2) we are dealing with a secular development that still is opening a playing field for different substantial interests that will be finally defining the concrete course.
Taken as question of a process of building a specific community, we face the

problem of properly determining the point of reference of these communities which surely are not anymore the old ‘ivory academic world’ but also not (yet?) the world of polytechniques in the known sense.
This shift goes hand in hand with the emergence of functional conglomerations.
The expectation is that everybody is responsible of everything and has to fill the various roles: the academic as fundraiser, as top-researcher, as secretary, manager and HR-expert to name but a few of the required roles.
Of course, a clear solution to this constellation by way of internal conflict resolution cannot exist as the interests and the contradictions between them are located in different fields. Thus, the actual solution is hegemony of a specific ‘economy of time’ as it had been said to be ultimately characterising the societal mode of production.

This means that community building, because it is a matter of building an incomplete and imagined community, is even more essential as matter of striving for a broad approach. Coming back to the Monnet method, one factor that is only barely mentioned in the quoted characterisation, is the supposition that the elitist character was not limited to decision making but concerned as well Europe as space of business elites, suggesting that from such centre a social space would emerge in the form of concentric cycles: the elites, bringing their interpreters with them, gathering the experts of the different fields, joined by the various support staff, etc., finally ending in the Ryanairisation of travel and the birth of the ‘generation easyjet’. Several parts of that ‘European programme’ failed – and they were doomed to fail. As questionable as the overall approach to ‘state building’ is from the perspective of any political theory of legitimacy, one surely valid point is the implicit acknowledgment that any strategy that aims at integration is anchored in the actual need to educate its own populace to be experts on their own concerns. A political project like that of the EU would have required the development of a European demos – the European elites did know this and indeed they did fear it (see Herrmann 2006).

This is as well the challenge for a new global teaching and research agenda. So far such agenda is very much driven by (a) specific and mostly narrowly defined interests and/or by (b) highly individualist attitudes, teachers and researchers seeing themselves very much as artistic performers and creators.

Tertium non datur? Part of the difficulty is that overcoming the particularist stances is caught in a quandary: the first agenda may be able to overcome the individualist orientation by narrowing the substantial scope as everything has to be geared towards realisation of the particular interest; in the second case, it is too frequent to sacrifice collaboration by subordination under the ‘leader’ – not allowing the profound emergence of a demos which would not least call for evoking to be criticised. In case one agrees with the statement that ‘[f]reedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently’ (Luxemburg 1918), it means one also has to agree to self-critique as fundamental; moreover, one has to establish mechanisms that structurally evoke such criticism. Admittedly difficult, though exactly this is a huge potential for success of joint ventures. As such they would go beyond an orientation on comparative advantage in a market setting, aiming at developing collaborative advantage in an open, innovation driven development of mindsets. Of course, the problem may well begin here, many easily agreeing and still, not allowing the self-critique being publicly stated. As much as freedom is always the freedom of the dissenter,[xi] as much the limitations of freedom are usually seen as coming from ‘the other side’. Still, difficulties should not stop from pushing things further. One of the reasons for some optimism is the fact that traditional patterns of both education and employment are increasingly barred.

The challenge in the light of legitimacy is multilayered – and actually the first issue that needs to be tackled is that of creating an open debate that explicitly starts from difference instead of taking a supposed harmony as central point. It is suggested here that difference is not as such problematic – inept is denying it.

Finally, we have to locate difference of interest in terms of ‘substance’ along the different lines presented in the section 1) Interests marking the legitimacy trap’ of this contribution.
One important – and especially challenging – issue is linked to the vital aspect of community building. The concept of community is essentially based on dimensions as commonality/mutuality, public and nearness. This, of course, is somewhat a misnomer in the context of international cooperation and even bears some danger. Although these factors surely play an ongoing role, there is some danger of a deadlock emerging: only a small number of people are involved in the process, and/or the contacts are completely technicalised. However, in particular smaller venture projects offer perspectives to act in an intermediary function, linking involved staff in exchange on subject matters and into a wider field – an open question is if staff of both sides is ready and has the capacities, which

includes personal commitment and sufficient institutional backing.

The New Normal

International and even global education is by no means new. Leaving a detailed survey aside, we can see at least five phases.

– In very early years we find a predominantly western based inter- and globalisation, based on the missionary ambitions of the church and also in the church's search for universal knowledge.**[xii]**

– In the middle years the emergence of network that evolved around global exchange of interest and questions – not detached from practical interest, and even on the contrary: founded in the interest of change, of fathoming options of more fundamental change.**[xiii]**

– Still Western, the business and intellectual elite had been a foundation for a new stage of internationalisation of education – although saying Western is not quite right as it had been in its substantial gist strongly dominated by the Anglo-American orientation – aiming at gaining from the at the time undisputed and undisputable centre, modelling the world along the Rostowian model (Rostow 1960, 1990; see also Frank and Gills 1993/1996). One could take it as sublation and supersession of the previous stage, maintaining the idea of internationalisation, gearing it even towards globalisation, however, subordinating it now under the 'law of the new business cycle', understood as specifically Anglo-Saxon model (see Aglietta 1976). Those who studied abroad had been very much early skills-searchers: learning from the advanced centre, aiming at applying the acquired skills 'back home'.

– The knowledge-searchers and acquirers can be seen as a new generation – in part emerging from the previously mentioned group; and in part standing even in opposition; the new explorers of the 'easy riders', the late-coming heirs of Columbus, depending on the monies of those whom they wanted (in part) overthrow. Characterising this generation is that 'crossing borders' meant as well leaving the ancestral cultural spaces.

– The fifth phase is the one in the middle of which we find ourselves now. In some respect it is the academic branch of the 'generation easyjet': open, thirsting for knowledge and, of course, privileged. In some respect it is a new generation, eager to settle, eager to acquire skills and facing a new and unknown world, competitive, and very similar to those we found at stage three: aiming at gaining from the centre. However, this centre had now not been entirely undisputed and undisputable. The situation is now different as many members of this group are (initially only?) committed to learn and return. The development is full of contradictions – part thereof is the self-confident orientation of young people, coming from countries from which the perspective that 'The World is Flat' (Friedman 2005) appears to be true. Finally, the Beijing consensus is not only a 'Chinese issue' but can at least be seen as well in the perspective from the other capitals of the BRICS-countries: Brasilia, Cape Town/Pretoria/Bloemfontein, Moscow, and New Delhi. On the other hand, we find a tendency to stick in many instances to the 'fascination by the exotic and the evangelistic' as much as without any doubt a significant part of the material resources are still very much mirroring the traditional patterns of the distribution of power, we find a certain reflection of this distribution across the entire range of behaviour.

Cum grano salis all this applies to students and teaching staff alike – and indeed one of the problems is at this stage the extreme 'concentration' and pre-selection: the fact that there are limited numbers of students and staff involved, and that they are more or less only involved in the 'implementation of programmes within a new framework' means not least that major potentials to achieve a new agenda are missed. The fact of frequently in-sufficient communication surely does not help.**[xiv]** The latter is part due to the fact that the running of the programmes and the work in the subject areas are not sufficiently welded together.

Education and Research

In a short article in *The Guardian* Nigel Carrington looks at six myths about how universities spend their tuition fee income (Carrington 2015). He highlights a point that has to be crucial for any considerations on further development; we read that '[i]t is possible to provide high quality education without doing research'. Qualifying this he continues that '[t]his might be true if we see the primary role of higher education as simply producing undergraduates to go straight into employment. It works well, for instance, if your goal is to produce law or accountancy graduates who will go directly into professional careers.

But where does the new knowledge come from that is driving the economy of this country? Largely from the postgraduate community.' This qualification should be driven a bit further though, actually touching at core of the present debate. We can easily read it as statement raising the question of academic education. Taking place at a third level institution does not automatically grant academic orientation. And indeed, we may speak of a tendency to erode a certain kind of scholarly work. This is a multifaceted development that cannot be discussed in the present contribution. However, the fact of the existence of the conflictual field needs to be spelled out. Questions as for instance the following have to be addressed: Should more subjects be academised by way of teaching them in a very narrow sense of advanced skills training? Can academisation offer an opportunity to enhance skills training by offering it at institutions of Third Level Education, enforcing this way the integration of non-academic disciplines into a wider academic framework ('de-academisation of specific functionalities and academisation of general education')?

Should there be a return to an explicitly multilayered system of third level education instead of its implicit maintenance as it had been issued by the 'Bologna-sation'? In which way, if at all, can and should students be more involved in developing at an early stage a research strategy, also preparing them for a more academic orientation in their search of their further careers?

Universities for Students, Society, and Economy
Experiences are important stepping stone for further studies.
On the basis of analysing personal experiences and some – yet not fully explored realm of international education – be that of a student (short or long term abroad), staff (administration/academic, visiting or based in relevant places of employment) and with connection to previously discussed legitimacy trap a certain but still blurry picture starts to (re)appear.

Firstly and in accordance with a small research conveyed**[xv]** and own experiences provided some insight on how the process of students' choice from a very beginning is being formed. Starting with a very sobering but yet increasingly troubling 'parental guidance' that is based on government policies that promote certain degrees (usually the ones contributing instantly towards the job market) which offers predominantly business-orientated higher education on bachelors level such as Finance, Banking, Accounting and Administration and Management or IT, Software Engineering, Computer Science, etc. This is in a sense is a mirror image of the statistical data collected by the US National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES) or UK (British Council 2012) and enhance the notion that it is the market that is dictating (hegemon) in a top bottom process on what/how and when to study to quickly and almost effortlessly finish degrees to enter the world of 9–5 work.

Paradoxically, the current globalisation processes also brought forth the incredible opportunities for universities, students (possibly it is more correct to speak of the ambitions of their parents) and businesses all around the globe. The staggering growth of international joint-venture universities – that in contrast with a 'stand-alone' universities with huge financial backing from governments and/or private sources that provide high-end education for the elites and none for the masses that further disturbs the fragile equilibrium (Ferreira 2006). In this way it transcends the cultural and political boundaries and with setting up of business orientated degrees as its core joint-ventures with an affordable tuitions paves a solid ground for future, diverse degrees and promote the international education due to a number of multinational corporations with high profile seeking future employees (Belyavina, Li, and Bhandari 2013) with such qualities like mobility/languages/cultural awareness and not necessarily educated in top 10 universities.

Finally, this brings us to the character of a student (person) (educated domestically or internationally does not matter) and what he/she really wants. Right within the previously mentioned statements on subject academisation (further understanding) or job specialisation (focus training) lies the reception of experiences that the education offers to the students. Within it (internationally educated matters), we could be able to observe how students from different cultural backgrounds are affected for example on the matter of participation within this different cultural backgrounds. Due to different ways to educate – the international students might differ in reception and engagement; however, it does not define a 'better or worse' but rather deepens our understanding of one and allow being flexible that further the understanding thus quality of teaching that student receives. On the whole we could argue that there are more positives to be taken out of international education experiences but some negatives are being overlooked and neglected – especially the troubles of students coming back from studying abroad and their hardships in 'reconnecting' with the old or the new (depending on the length) which is often described as post study abroad depression.**[xvi]**

To sum up,the dominance of business programme orientated joint-venture brings forth the notion of market dictating the future generation of workers with governments and universities following trends and promoting certain degrees on expanse of others (which is a global issue, not only related to China) due to wide range of pressures coming from a mix of different stakeholders such as market and its current needs that are portrayed by governments which want to fill the gap in the labour market and want students to contribute as soon as possible and most crucially – parents and peers paradoxical pressure on 'climbing a ladder' and at the same time having steady, stress free job.

Education in an International Setting – Part of and Contribution to a Changing the Global Agenda

Joshua Cooper Ramo states in a recent interview in The Diplomat, from August 2016, that '[t]he idea of the Beijing Consensus is less that every nation will follow China's development model, but that it legitimizes the notion of particularity as opposed to the universality of a Washington model' (Elen 2016). Furthermore he contends that [t]oday, we live in a world in deep crisis. And much of this comes from the oversimple assumptions baked into universalizing ideas about political and economic structure. What works in the financial markets of London, we now all see, is not such an easy match after all for the puzzles of Greek finance. The political solutions that have buttressed several hundred years of European history cannot be installed as easily as a McDonald's in the countries of the Middle East (Ibid.).

Indeed, for instance for areas like teaching economics and related topics there is the need to acknowledge change in a more profound way than it is usually done – more or less randomly chosen a report on 'Meeting China's productivity challenge' may point in a relevant direction (McKinsey & Company, August 2016).

Taking this as serious issue on board is also relevant in the present context – only by recognising difference, it will be possible to reach a new and higher consensus – we can learn from the book of Zhuangzi. We find the little story of the butterfly:

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things. **[xvii]**

Taking this seriously, the condition of success of joint ventures depends on recognising them as part of such process of transformation – importantly it will only be workable if it is recognised as one of both sides, namely both sides in terms of national interests – in the given case of China and the UK; and in terms

of substantial interests of academia, i.e. the scientific community and a business oriented university administration, led by increasingly inadequate resource requirements.
Developing here a perspective in the light of globalistics **[xviii]** and Big and Global History (see Rodrigue, Grinin, and Korotayev 2015) two issues are worthwhile to be added, putting things into the perspective of such wider approach to development – and thus as well into the perspective of economic development.

The escalating distancing of the developmental process from the very fundamental basis – Colin Clark's analysis sector (see Clark 1940; for a short contemporary critique see Rothbarth 1941). and its later extension (including a quarternary and quinary sector) and also the perspective of Kondratief Waves (Grinin, Devezas, and Korotayev 2014) offer important insights: at an 'initial stage' we find existence and development as highly 'nature bound', an important aspect of development is, however, the emergence of an increasing distance. Looking more at the psychological and anthropological side, we may speak of artificiality or also of sublimation. Taking these two perspectives – developmental economics and psychological/anthropological – together we see in the narrower perspective of political economy and economics the quasi-separation of use value and exchange value and the emergence of exchange as quasi-independent area of production and exchange.

Paradoxically this leads to re-emphasising the orientation of education to the process of production: science – and with this education – is established as immediate productive force. This has major implications for the global and Big History. Artificial Intelligence as governor of the new epoch is often used as general spectre, painting the fearful picture of complete alienation.

This – and the search for a more positive outlook – brings us to David Ricardo. It can be said that the idea of competitive advantage as dominant issue in economics is going mainly back to his work. However, an important aspect is frequently forgotten: he emphasised that such 'law of comparative advantage depends on one stable currency underlying the relationship of actors as unified reference' (Ricardo 1821: 72 ff.). *Cum grani salis* we can apply this to the context of international education. As long as education looks for a new role in the emerging international setting, the move is very much about gaining and maintaining comparative advantage – using one strong currency as lead currency.

This may also explain the ease with which a specific ‘administrative hegemony could be gained and still can be in large parts maintained: quarrels concerned with the organisation of flights and the eligibility for the different standards as well as formal QA-matters are overshadowing substantial discourses on the different subject areas. And it is, of course, easier to push things forward in the business-related disciplines. However, at the end such system will remain limited to competitive strategies. Moving towards global education, the currency has to be changed, a language of professional standards then returns to the meaning of the standards of the profession, dealing with the discourses and disputes of the various disciplines. The various economic and political dilemmas of the EU show how difficult it is – its foundation was determined by the old language, not daring to admit that the EU would have to be a new currency. The challenge for the future is to find ways that guarantee the variety and specificity of disciplines and national traditions, and still fosters the common exchange. Looking another time at the EU-integration clearly shows that the needed currency has to be one that focuses positively on the realities of people’s life (general character of being educated) and the reality of a use-value, social quality oriented societies instead of functioning economies.

Notes

[i] Of course, such general statement needs to be qualified as it is not necessarily clear what exactly this qualification is about (see Holmquist and Sundin 2010; Frey 2003). And it is also frequently discussed to which extent the finance that are relevant here are actually based on specific anticipated ‘censorship’.

[ii] For example, see Luhmann 1984 and the reference to the work of Maturana and Varela about cognitive biology.

[iii] And even ignorance and insensitivity is a way of processing.

[iv] Referring to Tönnies’ work on Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Tönnies 1887; Darmstadt 1988 (based on the edition from 1935)); in the English translation we find initially the edition Tönnies, Ferdinand: Community and association; translated and supplemented by Charles P. Loomis; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955; later it had been translated as ‘Community and Society’.

[v] See for mode of living and life regime Herrmann, forthcoming.

[vi] See the brief paragraph´Education in an International Setting – Part of and Contribution to Changing the Global Agenda’ at the end of the present contribution.

[vii] In this context see, for example, Universities UK, 2010; Deutscher

Akademischer Austauschdienst/Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln 2016.
[viii] Alluding to Maine's statement of development being characterised as one from status to contract (see Maine 1861).
[ix] URL: http://www.fondations.net/monnet-method-definition/. Accessed 02/10/16.
[x] Economic, political, juridical, cultural, in part in parallel, in part contradictory.
[xi] This is another translation of the words used by Luxemburg whose text was written in German language.
[xii] Even if it had been in fact the search for the universal justification of Christianity and the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church.
[xiii] Looking at the timing, this phase overlaps to a large extent with the phase mentioned before. To some extent we also find a substantial overlap as the church could only maintain its hegemonic position by radically changing some of the basic parameters – the attitude and role of pope Urban VIII in the dispute with Galileo Galilei has to be mentioned here, indeed saying much about the in part existing acknowledgement of fundamental change and the need for opening towards a new understanding of science within the church.
[xiv] In this brief reflection two issues had not been discussed – and indeed they do not fit into any of such typology. (Talking of a typology means as well to admit that the presentation is massively neglecting the fact of a much more quaint and contradictory reality.) Somewhere along the line we find, at times hugely relevant in quantitative terms, and importantly also influential in terms of 'school building' the emigrants and refugees, establishing a new platform for the old thinking, being allowed to carry on their traditions, and feeling secure enough not to submit (entirely) under the new conditions – of course, often also standing outside of the main competition for funding. Another, though most important, point is the issue of 'brain drain' – its exact causes, meaning and understanding.
[xv] Conducted as a series of informal yet annonymous interviews with heads of joint-venture universitites in China for a conference in Shanghai on October, 2016.
[xvi] URL: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/dan-baker-studentuniverse-/post-study-abroad-depress_b_8698630.html; https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jun/04/students-post-year-abroad-blues; https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/post-study-abroad-depression; accessed 6/11/2016.
[xvii] Zhūangzi; URL: https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Zhuangzi; 03/10/16.

[xviii] See in this context Grinin, Korotayev, and Herrmann, in this volume: 'Introduction. How Global can be Global Future?'

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The Single-Payer Breakthrough In California: Robert Pollin On The Economics Of Universal Care

On June 1, California senators voted to replace private health insurance with a single-payer system. Senate Bill 562, by State Senators Ricardo Lara and Toni Atkins, passed 23-14, and will now advance to the Assembly where the measure would require two-thirds vote in both chambers to become law.

Clearly, the June 1 vote by California senators is an initial step toward the adoption of a government-run universal health care system, but it already signifies a major political victory for progressives in this country, who have long advocated for a publicly funded health care system. The proposed measure, i.e., SB-562, was backed by an economic analysis undertaken by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Its lead author, Distinguished Professor of Economics and Co-Director of PERI Robert Pollin, introduced the study at a capitol news conference a day before the State Senate vote — and it was undeniably instrumental in the passing of SB-562. Now that the first hurdle toward the replacement of private health insurance in California with government-run health care has been cleared, we asked Pollin to weigh in on the bill's financial implications and its future. In the exclusive interview below, Robert Pollin discusses why a transition to a truly universal health care system makes economic sense for the state of California — and the country.

C. J. Polychroniou: Bob, could you start by briefly outlining the key features of SB-562 and tell us how you and PERI got involved in providing the financial analysis for the proposed measure?

Robert Pollin: SB-562, in its essentials, proposes a classic single-payer, or Medicare-for-All, health care system for the State of California. That means basically two things: First, everyone in California is guaranteed access to decent health care, regardless of their income level, where they work or whether they have a job at all. This principle is quite straightforward. It is the equivalent to the principle on which we operate public schools in the US. It is also the principle that operates for Medicare right now, covering everyone 65 and over. And second, [the bill provides that] private insurance companies are no longer permitted to offer health care coverage for residents of California.

The way I got involved is also simple: I was asked to get involved by RoseAnn DeMoro, who is the longtime executive director of the California Nurses Association and National Nurses United. In my view, the nurses' union is the most progressive and innovative union in the US and probably the single most effective force for good in US mainstream politics today. So, when they asked me to get involved, it would have been very hard to say "no." On top of that, I have worked with them for years now, on the issue of taxing Wall Street — i.e., the "Robin Hood Tax." In all of my previous work with them, they have had total respect for my independence as a researcher. That is critical. They knew that, if I took this commission, I was doing it to produce a serious piece of analytic work. I was not about to just do cheerleading for them.

One of the major objections launched against SB-562 was that it would be financially unsustainable. However, the study that you and your colleagues undertook says providing universal coverage would increase overall system costs by about 10 percent, but the single-payer system could produce savings of about 18 percent. Can you elaborate a bit on this?

At present, the total cost of health care in California — including everything — is roughly $370 billion. But even with this level of spending — about 14 percent of total GDP in California — there is still about 7.5 percent of California's population (2.7 million people) who have no health insurance, and another 36 percent of the population (about 12 million people) who are underinsured, i.e., they have limited access to health care because their insurance premiums, deductibles and/or co-payments are extremely high relative to their income levels. My co-authors James Heintz, Peter Arno and Jeannette Wicks-Lim and I estimated that to provide good health care to all those who are presently either uninsured or underinsured would raise total system costs to about $400 billion, assuming that the health care system remained intact otherwise. We then estimated that, with the single-payer system, we could extract about 18 percent in total cost savings. We get those savings through reducing excessive administration, controlling pharmaceutical prices, fixing fees for doctors and hospitals at Medicare rates, and reducing the high degree of waste in the present system of service provision (such as doctors ordering excessive procedures).

Through these cost-control measures, we estimate that the single-payer system can provide everyone in California with decent health care at a total cost of $330 billion, i.e., a savings of about 8 percent relative to the current system while still delivering universal coverage.

Adding new taxes is always a controversial issue with voters, so what type of taxes does the study propose to generate the revenue required to sustain a universal health care system in California?

Right now, federal, state and municipal financing covers about 70 percent of all health care expenditures in California. At present, federal law requires the federal government to continue providing the current level of spending even if a state organizes its own health care system differently than the prevailing federal law, which, to date, is still the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"). That means that the current public funding will cover about $225 billion of the total $330 billion in total spending needed to operate single-payer in California. We therefore still need to raise an additional $105 billion. To do that, we propose two new taxes: (1) a gross receipts tax on all California businesses of 2.3 percent, but with the first $2 million in business receipts exempted from the tax. This means that small businesses will pay no gross receipts taxes; (2) a 2.3 percent sales tax increase. This would exempt spending on housing, utilities and food. It would also provide a 2 percent income tax credit for low-income families who are now on MediCal (the California-based version of Medicaid).

Overall, both the gross receipts tax and the sales tax are quite progressive in their overall impact. Small businesses will pay nothing and most low-income families will pay nothing or only a very small amount.

There are close to 3 million uninsured residents in California today. What will be the impact of providing "free" health care coverage to them on the current expenditure level?

It will be transformative. They will have full access to health care for the first time. It will also save them money. For example, right now the average low-income family in California — including those receiving MediCal support — is paying around $700 per year in out-of-pocket costs for health care. These expenses will be gone.

What type of benefits will accrue for residents of California with the adoption of a universal health care system?

Under the California single-payer proposal, net health care spending for middle-income families falls sharply, to an average of 0.8 percent of these families' income level. This represents a reduction in health care spending for California's middle-income families of between 2.6 percent and 9.1 percent of income. By contrast, with California's high-income families, health care costs will rise, but still only to an average of 0.6 percent of their average income level. At present, California's high-income families are receiving a net subsidy of 1 percent of their income to support their health care coverage.

The Economic Analysis of the Healthy California Single-Payer Health Care

Proposal (SB-562) does not expand into the question of how the transition from a private health care system to a universal one might affect employment and growth levels, but can you speculate on the possible impact that this might have on the economy for the state of California in general?

The Healthy California plan is actually a windfall for most businesses in California, because it frees these businesses from having to pay for health insurance and to manage these plans for their workers. True, they will have to now pay the 2.3 percent gross receipts tax on receipts over $2 million. Still, on balance, we find that all the representative firms of all sizes are at least no worse off through Healthy California relative to conditions with the existing system. In most cases, the firms [will] be significantly better off. Thus, small firms that have been providing private health care coverage for their workers will see their health care costs fall by 22 percent as a share of payroll. The small firms that have not provided coverage will still make zero payments for health care under Healthy California, since their average level of gross receipts falls well below the $2 million threshold for receiving a tax exemption.

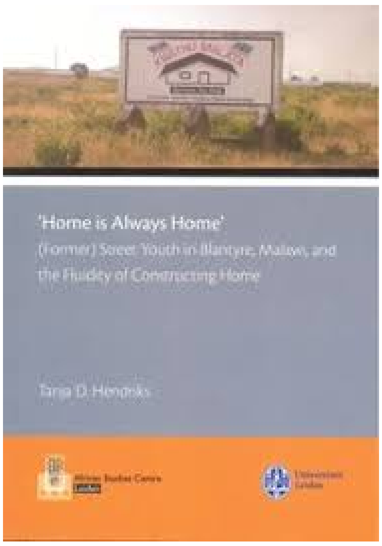
Medium-sized firms will see their health care costs fall by between 6.8 and 13.4 percent as a share of payroll under Healthy California relative to the existing system. Even firms with up to 500 employees will experience a fall in their net health care costs of 5.7 percent as a share of payroll relative to the existing system. Finally, the largest firms in California, which employ an average of 1,143 workers and receive gross receipts, on average, of $487.3 million, will experience a decline in their health care spending of 0.6 percent as a share of payroll under Healthy California relative to what they presently pay.

Are you optimistic about the chances of the Healthy California Act being enacted? Also, what do you think progressives and California residents should do in the meantime to make sure that the concept of a single-payer system becomes a reality, and thus help the US move closer toward adopting a human health care system and be in line with the rest of the advanced industrialized world?

I was amazed that the California State Senate approved of the single-payer plan on Thursday, June 1, literally one day after we publicly presented our study. So that is certainly grounds for optimism. On the other hand, there is no avoiding the fact this measure represents a total transformation of a huge sector of California's economy — 14 percent of the state's GDP.

Moving from where we are at present, with one initial legislative victory, to full enactment of the proposal, then implementing the proposal in a way that really works for people, will entail many more difficult steps. But my impression is that the people of California are ready for this. According to the most recent polling evidence, 70 percent of California residents support single-payer. That level of support should certainly continue to get the attention of the state's legislators as well as Governor Jerry Brown.

Tanja D. Hendriks ~ 'Home Is Always Home'. (Former) Street Youth In Blantyre, Malawi, And The Fluidity Of Constructing Home



For many Malawians the concept of home is strongly associated with the rural areas and one's (supposedly rural) place of birth. This 'grand narrative about home', though often reiterated, doesn't necessarily depict lived reality. Malawi's history of movement and labor migration coupled with contemporary rapid urbanization makes that the amount of people whose lives do not fit this grand narrative, is increasing fast.

In the current context of extreme poverty, destitution and devastation – the latter due to the flash floods of January 2015 – slum areas in Blantyre city are growing and so is the number of street children and youth. Some of them are taken in by organizations such as the Samaritan Trust; a street children shelter. This program aims at taking street youth home by ‘reintegrating’ them in their (rural) communities. When asked, the majority of (former) street youth adhere to the grand narrative and state their home to be in a rural village. Yet at the same time, this home is a place they intentionally left and do not wish to (currently) return to. Hence they are generally depicted as ‘homeless’. I wondered: how do (former) street youth in Blantyre, Malawi, engage with ‘the grand narrative about home’ in trying to imagine their ‘becoming at home’ in the city?

My thesis departs from the idea that (the search for) home is an integral part of the human condition. During eight months of ethnographic fieldwork in Blantyre, Malawi, I used qualitative methods – mainly interviews and participant observation – to come to an understanding of the meaning of home for (former) street youth. Some of them, the street girls, currently reside at Samaritan Trust and the former street youth are boys who formerly resided there. Their home-making practices in relation to a marginalized socio-economic position in an overall challenging economic context point towards more fluid and diverse constructions of home that exist alongside the grand narrative without rendering it obsolete. Under pressure, (former) street youth paradoxically attempt to solidify home – even though home remains fluid in practice.

These attempts assist in coping with life in liquid modernity while they are at the same time fraught with contradictions, especially when these solidifications are themselves solidified in policies. These policies subsequently hamper (former) street youth’s becoming at home in town by following the grand narrative and thus confining their homes to rural areas. I conclude that home can best be seen as a fluid field of tensions (re)created in the everyday, thus leaving space for both (former) street youth’s roots and routes. An alternative way in which (former) street youth try to become at home in the city is by searching for a romantic partner to co-construct this (future) home.

This book is based on Tanja D. Hendriks’ Master’s thesis ‘‘Home is Always Home’: (Former) Street Youth in Blantyre, Malawi, and the Fluidity of Constructing Home’, winner of the African Studies Centre Leiden’s 2016 Africa Thesis Award. This annual award for Master’s students encourages student research and writing on Africa and promotes the study of African cultures and societies.

Read the book: http://www.ascleiden.nl/home-always-home-former-street-youth-blantyre-malawi-and-fluidity-constructing-home

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Stephen Ellis & Gerrie ter Haar ~ Africa's Religious Resurgence And The Politics Of Good And Evil

Charles Taylor – Former President of Liberia

Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, can be found every workday sitting in the dock of a small, bright, ultramodern courtroom in The Hague. Taylor is accused of responsibility for some of the gravest crimes imaginable— atrocities committed in Liberia's neighbor to the northwest, Sierra Leone, during that country's 1991–2002 civil war. The crimes include authorizing mass recruitment of child soldiers, mass rape, and hacking off the hands of hundreds of people. Yet Taylor is known as a man who devotes considerable attention to religious matters. His example serves as a reminder that combining the practice of religion with the use of extreme violence is not as unusual as one might think.

The ex-president does not dispute that these crimes actually occurred. Nor does he deny that equally terrible things happened in his own country during the war that was fought there, off and on, between 1989 and 2003. But the charges against him concern Sierra Leone, not Liberia. And he maintains that the atrocities perpetrated in Sierra Leone were none of his doing. It is the first time an African head of state has ever stood trial before an international tribunal. Taylor is appearing before the Special Court for Sierra Leone—a hybrid body created jointly by the state of Sierra Leone and the United Nations. The case is being heard in the Netherlands rather than West Africa for security reasons: Taylor still has a few influential friends in the region.

Most of the time Taylor, born in Liberia in 1948, resembles nothing so much as the benign patriarch of a wealthy family. He wears a dark business suit, a silk tie, and lightly tinted glasses. He has a chunky gold watch on his wrist. He chats affably with his lawyers. Yet not only is he standing trial for war crimes; his eldest son, Charles Taylor Jr., better known as "Chuckie," currently awaits trial in Florida on charges of torture. Taylor's speeches, in the days when he was Liberia's head of state (1997–2003), were full of extravagant references to Jesus. He once declared to a mass rally that Jesus Christ was the true president of Liberia, and he is often described as having been a Baptist preacher. It is also reported that he joined the Nation of Islam during the year when he was held in a Massachusetts jail awaiting extradition to his home country. (Taylor had escaped to America from Liberia in 1983—apparently with $900,000 of government money in his possession—after a dispute with the country's military dictator. Detained by us authorities at the request of the Liberian government, which wanted to try him for embezzlement, Taylor escaped from the Plymouth House of Correction in 1985.)

Read more: https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/ASC-071342346-186-01.pdf?

Will California Show The Way To

The Rest Of The US On Health Care?

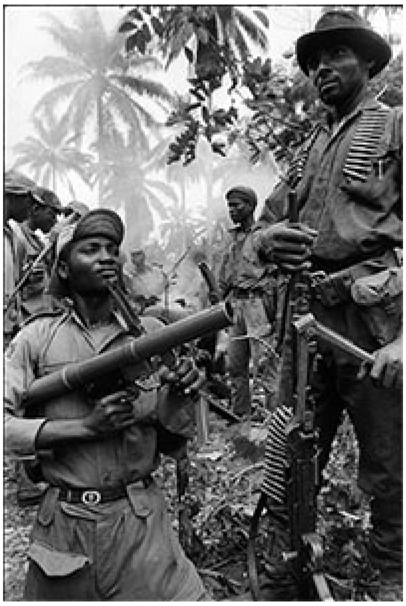
Since the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, the news coming out of the US are gloomy and pessimistic. Yet, resistance to Trumpism is growing across the country, and there are even highly encouraging developments at the state level, such as the effort to introduce a universal health care system in the state of California.

Indeed, on June 1, California senators voted to replace private health insurance with a single-payer system. Senate Bill 562, by senators Ricardo Lara and Toni Atkins, passed 23-14, and will now advance to the Assembly where the measure would require two-thirds vote in both chambers to become law.

Clearly, the June 1 vote by California senators is an initial step towards the adoption of a government-run universal health care system, but it already signifies a major political victory for progressives in the United States, who have long advocated for a publicly-funded health care system. The proposed measure, i.e., SB-562, was backed by an economic analysis undertaken by The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. It's lead author, Distinguished Professor of Economics and Co-Director of PERI Robert Pollin, introduced the study at a Capitol news conference a day before the State Senate vote — a move that was undeniably instrumental in the passing of SB-562 which cleared the first huddle towards the replacement of private health insurance in California with government-run health care. The full content of the aforementioned study can be downloaded at the link below.

Link: PollinZetZalZECONOMICZANALYSISZOFZCAZSINGLE-PAYERZPROPOSAL—5-31-17 (1)

The Nigerian-Biafran War



May 30 2017 marks the 50th birthday of the declaration of independence of the republic of Biafra, leading up to a 30-month civil war between federal Nigerian troops and the (Igbo) secessionists. On the occasion of this anniversary, the Library, Documentation and Information Department at the African Studies Centre in Leiden (ASCL) has compiled a web dossier on the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), also known as the Biafran War.

Far from being an exhaustive or even representative overview of the record of scholarship that has appeared on this topic, this dossier is an attempt to highlight different discourses reflected in the ASCL Library's collection. After the introduction, section 2 presents a selection of publications on the war, ranging from a 1967 propaganda leaflet by the Nigerian government of information (Unity in Diversity) to a 2016 article on 'the tensions in Nigeria-Biafra war discourses'. A highlight of this section is a collection of student essays on the civil war written in 1971 at the Toro teacher's college. The cahiers were donated by their teacher, Aart Rietveld. Noteworthy is also the civil war chapters in the textbook series on civics and history for primary schools.

The third section deals with fictional accounts, personal narratives and poetry on the Biafran conflict, illustrating how much more literature there is than the (rightly famous) writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Adichie and Achebe.

Sections 4,5 and 6 capture the conflict through the biographical lenses of key actors. Writings by and about the two political protagonists, General Gowon (Nigerian head of state 1966–1975) and General Ojukwu (president of Biafra 1967–1971), give an insight into the federal and Igbo perspectives of the conflict. The third person chosen for this biographical section is the Yoruba nationalist Obafemi Awolowo, who was active as Federal Commissioner for Finance in Gowon's cabinet during the war. Chinua Achebe portrays Awolowo as the architect of the starvation policy meant to crush the Igbo defence: “It is my impression that Chief Obafemi Awolowo was driven by an overriding ambition for power, for himself in particular and for the advancement of his Yoruba people in general. […] In the Biafran case it meant hatching up a diabolical policy to reduce the numbers of his enemies significantly through starvation […].”(*There was a country*, p. 233). This view contrasts strongly with the almost hagiographic accounts of “the man of courage , wisdom, reason and vision” (according to Moses Makinde).

The dossier is concluded with a selection of web resources and is introduced by former LeidenASA fellow Jays Julius-Adeoye, who recently published ‘The Nigeria-Biafra war, popular culture and agitation for sovereignty of Biafra nation’ in the ASCL working paper series.