2 Pedagogies of Identity

The Formation and Reformation of the European Schools

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Aims and Ideology

To consider the European Schools and their relevance to the European Union (EU) means asking what really lies at the core of what is known as Europeanization. Is it a useful mechanism for ensuring a degree of educational equilibrium among diverse groups, because each necessarily struggles for dominance? Is it something simpler: in other words, an intergovernmental project of pedagogic collaboration, pragmatically reconciling logistical and philosophical differences from different member state education systems? Or is it an example of a process that stimulates political conflict? In reality, it is likely to be all of these things at different times. In order to understand why this might be the case, however, it is necessary to understand some of the subtleties of the European Schools' history and their current arrangements.

The European Schools were founded in 1953 in Luxembourg and confirmed as a legally defined body in 1957 via the *Convention Defining the Statute of the European Schools*. As Pukallus reminds us, the Higher Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) originally did not have any competences in the area of education, and it was not mentioned in the founding treaty or the Treaty of Paris. However, rather than simply arrange for children to be integrated into the local Luxembourgish schooling system, the Higher Authority attempted to find a way of sustaining mother tongue education whilst at the same ensuring that children were educated together rather than apart in different institutions.

The initiative was largely a parent-led effort underpinned by diplomatic negotiations by key officials. It began with Marcel Decombis, a member of Jean Monnet's Cabinet (who would later become head teacher at the European School in Luxembourg), visiting Monnet and suggesting an integrated education system for the children of ECSC employees. Monnet took this to the President of the Common Assembly, Paul-Henri Spaak, who expressed support and convened a meeting of the Secrétaires Généraux. They were supportive in principle but did not feel it appropriate to take responsibility for the fine detail of setting up such a system. A special committee was therefore founded by Albert van Houtte (Registrar of the European Courts of Justice, 1953–1982). Van Houtte negotiated an exemption of a Luxembourgish 1912 law in order to allow for schools to be established that did not

conform to the national system. Following this, in 1952, the *Association des intérêts éducatifs et familiaux des fonctionnaires de la Communauté* was established, and it was here that parents became heavily involved in creating the fine detail of the system (Pukallus 2019, Olsen 1993).

As stated earlier, the primary aim was to provide a mother tongue education for the children of employees of what was then the ECSC (joined by the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, which became the EU in 1993). The initiative originally involved the cooperation of six national governments with regard to admissions, teaching arrangements, curricula, and recognition of assessment, and the first European School opened in Luxembourg in 1957. The European School System was to grow significantly, both in size and complexity, and there are now 13 schools (Alicante, Brussels I (Uccle + Berkendael), Brussels II (Woluwe + Evere), Brussels III (Ixelles), Brussels IV (Laeken), Frankfurt am Main, Mol, Bergen, Karlsruhe, Munich, Varese, Luxembourg I, and Luxembourg II) in 6 countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Luxembourg), with a total of about 28,300 pupils on the rolls (March 2022). At this time, there are also 14 (soon to be 17) "accredited" schools (using the European Schools model but not centrally funded or run).

The European Schools are run by a board of governors that consists of the following *ex officio* members, as enshrined in the 1957 Statute:

(a) the representative or representatives at ministerial level of each of the member states of the European Communities authorized to commit the government of that member state, on the understanding that each member state has only one vote;
(b) a member of the Commission of the European Communities;
(c) a representative designated by the Staff Committee (from among the teaching staff);
(d) a representative of the pupils' parents designated by the parents' associations.

In addition, a student representative may be invited to attend meetings of the board of governors as an observer for items concerning students. The board of governors is convened at least once a year, by its chair. The office of chair is held for one year by a representative of each member state in turn.

The European School System is headed by the officially appointed Secretary General, with involvement from a range of EU agencies and institutions. The schools consist of three sections: nursery (two years), primary (five years), and secondary (seven years). Students are offered a broad academic education that culminates in the European Baccalaureate (EB) at the age of 18, based on what was commonly available as a school leaving qualification in 1957, and designed to be recognized by all higher education institutions in each member state, mutually recognized as a valid university entrance qualification.

The foundation stones of each of the school contain the aims inscribed on parchment:

Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.

Mindful of this, the European Schools have since their inception sought to reconcile young people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, align with other national education systems within Europe, and encourage the formation of a European identity among citizens of the future, whilst encouraging them to maintain their own national identities. As such, they promote cultural exchange (Theiler 1999, Carlos 2012). They provide basic instruction in all official EU languages apart from Luxembourgish and Turkish (this definition means some minority European languages such as Basque and Catalan are omitted), in addition to mother tongue instruction. They instruct students in aspects of common European artistic heritage, common European history, and they teach related topics through what is known in the European School System as "European Hours". This is complemented through the development of a European and international perspective on other subjects throughout the curriculum.

The aims expressed in the foundation stones may be seen as idealistic and rooted in the post-World War II ideals of peace and cooperation across Europe. These ideals were underpinned by the need for physical reconstruction, as well as the need to establish new democratic structures and organizations to allow for the rebuilding of society. However, the structures and principles of the European Schools have remained stubbornly intact for the following 68 years in the face of great change around them. This includes significant European expansion from 6 to 28 (now 27) member states, a quadrupling of the number of languages used in the schools, and frequent calls for curriculum reform. What "schooled and ready" might have meant in 1957 was always going to mean something quite different two generations later, but accommodating change has been very difficult given the proliferation of governments involved, and given that everything needed to align very carefully to individual national systems (and avoid the extreme struggles for dominance mentioned previously). This led to much frustration among the original supporters, who were generally employees of the ECSC anxious to create something suitable for their own children. As founder Albert Van Houtte said informally in 2001 in the teachers' canteen of the European School in Luxembourg, to Kari Kivinen, who was later to become Secretary General of the European Schools,

Listen, young man. I am really disappointed. We drafted the basis of the European School System in a hurry. It only took us a few weeks to sort it out. Now, fifty years later, you have not managed to change and develop it in any way whatsoever!

(Leaton Gray *et al.*, 2018: v)

It is this inherent resistance to structural change, combined with the increasing social segregation of the European School System, which has led to cracks in the façade as it comes under increased scrutiny in a number of ways: academically, politically, and financially. This chapter asks what form the pedagogy of the European Schools is taking in the light of this fragmentation, and how this relates to the changing social identity of students. It does this through a sociological, interpretivist documentary analysis of the academic and policy literature. It examines the role of the European Schools in the light of problems surrounding social constructions of Europeanization, as well as problems underpinning its existing structures. Finally, the chapter asks what relevance this has in terms of understanding the future of Europe. The next section of the chapter explores these tensions from a sociological perspective in the light of European expansion and new social imperatives.

Pedagogy in the European Schools

There are two defining features of the pedagogical approach of the European Schools. The first, as mentioned earlier, is that a European dimension is embedded within the curriculum and takes a number of forms, for example teaching subjects through the lens of European values and traditions, exploring subject matter linked to Europe in history and geography, and prioritizing European languages and traditions. Cultural and linguistic factors are combined to form a focus for this, with the goal of encouraging a European mindset. This provides a key framework for all teaching and learning activity, or what the sociologist Basil Bernstein (2000) might term a "pedagogic device", creating a set of rules that determine what is to follow.

One of these pedagogic devices is that a multilingual framework for activity is used, reflecting the multilingual construction of the system's political home (i.e., the EU). This is influenced by the EU's political and economic discourse, or to a broader extent its *Weltanschauung* (world view), rooted in the primacy of cooperative regional multinationalism, in which individuals are classified as European citizens. In addition to being members of a "language section", or mini-school within a school, based on their native language (if local numbers permit), students are allocated individual subject timetables that range across multiple languages. Consequently, they might, for example, study mathematics in their mother tongue (L1), but geography in their third language (L3), as the diversity of available languages of instruction has increased over time with each EU expansion, as well as the organizational complexity of the schools. Pedagogically, this is argued to be in the interests of the student, in that it adds to their overall linguistic repertoire by applying it to subject content in an everyday context. The approach is termed Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and it is one that is not confined to the European Schools by any means. It can also be encountered in the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy, to give three examples, which might be seen as a consequence of the influence of Europeanization on national schooling systems. CLIL is also evident in the "immersion" technique of language learning deployed by schools internationally, for example, where classroom instructions

are given in the target language alongside actual linguistic curriculum content. However, where this becomes problematic is when there is insufficient explicit teaching of the additional languages, and language development in content classes (such as geography) is seen as somehow incidental (Leaton Gray *et al.* 2018). This means that in language classes, the experience of the student potentially becomes somewhat shallow, focused on things like grammatical constructions and basic forms of expression. It becomes hard for the student to think critically in these other languages, because the only time they encounter them in this sense is whilst also trying to divine the content of, say, geography lessons. The solution lies in bridging language study and other curriculum subjects, through providing meaningful content in language classes and explicit linguistic content in the curriculum subject classes. This encourages the kind of motivation and higher order learning that is needed for a student to reach his or her potential (Davison and Williams 2001; Lightbown and Spada 2013; Cammarata 2016; Cumming and Lyster 2016). While the European Schools have recently sought to reform their curriculum in this regard, during the period 2015–2022, through aligning language instruction more closely to the Common European Framework of Reference for language learning developed by the Council of Europe (Gouiller 2007), it is fair to say this synthesis of language and content in the fullest sense of the word is a work in progress. The multilingual motive may be pure, but its application becomes more and more problematic with every European expansion.

The second defining feature is that the educational model is retrospective, in the sense that it reflects to some extent the patterns of social and cultural capital that were dominant among EEC employees in 1957, when the first European School was opened. Initially the model was broader, including provision for vocational education[1] and liaison with other local education authorities and systems to allow for inclusion, but since 1969 this has gradually become distilled into a model that is largely focused on access to elite forms of higher education through the EB, as a result of the ongoing preferences of graduate parents and teachers who were involved in governance (Leaton Gray *et al.* 2018). This is a qualification resembling the demands and traditions of the French Baccalaureate and the German Abitur, but without the diversity of provision that has developed over time within these programs to accommodate different types of students, such as professional and technological streams in France, or in the case of Germany, the *Hochschulreife* for sciences and professional subjects. It is here, in the lack of flexibility and diversity, that the EB also struggles within a broader European context, and it is here that we can trace the problem through mapping another pedagogic device, involving the dominance of particular power structures and social groups, as manifested in the organization and membership of the board of governors, as well as the various education working groups that are regularly convened from time to time to address particular issues of concern in relation to school improvement. It finds its form within the EB.

The EB was first awarded in 1959, and from its inception has been legally mandated in all EU member states as qualifying candidates for university entrance; it is supposed to reflect the philosophy of a broad and liberal education, or what

might in German be described as *Bildung*. In this sense, it represents a culmination of a long post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment European educational project leading towards the modern day. However, we see evidence of bias in the structure of the EB, as well as the approach taken with regard to its preparation. The formal examination itself involves candidates taking three oral and five written examinations, and having to display written and oral proficiency in at least two languages. There is also some classwork assessment (class marks), to allow for a degree of formative as well as summative assessment within the program.

Since 2015 there has been increasing use of comparison, or benchmarking, statements as a basis for assessing pupils. Since 2018 there has also been increased use of a competency-based approach generally. In this approach, eight key competences for lifelong learning are mapped across different subjects and areas of study. The reference framework sets out these competences:

(1) Literacy competence;
(2) Multilingual competence;
(3) Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering;
(4) Digital competence;
(5) Personal, social, and learning to learn competence;
(6) Civic competence;
(7) Entrepreneurship competence;
(8) Cultural awareness and expression competence.

(Council of the European Union 2018;
Pedagogic Development Unit 2018)

In this way, the assessment process makes claims to breadth as well as seeking to modernize assessment practices.

However, while its academic ideals may be clear, and its philosophical underpinnings evident, it cannot be seen as a socially comprehensive qualification including all types of pupils across the full range of social classes and intellectual ability levels, nor are alternatives available within the European School System. The EB accommodates the academic subjects and approaches that are the desired objective for the university-track children of graduate parents, and nothing else. This has an impact on inclusion. After investigating the situation empirically during a research study that took place from 2014 to 2015 at the request of the European Commission (Leaton Gray *et al*. 2015), we found that by upper secondary level, some categories of students start to leave because the curriculum no longer meets their needs, particularly in subjects such as the sciences, where there is a sudden and largely unwarranted increase in difficulty at the age of around 15, which fails to accommodate the needs of pupils who might benefit from a smoother academic path, with more difficult topics being introduced more gradually. This sudden increase in difficulty in the sciences regardless of a pupil's natural ability levels or intellectual/vocational inclinations represents a form of elitism

and exists despite the European Schools being meant to be inclusive of nearly all children from virtually all backgrounds, from the nursery class to the age of 18. Leading up to the examination, practices of ability streaming/setting and retention (keeping students back to repeat a year) are applied differentially in different schools and even within the same school in different language sections (e.g., if you are in a Francophone section, you can be five times as likely to have to repeat a year than in an Anglophone section, where this is much less common, because it is not normal practice). This can result in discrimination against some categories of student, often those without graduate parents, or those with specific learning difficulties or disabilities for whom adequate provision is not being made. Therefore, we see social discrimination (being the child of non-graduate parents, for example) being compounded by cultural practice (finding yourself in a particular language section that is one of the least prepared to tolerate difference). Despite efforts centrally in Brussels over the last decade to resolve these inequalities via discussions in working groups and central monitoring of pupil progress statistics, such students are frequently seen at a local school level as somehow alien to the system and pressured to move to other schools outside the European School System. They have what we might describe as "spoiled identities" in sociological terms, as opposed to the "ideal type" of student that takes the academic subjects on offer readily in his or her stride (Leaton Gray *et al.* 2015). In their detailed study of attitudes within a European School in Brussels, Drewski *et al.* (2018) also encountered this phenomenon, with lower attaining students being perceived as lacking a form of symbolic capital, in which high personal status is attained through apparently effortless achievement, and low status attributed to academic difficulty or visible hard work.

In this way, the upper secondary phase of the European Schools, along with the EB examination, both fulfill a social function in reproducing existing forms of power among EU civil servants and their families, through restricting access to homogeneous rather than heterogeneous types of students. This is further compounded by the fact that it is very difficult for members of the public who do not have a EU civil service connection to be given places in these schools, something which particularly affects other workers who have key roles as part of the Brussels and Strasbourg machinery, such as lobbyists and journalists, but also workers who have outsourced ancillary functions, such as cleaners and maintenance staff hired by private companies but working exclusively or almost exclusively in EU buildings (see van Parijs 2009b). Although the regulations permit broader recruitment of students, current admission processes lack local transparency and accountability, and have therefore recently been changed to include an automated preference process in the case of the most over-subscribed schools, for example in Brussels (Central Enrolment Authority 2020). The schools are entirely independent of local school authority admissions, monitoring, and inspection processes in their home countries. Also, compared with the experience of other local school students, those in European Schools rarely appear to interact with other school communities regionally in the manner that might normally be expected, for example for trips, joint concerts, or sporting fixtures, or certainly at the levels that might be expected (Oostlander 1993).

This disconnection from mainstream conceptions of engaged European citizenship has moved some distance from the comprehensive intentions of its founders, as well as those of the founders of the original EEC, as outlined earlier in the chapter. It positions the European Schools effectively as "company schools" and a free alternative to the expense of sending children to fee-paying international schools, rather than representing a full reflection of a democratic project. To some extent this has been offset through the introduction of the "Accredited" European Schools from 2007 onwards. These schools were introduced to broaden availability to this type of education beyond the children of those directly working for the EU. These schools are run privately, using the same academic model but without being centrally controlled or funded by the EU. However, this does not remove the problem of inherent bias in the European Schools' assessment and admissions processes (although in a general sense, there is a growing appetite for greater alignment with the wider educational models promoted by organizations such as the OECD; see Brøgger and Ydesen, Chapter 7).

Political, Legal, and Financial Aspects of the European Schools

One significant reason behind the extremely slow reform of the European School System is likely to be the sheer complexity of the multiple political and intergovernmental relationships surrounding it, and the principle of subsidiarity leading to close involvement of each member state. This has become magnified as a consequence of EU expansion. As stated previously, until 1957, the European School was run by the Parents Association. On 12 April 1957, the convention defining the Statute of the European Schools was signed and the European School (there only being one at this stage) was given the legal status of an intergovernmental school. At this point it started to be run collaboratively by the six member states at the time. In terms of daily management, the European School was run by four bodies: the *Conseil Supérieur*, the *Conseils d'Inspection* (Board of Inspectors), the *Conseil d'Administration* (Administrative Board), and the Director of the School. This has evolved over time to reflect the increasing complexity of the system, and currently, the following EU institutions all have different forms of involvement (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Governance structure of the European Schools

European Parliament	European Commission	Member states
Promotion of the European School system, in alignment with lifelong learning policies. Some supervisory and administrative functions.	Responsible for around 50% of the financing (other sources of income include other European agencies and institutions, as well as some commercial financing).	Secondment and financing of teachers in proportion to the number of language speakers within the system. School inspection. School buildings (provision and maintenance).

Mapping the governance and management out in this way, it is immediately possible to see areas where there are likely to be political tensions. For example, there is generally a shortage of seconded teachers, an area which is supposed to be the responsibility of the EU member states. The current target is 65% and the actual figure deployed is nearer 50%, despite recent efforts to address this through the encouragement of member states to be more generous. The shortfall is made up through local hires, often casualized and traditionally with inferior terms and conditions (although in some cases this is starting to change). Until leaving the EU in 2020, one member state, the United Kingdom, found itself providing state-funded, seconded teachers well in excess of the number of UK students within the European School System, partly because of the shortfall, and partly because English was seen as a *lingua franca* internationally. This meant that other non-UK students from countries that did not have English as an official language were increasingly joining English language sections to improve their prospects generally. This orientation towards international schooling as a precursor to competitive entry to the labor market is not confined to the European Schools (e.g., see Bunnell 2016). However, it is normally associated with the fee-paying schools sector rather than the state-funded schools sector. This led to expansion of those sections, with the United Kingdom increasing its funding share disproportionately. Consequently, since the United Kingdom left the EU, there is now a shortage of native English speakers within the system, as L1 provision is left to Malta and Ireland. This is perhaps an example of the phenomenon of "adventitious beneficiaries" (Archer 1979), ways of benefiting from systems set up by others, when interests happen to align usefully with something that is provided. Here it allows families and their children to gain an advantage from the European School System that was never intended. As argued previously, the schools were never meant to be a free alternative to fee-paying international schools offering an English-speaking track, but rather a facilitating mechanism whereby families could move freely into and out of schooling systems for EU purposes, without disadvantaging their children's education. In addition to funding discrepancies, such misapplication of policy ultimately also caused problems for teachers, who found themselves teaching non-native speakers in their L1 classes (Kinstler 2015).

Secondment of teachers from member states links to another area of political tension within the system, which is the organization of school inspections. The aim is ensuring alignment to national systems so that students (and teachers) can return to their systems of origin as seamlessly as possible, so national inspectors each inspect their own country's seconded teachers. Yet the lack of a conventional middle management structure in the European School System providing oversight results in consequences for both teacher and inspector secondment that play out locally. Seconded teachers (as opposed to those hired locally to fill particular roles) end up not being responsible to individual head teachers in the same way that they might be in a national system. They also work under differential employment law, depending on their countries of origin. This compounds the problem of teacher management as well as the problem of setting the direction of a European School (which in any case has limited autonomy, as it is controlled centrally to ensure consistency, and necessarily works to a fixed educational model).

On the other hand, local hires bring their own issues to the table, in terms of being funded out of the European Schools' European Commission budget rather than by individual member states. This has the effect of further reducing funding that is supposed to be available for other requirements, such as investment in ICT equipment. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic was later to expose this lack of investment extremely painfully, as the European Schools struggled to develop a policy framework for a consistent remote learning offer for students (Office of the Secretary General Pedagogical Development Unit 2020). Therefore, the financing of the European Schools is somewhat entangled with the political complexities of their day-to-day organization, with funding not used as efficiently or appropriately as it might be as a consequence. This is despite the fact that students are funded at a per capita rate of approximately 2× or 3× the level they might be in their own national education systems (Leaton Gray *et al.* 2015).

In all of these aspects, we therefore see an ongoing conflict between centralized and decentralized functions and education systems, both at a EU level and also at a national level. Indeed, the legal status of the European School System itself is not even particularly clear within this conflict. Within the current framework, parents and teachers have no legal recourse or remedy in terms of raising issues or appealing decisions with the board of governors, even though they are ultimately responsible for hiring the Secretary General as well as school directors, as it is unclear whether this lies under the jurisdiction of individual member states or centrally with the EU. This even applies in the case of relatively serious responsibilities such as child safeguarding. There was an attempt to resolve this situation by the European Parliament in 2011 via a resolution stating that "the European Schools should be brought under the umbrella of the Union" under Article 165 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU, but as yet the situation still remains unresolved. There is perhaps no bigger indicator of the European Schools' current identity crisis.

Relationship with Higher Education

As stated previously, the aim of the EB is to allow graduates of the European Schools access to higher education across European member states, and this works fairly automatically for most courses other than highly competitive ones such as medicine. In this sense it allows for significant international mobility, reflecting the 1957 Treaty of Rome that originally founded the EEC, which described as an objective "ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe" (meant in a social rather than a political sense). It also anticipated the Bologna Process, which sought to bring coherence to higher education across EU member states (see Overheidt *et al.* 2007) and a broader desire for pan-European higher education initiatives (see Cuvelier, Chapter 9). In addition, Bologna sought to encourage international mobility, most obviously amplified through the Erasmus program that supported international exchanges among schools and universities. This trend towards increasing internationalization has run alongside the vast expansion of university education generally in Europe since World War II, something Trow (1973)

describes in relation to higher expansion internationally as a shift from elite, to mass, and eventually to universal higher education, within the context of advanced economies.

It is clear the EB is an internationally mobile qualification, and in terms of access to elite multilingual careers within advanced economies, a powerful one at that (Leaton Gray *et al.* 2018). However, what is particularly interesting in the light of this chapter is how the precise distribution of (frequently elite) university applications plays out among European School students, and how this potentially links to parental preferences for places in English-speaking sections earlier in a student's school career, regardless of their nationalities of origin. This is because around 50% of European School applications to universities, at least from 2015, have been to UK universities (Whether this has changed since Brexit is difficult to tell, and it is likely that lack of access to the UK's government loans for higher education may in future play a part here, but at the time of writing this policy is only just changing.). The remaining 50% of applications are for universities in Europe, the United States, English-speaking Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Therefore, the majority of applications are for universities in English-speaking countries or regions, rather than evenly distributed across EU member states, or even linked to students' countries of origin. If the latter were the case, we would expect to see approximately 22% of applications being for Francophone universities, 12% for German-speaking universities, and 8% for Spanish-speaking universities (basing our figures on those kept by the Office of the Secretary General of the European Schools regarding the typical range of student nationalities upon admission, Leaton Gray *et al*. 2018). The fact that they are not distributed as expected reflects the trend towards European Schools being used as much for attaining career-level proficiency in the English language as accommodating young people from a range of international backgrounds. We see this in the way that outcomes (in this case post-school credentials achieved using the English language) demonstrate a hidden curriculum with a form of linguistic homogenization at the core, rather than true linguistic pluralism. In a sense this does not entirely come as a surprise, given the global trend towards using English as a dominant language within a knowledge-based, technologically driven economy. What we do see here in addition to that trend is a tendency towards a kind of supranational identity attained by European School families. English language skills are the mechanism by which this identity is facilitated and reinforced, providing access to elite education and employment opportunities linked to international mobility.

In this way, the career trajectories of European School students are perhaps more obviously linked to the education and employment histories of their parents than in other countries, even the highly stratified system seen in the United Kingdom, to take one example (Hansen and Vignoles 2005). What isn't taken into account when mapping European Schools policy is the potential harm that this ultimately has on the students themselves, as well as other social groups. Van Parijs (2009a) made the argument that "when you are admitted to an elite school by virtue of the status of your parents, it is hard not to develop a feeling of superiority towards those who are not".

During the course of our 2014–2015 research, we certainly found evidence of this in our interviews with 18-year-old student representatives at the European Schools. When they were asked what had happened to students who had left the school for academic reasons, unable to cope with some of the curriculum difficulties presented by a poorly planned science program, for example, the response was quite often that the student representatives didn't know and were no longer in touch with their schoolmates, even if they had known them for some time as younger children. They considered academic difficulties to be the fault of the individuals concerned, and their own ability to cope to be a consequence of their own superior abilities. "After all", said one representative to the research team, "we are being prepared for roles as future leaders within Europe and this is an elite education. If they can't cope with it, then it is right they should leave". This attitude is similar to what has been found by other researchers (e.g., Shore and Baratieri 2006) and represents an example of how a social system ignores those not convenient to it, something Osler and Starkey (2006) describe in a similar context as education programs encouraging Eurocentric attitudes or feelings of cultural superiority. It is also an example of how education systems try to reproduce power structures that are convenient (as stated previously, this also applies to many children with special educational needs, who often never apply to attend European Schools, or if they do, are eased out along the way). Academic ability is conflated with social class and used as a justification for a scholastic red carpet funded by taxpayers, while the comprehensive and socially inclusive origins of the system are forgotten, and education systems of the country of residence are rejected as inadequate (Favell 2010). In this way, what might have been originally seen as an inclusive and essentially pragmatic education project aimed at all employees of the ECSC has become increasingly reductive over the years, providing for a sub-group of employees of the EU rather than the children of all colleagues. This leads us to another concern, namely the problem of sustaining European social democratic values and integration generally within a globalized economy.

The Problem of Sustaining Europeanization

In relation to Italian regional policy, Enrico Gualini (2003) considers the term "Europeanization" as something of a problem in search of an explanation, rather than representing the explanation itself. We now find ourselves 15 years after the global financial crash, and post-Brexit, where the project of Europeanization is being scrutinized as never before. Once it might have been seen as a convenient, collaborative solution to the problem of rebuilding society after two world wars. However, dramatic expansion, particularly after the conclusion of the Cold War, has led to new problems integrating disparate social and political cultures, as has the attempt to align European member states in Northern and Southern Europe.

In the specific case of education, the EU's governance and institutions struggle to accommodate the needs of a modern European School System that has grown exponentially, and which continues to expand. The territorial bias of many education policies lies at the root of its everyday difficulties in this regard, rooted as

they are in a long history of state actors taking radically different approaches to educational planning and delivery. The European School System therefore finds itself struggling to achieve an equilibrium between its aims of providing a pro-European education via initiatives such as "European Hours", fitting within a common European area of education to allow for family mobility, and avoiding homogenization of different cultures via policies actively encouraging pluralization, for example through the provision of linguistically based language sections in as many schools as possible (Swan 1996).

Tomorrow's Europe?

In some ways, to consider the European Schools in context is to consider the future of Europeanization in general, as it is both a consequence of, and a reflection of, difficulties in the modernization of the European project. This is a school system that was set up specifically to serve, reflect, and promote a particular type of Western European philosophy and to help mitigate against forms of ultranationalism that proved so damaging in the 20th century (Starkey 2017). It has now found itself struggling to cope with the demands placed upon it after several waves of expansion, and it is now seeking to redefine its identity accordingly. It continues to explore ways of improving lines of accountability and governance, through the involvement of stakeholders, and it tries to reconcile the desire of end users for an elite form of educational provision with the needs of the wider community. One way of understanding these attempts is to see them as organic forms of adaptation that allow for social contracts among actors to be redefined to achieve a new equilibrium, although that may represent an equilibrium that doesn't quite satisfy everyone. Another way is to consider the changes taking place as an efficient form of reorganization, given that such systems always need to change over time. Both these positions have some credibility when applied to the everyday situation of the European School System as a whole. However, there is a more concerning viewpoint available to us, in which attempts at European integration seem to have become so internally focused and self-interested that they represent a major risk to the idea of social stability throughout Europe, especially given the rise of greater nationalism combined with Euroskepticism in European politics. This means that unless the European School System succeeds in opening up provision much more widely, incorporating significantly greater diversity within all aspects of its operation, it may eventually act as a symbol of the gradual decline of the EU, in the same way that it symbolized its inception. We can only hope for a more positive future.

Note

1 Previously in 1969 the following vocational offers were in place: (Group 1) Geometric Drawing, Notions of Technology, Handicraft (Group 2), Accounting and Commercial Arithmetic, Typewriting, Shorthand and Commercial Correspondence (Group 3), Childcare, Domestic Science, and Art. Vocational programmes are no longer offered.

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