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Space, Place and Scale:
Reframing the Open Method of Co-ordination
for 'Education and Training 2010'

Peter D. Jones

Graduate School of Education
University of Bristol

p.d.jones@bristol.ac.uk

Abstract

In this paper I argue that we can usefully address the nature, significance and range of effects of the OMC for Education and Training by adopting the theoretical perspectives on space, place and scale from the fields of economic geography and state theory. In particular, the distinctions offered by Collinge (1999), Brenner (2001), Jessop (2004, 2005) and Barbier (2004) provide a framework for investigating and problematising some of the sedimented and increasingly common sense assessments of the production of the European education space, the activities and practices in the Brussels policy places and the production of a scale of authority at the EU level. Methodologically, this paper follows Scharpf (2001) in wanting to pursue lines of argumentation which outline clear distinctions which make a difference in the way in which we conceive of the subjects and objects of study. The aim is to go against the grain of judgements which have become common place and which cut at the joints of explanations which have been offered.

Speaker

Peter Jones is currently completing his PhD Thesis: *'The European Commission and Education Policy: An Ethnographic Discourse Analysis'* under the supervision of Professors Susan Robertson and Roger Dale. The thesis develops an innovative approach to methodology in order to make sense of the complex multi-scalar development of education policy within the European Union and draws on ethnographic participant observation with the European Commission. Peter has a developing interdisciplinary research profile within the field of comparative education, economic geography and political science. He is a reviewer for the Journal *'Globalisation, Societies and Education'* and a contributor to the *GlobalHigherEd* blog (www.globalhighered.wordpress.com).

Introduction

The Lisbon Strategy, the launch of the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) and the developments as part of the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme have led to intense academic study of the meanings, significance and effects of a European Union profile in education policy development. This paper adopts a scale-theoretic approach to provides a critical assessment of the research conducted to date, an identification of the theoretical and methodological problems which are developing and suggestions about how notions of space, place and scale within an approach to multi-level governance, can open up ways for moving beyond what have become the sedimented sets of questions about and explanations for the development of an EU education policy.

Lisbon and the OMC – what do we think we know?

The origins of the Lisbon Strategy and the development of the OMC as the new governance paradigm have been explained in a number of ways. The standard view is that the OMC developed out of the European Employment Strategy and that the causes of that strategy apply equally to other social policy areas. According to this view (Streeck, 1996), the completion of the single market, the moves to monetary union and the establishment of the Stability and Growth Pact produced new and common problems related to growth, jobs and social cohesion. The EES was 'thus an answer and solution to a twofold unbalance generated by the acceleration of EU economic integration: an unbalance generated by the acceleration of EU economic integration: an unbalance between highly integrated EU monetary policies and insufficient macro-economic coordination, an unbalance between EU economic integration over EU social integration' (Goetschy, 2004, p. 2) At the same time, the diversity of social policy regimes and treaty provisions about subsidiarity and national competence meant that the path-finding EES provided a template for achieving 'a feasible balance between the need to respect diversity among member states, and the unity – and meaning – of common EU action' (Borras and Jacobsson, 2004, p. 186) In sum, there was a common structure of problems and the need to find comparable and coherent answers and even perhaps 'common responses in areas where legal competences rest with the member states' (Borras and Jacobsson, 2004, p. 186) And the underlying rationale is that the necessity of the development of an EU profile in social policy areas is based on an economy of scale argument: it is more efficient and effective to deal with common problems in a common way rather than individually. The political, contradictory and conflictual element of such seemingly fateful decisions is framed in terms of the regaining of sovereignty 'in the hope of recreating the social protection capabilities that are eroding at the national level' (Scharpf, 2001, p. 13)

The Lisbon Strategy is an assertion of common challenges and a wish list of aspirations. The OMC is presented as making it possible for a common EU policy repertoire to be developed on the basis of new activities, development of a common political, economic and sociological discourse and the dissemination of policy ideas throughout the European space and at all scales of governance and activity. Policy preferences and choices would be modified as a result. The presumed mechanism for all this would be cognitive coordination and increasing socialisation of actors to their new European identities and roles and the methods would be the EES tool box of common objectives, indicators, benchmarks and peer learning. A review of the OMC literature (Pochet, 2001, Borras and Jacobsson 2004, Schaefer, 2004) gives further specifications of how

the OMC is expected to achieve its effects and through which mechanisms. (See Table 1)

OMC Policy Activity	OMC Policy Outcomes	OMC Policy Mechanisms
Agenda-setting	Problem definition	Discourse
Agenda-interpretation	Problem awareness	Indicators
Agenda-amplification	Problem interaction	Benchmarks
Negotiations	Problem solutions	Peer Learning
Problem-solving	Problem implications	Actor identity formation
Decisions	Changed values	Rules of the game
	Changed preferences	Politicization
	Changed governance	De-politicization
	Changed systems	Economization
	Changed system content	De-economization
		Supranationalization
		Intergovernmentalization

Table. 1. OMC Activity, Outcomes, Effects and Mechanisms

As with so much of the literature on policy learning, policy transfer and the institutionalist perspectives of norming and forming, too little of the context and agency of learners and teachers in the processes is considered. What we get is the sociologically rather thin notions of trust, mutual accountability and coming to change through coming to value through coming to know. So from Hingel (2001) , we get the view that 'The 'Europeanization' of education has provoked the development of a strong feeling of 'mutual accountability' between Ministers of Education' (Hingel, 2001, p. 13) Policy development is supposed to happen through inherently social and psychological processes ranging from the rarefied and rational 'Learning on the basis of deliberation' (Gornitzka, 2005, p. 4), to the punitive and disciplinary modes of naming and shaming all the way through to the affective and subtle shaping of policy language and standardisation.

Much of the thinking about Lisbon and the OMC have worked with an implicit version of governmentality. The focus has been on the identification of technologies and mechanisms of governance which 'contract, consult, negotiate, create partnerships, empower and activate forms of agency, liberty and the choice of individuals in their different capacities. However, they also set norms, standards, benchmarks, performance indicators, quality controls and best practice standards, to monitor, measure and render calculable the performance of these various individuals or agencies' (Haahr, 2004, p. 216) I would argue that, in the end too much of the writing about the OMC has difficulty in accommodating agents, strategies, resistance and hierarchies of power. And it is the identification of the importance of these which constitutes the major gap in our understanding.

Lisbon and the OMC – what don't we know?

In terms of the OMC for education and training, I would argue that surprisingly little attention has been paid to the fact that this is *education* policy development; rather there is a tendency to address education policy by analogy with other areas of social policy, in particular the European Employment Strategy. And yet, for all the talk of the importance of education and training policy within human capital and innovation policy, the histories of education reform rhetoric and practices have received little

attention. The common position is that taken by Gornitzka (2005) in emphasising the 'sensitivity' of national education policy as if that were the key constraint on multi-level EU governance engagement with national and EU policy development. What seems to be missing is the sense that education policy as a distinct field has always been the site of competing strategies and constructions and that there is no necessary link between policy and scale. In sum then, I would argue that we need to adopt the Ginsburg et al (1990) position that 'reform rhetoric may not be concretely connected with efforts to change anything fundamentally about schools. In this case the object may be to define what the problems and possible solutions are, even if no sustained effort is launched' (Ginsburg et al, 1990, p. 493) I would argue that we still know far too little about why, under what conditions and with what expected effects, actors are developing education policy at the European level. The strategic selectivity of activity, the opportunities and resources, the competitive core to the cooperative mode, these are all areas which we do not know enough about.

I would suggest that one of the reasons for this is that the naming of the Open Method of Coordination and its application to the field of education policy has produced a curious reification of the object of study; what was conceived of as a process becomes, through the activities of study and conceptualisation an object with causal powers. The effect of this is to produce a view of EU education policy processes as a coherent and sustainable body of policy activity which very much like the stately glide of the swan, disguises the efforts, strategic shifts and almost impossible nature of the underlying mechanics. The 'official' view of the OMC for education is that it has developed over the long run and been strategically brokered by entrepreneurial actors from the Commission and the Member States (Corbett, 2003, Hingel, 2001). This view is difficult to square with the idea that 'OMCs can be launched (and dropped) easily' (NewGov, 2005, p. 17) or the ways in which OMCs have tended to morph into the ideal-type OMC, the European Employment Strategy. The dynamics of movement and maintenance, the experimentation and failure, the shifts in focus and the contingencies of bigger politics and economics all tend to fall outside of analysis. As a result we are in no position to even speculate about what will happen when the 2010 deadline has come and gone or what would condition the development or atrophication of EU education policy at that point.

A central role within the OMC is accorded to discourse. EU level discourses are supposedly producing a space with a shared policy vision, a shared policy language and a shared sense of a common destiny. What I would call 'discourse mystification' is perhaps the most difficult areas for us to even think. It would be counter-intuitive to assert that when all actors are speaking from the same script in choreographed policy moves over regular cycles of policy making performance, that this is entirely insignificant. But the most important contemporary literature on discourse analysis(Blommaert, 2005) calls upon us to think again about the contexts of meaning and interpretation and the fundamentally social nature of language as interaction. As soon as we introduce the logic of dramaturgy then we have to abandon our suspension of disbelief and see the theatricality and artificiality of the policy stage, the arbitrariness of the institutional décor and the ambiguities in terms of audience.. This is something of a commonplace but it bears repeating: what appears to be significant changes in language and discourse can be no such thing. At the same time, sharing the same discourse 'is certainly not incompatible with an extreme variety of domestic economic and social policies, which can be globally correlated to very different social 'outcomes', in terms of redistribution, well-being and inequality, even in a context where monetary norms are prominent in the global international economy' (Barbier, 2004, p. 14) Again,

one of the core tenets of thinking about the OMC seems to rest on the flimsiest of discursive theories. We really need to remember that policy discourse is often little more than cant and that we cannot assume 'a wide-spread homogenisation of ideas across all European countries' (Barbier, 2005, p. 63) A contrarian view would want to ask questions about the depth and importance of the repetition of discourses which are hardly novel, the involvement of small elites, the question of only superficial adaptation to the rules of highly specific Brussels contexts with particular rules of recognition and the multiple identities of policy actors.

I would also suggest that we are still very far from being able to think about what has been called the 'significance and effects debate' at the level of actors participating in the processes (Dale, 2004). Clearly, initiatives have been launched, indicators drawn up, benchmarks agreed, networks established, policy papers written of which some have been through the deliberations of the range of EU institutions to emerge as EU policy recommendations. And all of these things have involved people acting as representatives of governments, civil services, special interest groups, academic communities etc. At some level this is a significant phenomenon. As Walters and Haahr (2005) make clear, there is a clear empirical significance to the fact that, in the case of Denmark, 140 national civil servants not previously involved in EU affairs are now shuttling backwards and forwards involved in OMC processes. What they do there or what they do back in Denmark is quite another matter however. Again, it would be difficult to argue that there has been nothing of significance going on. As Barbier says, 'because representatives of national administrations have been constantly involved in these activities, Member States have had to adjust their traditional work and functioning accordingly. Other actors – like for instance social partners' organisations – also have had to devote new resources to be able to participate in these activities' (Barbier, 2004, p. 5) At the level of actors involvement in institutional activity though , I would suggest that we still understand far too little about who is taking part, in what ways, with what kinds of authority and that until we do we will not be able to move forward with even the definition of what might be a significant effect.

The establishment of working groups and networks is again at a certain level significant. They create the opportunity for policy spaces and places to be developed and for ideas to be tested. It is a big leap from this however to the positions outlined by Lawn and Lingard, that we are witnessing the establishment of a 'new 'magistracy of influence' in the European educational policy domain: a policy elite that acts across borders, displays a similar habitus, have a feel for the same policy game and are, in a sense, bearers of an emergent European educational policy and policy space' (Lawn and Lingard, 2002, p. 292) In Wallace's (2001) terms, the establishment of networks in and of itself tells us nothing about the degree of delegation of authority to the networks. For Gornitzka 'Some of these working groups function as organised arenas used by the Commission as 'hired help' for developing recommendation and action plans that the Commission has been charged to develop by the Council' (Gornitzka, 2005, p. 19) In his study of the development of EU health policy, Guigner (2004) questions the degree to which the formation of expert networks has been able to be mobilised for the development of EU policy. The key question might well be the extent to which experts are allowed to function in a parallel world to the political world which in the end grants or does not grant them status. The development of networks of influence seemingly spreading like a web throughout the European education space and coming to form an increasingly 'thick' and 'dense' tapestry of policy formation is perhaps most clearly

articulated by Lawn and Lingard (2002). For them, 'significant policy actors in education are working today face to face and virtually in joint governmental projects and networking translating, mediating and constructing educational policies' (Lawn and Lingard, 2002, p. 290) But what happens if the core features of this description start to look more than a little threadbare, does the notional significance of this start to fall apart too? What if the actors are not significant? What if the working has more in common with masks and unstable identities, with saving face and making the right faces rather than with open and deliberative joint action? What if the translation, mediation and construction has more to do with strategic selectivity rather than making common cause? In sum, what if the networks are apparatuses for the playing out of existing policy dynamics rather than the construction of new ones? Again, we can speculate about the influence and importance of networks but we really have very little idea about their significance for policy.

Of course, the weaknesses of the OMC in terms of national policy reform have been well-recognised. However, I think it is important to specify exactly where the weaknesses lie. Reading against the grain of analyses which focus on behaviour modification through being made accountable, I would want to draw attention to the capacity of policy actors to engage in practices which fundamentally redefine the terms of both surveillance and accountability. So the involvement of national actors in the reporting of national policy can take the form of 'producing detailed national reports, more for the benefit of promoting national policies than to comply with EU strategic goals' (Boras and Greves, 2004, p. 333) The production of indicators and benchmarks is never neutral and the validity of both assessment and evaluation is always contestable. To be named and shamed is hardly likely to be accepted unconditionally and 'naming and shaming, one of the more vaunted aspects of the method cannot bite if the shamed can retort that indicators do not capture the specificities of the situation' (NewGov, 2005, p. 31) And even before the use of indicators reaches the point at which disciplinary surveillance could have an effect, there is ample scope for 'participants to manipulate the evidence to what is seen to be required' (Arrowsmith et al, 2004, p. 321) In terms of Peer Learning too, the experience in other policy domains and institutional settings tends to indicate that there is plenty of scope for a refusal of the position which audit constructs on the grounds that 'the process is flawed by such factors as unqualified examiners, bias stemming from national interests, or inadequate standards or criteria' (Pagani, 2002, p. 13) In essence the supposed mechanisms of policy development will always leave plenty of scope for a refusal by actors representing particular interests to go along with the programmes logic, instead substituting their own.

Running, throughout these lacunae in our knowledge and understanding are two propositions. The first is that without detailed, on the ground, ethnographic, inside involvement, participation and observation, developing a concrete understanding of the actions, motivations, choices and importance of actors involved in these processes will always be beyond us. Secondly, there is the nagging doubt that for all the activity, the OMC for education and training might appear, partly through academic study of it, as more significant than it actually is. And there is an unavoidable question then, at what point do we address the sites where policy, EU-inspired, EU-friendly or EU-resistant, is implemented. For Barbier, any EU level policy 'would remain a pure fiction (a pure symbol, in a way) were it not explicitly grafted onto national policies, which are embedded in their existing systems of social protection' (Barbier, 2004, p. 4)

Space, Place and Scale

The difficulties in thinking about the OMC for education and training are perhaps best demonstrated by recognition of the fecundity with which researchers have attempted to produce an adequate vocabulary for the dynamics of policy development. Should we be talking about 'Trans- rather than supranational'(Borras and Jacobsson, 2004, p. 201)? Is it 'intensive trans-governmentalism'(Wallace, 2001, p. 592)? Or is it intensified neo-voluntarism (Streeck, 1996) Are the actors engaged in 'Competitive solidarity' (Streeck, 1999). If we are talking about 'reinforced cooperation' (Borras and Jacobsson, 2004, p. 185), what is the significance of *force* and what impact does this have on cooperation? Clearly the difficulty arises in trying to analyse the interactions of 'economic and social policy in and across many different scales of action with the participation of a wide range of official, quasi-official, private economic interests, and representatives of civil society' (Jessop, 2004, p. 58) I would argue though that in addition to a reconsideration of the efficacy of the conceptual terrain which the OMC presents to us, we need to revisit the lines of force, the conditions which produce fields of opportunity and constraint and the structural conditions for the actions of agents within the field of education policy. And it is here, I will argue, that a scale-theoretic approach can make an important contribution.

Some attempts have been made to think about the meaning, significance and effects of the OMC for education and training using a scale approach. The problem so far though has been that scale arguments have transposed to the EU scale, arguments which were more common in thinking about the state and education policy. So, Robertson and Dale (2003), suggested that what they termed a functional and scalar division of labour was developing in which we might see signs that 'the focus of European activity in the educational sphere, at both the supranational and the national levels will be on the *capacity* of education systems rather than their *mandate* or their *governance*, and on their *effectiveness* rather than their *efficiency*' (Robertson and Dale, 2003, p. 12) The attempt to map particular functions to particular scales of activity tends to assume a rather too neat scalar division and functional division. What is missing is a relational sense that capacity, mandate, effectiveness and efficiency are inextricably linked and therefore that any activity at any scale would need to deal with challenges simultaneously. I would argue that the scalar division of labour approach would be usefully developed by a clearer analytical focus on distinctions between space, place and scale combined with an empirical examination of what aspects of education policy with what kinds of interconnectedness are being worked through. My intention here is not to adopt a scale-*centric* approach which would be akin to transposing to the EU level the faults of a *state*-centric approach with all the attendant functionalist and normative baggage that comes with it. Rather, I argue that a scale-*theoretic* approach which makes possible the identification of a repertoire of scalar positions at which experimental and path-seeking policy practices and regimes are developed.

Collinge (1999) provides three possible categories for thinking about scale within complex multi-level governance arrangements. For him, a useful heuristic is to think in terms of *dominant* scales, *nodal* scales and *marginal* scales. Dominant scales are able to exercise power over institutions at other scales; nodal scales are not dominant overall but are important for the development of certain activities which may have impacts on other scales; marginal scales are important as sites of the management of resistance. I would argue that using this kind of framework makes it possible to conceive of the

processes of the OMC for education and training as being about the conflicts surrounding what form of scale the EU is.

Brenner (2001), develops an additional perspective on scale. His emphasis is on the political contestation which leads to processes by which 'entrenched scalar configurations are continually junked and remade through intense socio-political struggles' (Brenner, 2001, p. 592) Such struggles take place in particular places in which the capacity to influence the junking and remaking is contingent on the relations between the place, scale and space. In Brenner's terms then, the European education space is made, defined and struggled over in particular institutional spaces in Brussels by actors who derive their legitimacy and actorliness from other (national and sub-national) spaces.

Now, the conceptualisation of the EU as a complex field of overlapping, nested and related authority and influence does not begin with theories of scale. The multi-level governance literature addressed precisely this point. However, too often the vocabularies of multi-level governance produce a limited view of the EU as 'composed of distinct policy making levels' when 'rather it should be used to explore the EU as a highly fluid system of governance, characterised by the complex interpenetration of the national, sub-national and supranational; as a multi-perspectival domain of complex overlapping spaces with a multi-level institutional architecture and a dispersion of authority' (Rosamond, 2001, p. 160) What I think is added to the power of the analysis is a sense of the struggle and resources for struggle over the architecture of interaction in which places and spaces are dialectically related. If we add to this the analytical distinctions between in Barbier's (2004) terms, the places which serve as *forums* or *arenas*, I think we come closer to being able to address the absence of strategic actors in too much of the literature on the OMC.

One further development of a scale-theoretical perspective is particularly useful. Jessop sees 'self-reflexive irony' as an important component of the social ontology of the actors within governance practices as they grapple with the 'distinctive modalities of success, failure, tension, crisis, reflexivity and crisis management' (Jessop, 2004, p. 73) For Jessop, a multi-scalar ensemble of institutions and social relations such as the EU needs to be seen as necessarily involved in an unstable, restless, and reflexive search for articulations of regimes and modes of government/governance in the face of continual market, state and governance failures (Jessop,2004, p.49). Irony in this sense is a mode of behaviour and the analysis of OMC can usefully be framed within a recognition of how the instability of context and the uncertainty of outcome will produce provisional and contingent institutional and discursive modifications. The analysis of such modifications needs to take place within a framework which embraces instability, frames the instability adequately in terms of temporality and *relative* durability and sees modification as the result of actors self-reflexive and strategically selective choices.

As an antidote to the reification of OMC processes and with a view to opening up ways of addressing the gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the OMC processes, I would want to argue that what we have witnessed is part of a restless search for a productive scale for the governance of the European and national policy spaces which takes place through 'everyday habits, routines, practices, negotiations, experiments, conflicts and struggles' (Brenner, 2001, p. 605) I would argue that such an approach is indispensable because as Wallace asserts, 'the daily practice of the EU refuse to settle into a sufficiently regular pattern for its political processes to be clearly defined' (Wallace, 2001, p. 581). In addition though, Jessop's ironic perspective helps to address

the necessarily tentative and exploratory nature of space, place and scale dynamics within the OMC because it helps us to face Brenner's suitably ironic view that 'the mere *existence* of scalar organization does not, *ipso facto*, result in sociological or politically relevant *scale effects*' (Brenner, 2001, p. 601)

Space, Place and Scale: the OMC Education and Training 2010

So what kinds of questions are opened up for an analysis of this particular OMC by scale-theoretic approaches?

In terms of the Commission at the heart of the process, I would argue that it has been able to use its powers of initiative to promote policies which construct the European education space which provides it with its legitimacy and sources of claims for legitimacy. It is only because of its super-vision that it has been able to claim the right to supervise. In this sense the collection of indicators and national reports has been fundamentally important for its position as coordinator-in-chief of the processes. The Commission's establishment of networks have been a part of this since they allow for a genuine sense of knowing and being involved in education policy communities throughout the European education space. And its position in terms of space and place is remarkably secure. As Gornitzka says, 'its position would be hard to fill for any other national administration, or international organisations' secretariat as it connects permanent administrative capacity with trans-national actors, agencies and national administrations, and not in the least provides the link to the general infrastructure of the EU outside the education sector' (Gorntizka, 2007, p. 27) The Commission's role within the Brussels places is equally unassailable. Commission actors act within the rules and obligations which are clearly established for such places and participants in policy formation would obviously be expected to respond to the Commission in terms of its secure position within the Brussels spaces. What happens outside the Brussels spaces would be another matter altogether.

And the Brussels places have been filled with all sorts of productive activity. Since 2000 there is no area of education policy which has not been addressed in one way or another. Table 2 gives a select overview of policy development around the key questions of governance of education (goals, objective and policy mechanisms), education system management (size of system, systemacity of system, financial sustainability of system) and content of education (curriculum, assessment, quality and pedagogy). If anyone is left in any doubt about the inadequacy of notions of subsidiarity in making aspects of education policy off limits, this surely provides the proof. The notion of supplementary and complementary activities is surely too, pushed to the very edges of semantic angels dancing on the heads of pins. The treaty as it stands is not being defended and certainly not by its supposed guardian the Commission.

Within the Brussels places, the Commission has clearly been called upon to fulfil a wide-range of roles. Using Barbier's distinction between forum and arena where the arena is the place where scalar struggles take place, we might conceive of Commission roles according to the typology in Table 3. It should not be forgotten though that the Commission's roles are also available as a resource for other actors in the Brussels places as well as the EU and national spaces and scales.. The Commission can be the scapegoat for unpopular decisions (Boras and Greves, 2004, p. 332). It can be the practical orchestrator for processes which are seen as necessary but for which sufficient

Activities	Policy Area	EU Education Policy
Governance Activities	Goals and objectives	Lifelong Learning Knowledge Economy Knowledge Society European Education Space
	Policy making power structure	Common principles Best practice Benchmarks/indicators Policy learning National Reports European tools and mechanisms Quality assurance Competition between models International outcome measures Evidence based policy
	Finance/budget processes	% GDP Public/private contributions Efficiency/equity Inputs/outcomes
System Management	Size and number of students, teachers, administrator, buildings	Teacher shortages, demography and teacher training
	System organisation – types/status of institutions System organisation – links between institutions; age of transition	Education and Training Formal, informal and non-formal Credit transfer European Qualifications Framework Pre-school Education Early/later tracking
	Level of funding	Efficiency and equity EU Social Funds Research Framework Funds European Investment Bank
Content	Curriculum Content	Key competences
	Curriculum Assessment	Outcomes-based EQF
	Pedagogy	e-learning Teacher as facilitator

Table 2. EU Education Policy

consensus would not be available (Gornitzka, 2005, p. 19) In sum, I would suggest that we can start to talk about strategic behaviours and identities more clearly by adopting some scale theoretic distinctions.

Commission Policy Roles	
Forum	**Arena**
- Pace-setter - Motivator - Counsellor - Role model	- Agenda-setter - Negotiator - Manipulator - Arbiter - Problem-solver

Table 3. Commission Policy Roles

And of course we might expect that strategic selectivity would play a role in the movements between forums and arenas with all of the implications which this carries in terms of spatial and scalar struggles. We would need to continue to recognise that activity in Brussels can provide the means to counter 'more slow and more conservative development of Ministries and National educational authorities' (Hingel, 2001, p. 14) And of course what I am arguing is that the notion of place-specific and shifting roles would not just apply to the Commission but could be used to develop a typology of roles for all actors in the Brussels spaces and more widely throughout the European education space in their interactions with EU policy development.

The Politics of Scale

Clearly though, when activity moves from being place specific towards having scalar significance, we could expect that micro- and macro- politics would play an increasingly important role. In Table 4, I present a selected overview of education policy development within the OMC. What the table represents is an attempt to specify which policies have achieved which degree of what I call *Institutionalisation as Rescaling*. What seems to have happened is an increasing development of the EU as a scale of governance in particular areas. The areas are clearly associated with the degree of functional interdependence between Member States as part of an EU with which has a dominant as opposed to a nodal or marginal scalar profile.

The role of the EU as a dominant scale of education policy is more pronounced the more the education field is a functional part of bigger and broader transfer of competencies. So, for example, what the national adoption of particular models of fees, loans and grants means is that the definition and viability of national policies for national citizens as opposed to EU citizens, becomes increasingly problematic and calls for forms of coordination at the EU level. Education policy is therefore implicated in the more general sense that 'national social policy projects will in future have to be scrutinized for their financial and political compatibility with international commitments to cross-border mobility, with some likely to be ruled out as incompatible' (Streeck, 1996, p. 84)'

The EU would be more properly considered as a nodal scale in policy areas which have not made it above the level of the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process can perhaps be seen as the farthest edge of the Open Method of Coordination and the importance of universities, the agenda of innovation, creativity and the knowledge economy, the focus on the capacity to enhance capital accumulation, growth and jobs, leads credence to the sense that Member States have made a fateful commitment to a common destiny within

Policy Area / Institutional Scale and Intensity	Market-creating policies	Market-enabling policies	Process policies	Welfare state policies	Knowledge Economy/Society	Fiscal equalization policies	
Supranational	Services Directive	Mutual recognition of qualifications; children of migrant workers; VET;	The European Dimension of loans, fees and grants		European Investment Bank		I N S T I T U T I O N A L I S A T I O N A S R E S C A L I N G
Joint Decision		EQF, Efficiency and Equity, Lifelong Learning, Key competences			Research Framework; European Institute of Technology; Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme	European Social Funds, Research frameworks, Mobility programmes	
Enhanced Intergovernmentalism	THE BOLOGNA PROCESS						
Lisbon Strategy and the Intergovernmental	Bologna Process	Bologna Process	Spring European Council				
Lisbon Strategy and the Open Method of coordination			Education and Training Joint Reports National Progress Reports Policy Networks and Policy Clusters Learning as competences and outcomes	OMCs for European Employment Strategies and Social Cohesion	Common objectives and indicators, 5 'benchmarks', per capita spend, migrants and social cohesion; language policy, European dimension;	Lisbon Strategy	
Functional Interdependence	Education as tradable commodity; Competitive knowledge economy strategies;	Mobility of labour; Education as visible comparable sector	Sustainable funding models; recognition of prior qualifications and experience	Education for identity, active citizenship, migrant populations	Trans-European Research Economies of Scale; Research, innovation and teaching clusters; education and training for social services	Regional development and knowledge concentrations	
Common concerns	Education and competition	Education and economic and social cohesion	Education governance	Welfare reform	Europeanisation and Education: sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion	Combined and uneven development	

Table 4. Institutionalisation as Rescaling in EU Education Policy

a European Higher Education space without of course (quite) subsuming it within a Commission aspiration towards an EU scalar hierarchy.

The bulk of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme sits in the EU scale which is most plausibly considered potentially either nodal or marginal. It remains to be seen which policy areas will gain the status of having Recommendations formed, negotiated and agreed with the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament although it is probably a fair bet to say that Member States will continue to treat them even if they do as marginal scales in terms of their own policy developments. In Gornitzka's terms, the national scale will continue to be 'tugged at by the embryonic development of common European standards' (Gorntizka, 2007, p. 220

If we attempt to draws up a balance sheet, a template for recording the extent to which these processes are settling into a relatively stable scalar, spatial and place specific fix, a number of areas can be considered. A crucial dimension here then is the strategies of the actors involved. It has become something of a common-place to think of the OMC as integration with the brakes on, a concerted attempt to construct both opportunities and constraints in the construction of the spaces, places and scales of the EU. Trying to identify the opportunities then becomes important. The dimensions of the EU as scale might be usefully framed in terms of the opportunities to use the Brussels arenas and forums as relatively sealed places in which policy can be considered, developed, embraced and rejected at a distance from the domestic arenas and forums. National states will continue control which policies areas go up or down and when they do agree to policies being addressed in different places with different scalar implications, they will do so in ways which retain their powers to limit the implications for national autonomy. (Jessop, 2004).

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that a series of sedimented views of the Lisbon Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination have developed which too often read with the grain of the supposed dynamics of education policy development. The result has been that there has been too much focus on the technologies of indicators, benchmarks, peer learning, education reform through cognitive adjustment and the development of policy by network and too little attention to the opportunities and constraints for strategic actors in activities which might have rather less to do with changing education than we might imagine.

The conceptual perspectives of a scale-theoretical approach have been presented and explored as a way to address some of the weaknesses of research into EU education policy. It seems to me that the unstable and contingent nature of the processes needs to be more fully acknowledge because the OMC is 'in the process of learning its place in the political order of the EU, of the member states and international policy making arenas' (Gornitzka, 2005, p. 23) and because the strategic actors involved are 'still searching for the right mode of cooperation' (Hingel, 2001, p. 11)

This paper has tried to steer a path between two positions. Firstly, a suspicion that the negotiation of policy in Brussels places is about little more than the construction of a parallel world of policy which has extremely limited significance for the world of education system management in the real world of member state education systems. Secondly, and in contrast, that the development of EU scalar significance for education policy is of fateful importance and that its effects will be felt over the long run. Arrowsmith's sense is that 'The EU has sufficient political muscle to destabilize existing national systems without the strength, in the employment sphere at least, to

build alternative EU-wide systems of regulation' (Arrowsmith et al, 2004, p. 323) The question for education then would be what are the implications for spaces and places of education when the scale of governance coincides less and less with the scales of education provision and funding? We are not there yet and one of the key arguments of this paper are that we might never get there, partly because, as Goetschy says, as 2010 comes and goes and with the ambitions of Lisbon left unfulfilled, 'a certain tiredness of the mobilized actors and institutions and a withering away of certain OMCs is not to be excluded' (Goetschy, 2004, p. 13)

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