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2. SIGNS OF REENGAGEMENT?

*Changes in Teaching Methodology in the Framework of the Bologna
Process*[2]

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT

Spanish universities have carried out a number of changes derived from the largest
social changes that have occurred in recent years. In this article, we shall only
highlight two of these that may have had some influence on the new processes of
integration and the generation of identity at university.

Firstly, there was the demographic growth of the 1970s, which tripled the
number of students entering university; nowadays almost fifty per cent of young
people go into higher education. This generalised access to university has led to an
increase in heterogeneity, a diversity of origins, profiles, cultural capital,
competences and motivations among students. The new composition implies a
diversification of student expectations and needs and, therefore, of their demands
of the institution (Consell Social UAB, 1989; Masjuan, 2004; Troiano, 2005).

Secondly, in consideration of the changes to the profiles of students as a result
of university expansion the entry of Spain and other countries in the EHEA has led
to changes in teaching methods, which have centred learning on the student. This
has led to an increase in teaching methodologies related with continuous
assessment, problem-based learning, the active participation of students, working
in groups etc. As shown below, the analysis of the implementation of the Bologna
Process to different degree courses has not been uniform either in time or in the
specific types of pedagogic practices. However, in general, it has meant that the old
profile of a student who was able to collect the program for a subject at the start of
the year and not reappear in class until examination day is far less viable these
days.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The University Experience

Following the separation into academic and social aspects made by other authors
(Tinto, 1997; Weidman et al., 2001), the article focuses on students' university
experiences, taking into account both aspects but particularly highlights the social
ones. The consequences of the teaching innovations related with the
implementation of the Bologna Process are analysed, which are an incentive for

student autonomy. These changes promoted on the basis of introducing new teaching methodologies have an effect on academic aspects, on student learning and on social aspects, i.e. the way in which students relate to their colleagues. As the literature on the subject states, both areas are strongly related, such that the effects on academic aspects also have indirect effects on social aspects (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Eggens et al., 2007).

In terms of academic aspects, there is a need to study what the effects are of the Bologna Process on student learning. On the basis of previous studies of the implementation of pedagogical innovations at universities in the Spanish context (Elias, in press; Masjuan & Troiano, 2009a) it can be concluded that students need certain aspects (such as the organisation of timetables, appropriate evaluation strategies, information and guidance from teaching staff) to reach a minimum threshold of quality in order to be able to study and learn[3]. In other words, despite the good intentions associated to these innovations, the students they are aimed at need to sense a minimum control of these opportunities in order to perceive the positive effects of the changes (Creyer & Elton, 1986; Elton, 1996; Prescott & Simpson, 2004).

A fundamental factor that has a direct effect on academic aspects is the motivation to choose a career, although this is not considered in this article. The fact that a student has an expressive or instrumental motivation to study has a direct effect on the type and intensity of a student's university experience (Bernstein, 1971; Masjuan & Troiano, 2009b).

An analysis of the present-day context involves focussing attention on the changes in teaching methodology brought about by the Bologna Process, and their consequences. So, for all of the pedagogical innovations that have been introduced to improve learning, there is also a need to analyse the conditions for their implantation and the perception that students have of the new context. So, the institution may take actions to encourage academic identification (normally expressive), such as, for example, group work, consolidating a quality university, guidance services and assistance with studies, etc., or social identification, such as improving sports services, organising parties, promoting professional social networks, etc.[4]

Within this framework, the analysis also includes the academic aspects of the type of relations that students especially establish with their work group, which has been widely promoted by the Bologna Process, and the consequences of these types of relations on social aspects, namely in the creation of new groups of friends (or peer groups) at university.

Along similar lines, in terms of the social aspects, the contributions made by the relations developed at university are considered important elements for understanding the learning processes of university students (Brennan & Jary, 2005; Vermetten et al., 2002; Villar & Albertín, 2010; Ethington, 2000; Smith & Bath, 2006; Hadji et al., 2005; Masjuan & Troiano, 2009b; Elias, 2009; and others).

Classical research into the subject by Pascarella & Terenzini (1991, 2005) and Astin (1984) concludes that engagement is the most important factor in students' learning and their personal development at university, because students that are

more integrated in the university put more effort into their work and their university lives in general. Meanwhile, Tinto (1997), another of the prominent authors on this subject, has stressed the importance of student engagement for persistence with studies.

Bearing in mind the relationship between the academic and social aspects, this area of research has found that students' relationships with the institution involve two-way benefits. Students state that their marks improve, as does their personal development (Volkwein et al., 1986), while the institution obtains other benefits in terms of efficiency and efficacy, such as for example a reduction in dropout rates (Coulon, 2005; Felouzis, 2000). In this sense, the more integrated students are with the institution, with a higher number of contacts and more social support (members of a network of relations), the greater probability they have of obtaining good academic results (Eggens et al., 2007).

Informal relationships that are not strictly academic have also been the source of research and articles. These are considered to be an important element of student integration in the institution, and can help improve students' academic performance and persistence. Research was conducted into this subject in the United States (Weidman et al., 2001; Tinto 1997), where college characteristics contribute to interactions between their members. Similar conclusions have been reached in the United Kingdom (Houston & Lebeau, 2006). In fact, these issues have emerged in what are known as 'college experiences', studies mainly in the United States and later in the UK, which analyse how attending a certain college has an impact on a student's learning.

The research presented here is close in nature to that done in the framework of informal networks and the concept of social capital, whereby relationships within a group involve such resources as information, friendship, favours etc., to which certain individuals or groups have access through being members and holding a position in a certain social network (Coleman, 1990; Croll, 2004).

Recent empirical research notes this utility when analysing the basic positions adopted by students to deal with social relations and social capital. Indeed, Villar and Albertín (2010) identify three main positions; the first is the socio-affective, in which the value of friendship is essential; the second is a pragmatic position, where individualism, strategy and competitiveness are important; and the third is a contextually contingent position in which people have different identities and use different spheres, depending on the context, which enables different ways of establishing relations. The maintenance of one or other position determines the type of relationship that is established with peers. For a more in-depth analysis of the issue of group work, see the article Masjuan et al. (2010).

The Problem of Student Identity

In this regard, it is indispensable to also make a separation between cultural aspects (beliefs, standards and values) and 'participation', in reference to social behaviour and conduct, which is useful for understanding the complex process of integrating students in the institution. Here we should introduce McInnis' comments with

respect to the effects of the mass university both on behaviour and on the beliefs, standards and values of university students.

The well-known article by McInnis (2002) showed how the university students of the time (who had a new profile due to educational expansion and universities of the masses) felt less integrated in the institution in terms of expressive belonging and showed an apparent lack of commitment. The author's research focuses on this aspect in first year students, and draws attention to the evident increase in signs of disengagement; from here he concludes that students spend less time on campus and more time working or doing other activities (McInnis, 2002; McInnis & James, 1995). Students currently have other priorities than the academic demands of university. He therefore notes a major impact of students that do paid work during their time at university, given that they have increasingly less need to dedicate time to university study, or to access learning resources. His analyses also conclude that students have an increasingly greater expectation that it is the university that should adapt to their own lives, and not the other way round. In this regard, students do a certain amount of self-selection when it comes to picking a specific degree or university, with students seeking those which fit best with the their own values and norms, and thus seeking to reduce the difficulties of the process of adapting to university.

Many other research studies in various different countries have detected the same disengagement process. This line of research has led to the development of three basic ideas. First, universities have different values and norms, and these different characteristics also vary depending on the relations between their members (Kuh & Love, 2000; Read et al., 2003; Weidman et al., 2001). Second, engagement can signify different phenomena, for example, depending on whether students are in their first or final year, which can involve different forms of academic success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Finally, in order to feel integrated, students must sense that certain objectives, visions and norms, and the methods used to achieve them, are congruent with academic culture (Braxton and Hirschy in Villar, 2006).

Our research also forms part of this line of research into the conditions of student engagement, but the conceptual framework of this subject is broad and sometimes confusing, as the different authors use the same terms to define different situations or use different concepts to explain very similar phenomena (integration, involvement, engagement, socialization, belonging, enrolment …). This article maintains the need to conceptually clarify this phenomenon, and so has decided to use the term identity in order to understand the student's perception of the global integration process. The term identity therefore approaches the concept of engagement but also includes the actions carried out by the individual (and how these affect cultural aspects).

The concept of identification used in this article is the set of characteristics that are common to a group of individuals and which enable them to be defined as a group. In the words of De Francisco & Aguiar (2003), identity can be reduced to the interests, values and norms with which individuals identify, and so the role of the group with which students identify and the expectations that others have of

them as individuals are fundamental. In this regard, the complexity of interests, preferences, norms and values with which individuals identify constitute their own social identities[5]. The need to separate the academic from the social aspects and the cultural angle (feeling or perception of students) from the behavioural angle (action) is considered.

In relation with the academic identification with university, the student is considered to be identified as such when he or she shares the values to a great or lesser extent and/or acts by respecting the acceptable parameters of the university institution's norms, which is how identifications of different degrees are generated, in the construction of which the individual plays a major role. In this case, the institution's values and norms are to value knowledge, to consider the profession to be applied knowledge, ethics, to attend lectures, behave properly in lectures, do the work required properly, treat lecturers respectfully, etc., and thus the institution rewards applied and participative students.

The academic identification can be expressive, i.e. sharing the values and norms that the institution rewards, or instrumental, i.e. being aware of the institution's values and norms and doing the acceptable minimum to appear to be assuming them, while being clear that the real objective is to pass subjects and obtain the certificate. The institution's values and norms can vary between universities or, as is particularly common in Catalonia, between courses: some reward expressive identification with the institution, i.e. with the content, while others reward more vocational aspects.

Therefore, if a student participates and is committed to the institution, he or she has a student identity (Brennan et al., 2009). There are evidently different degrees of integration, and therefore, degrees of identity[6].

Once an individual feels identified, they participate in the institution, either academically (by attending class, doing the work asked of them, working cooperatively in groups, passing exams, participating in the course council, etc., or socially (spending time with classmates, doing voluntary work, etc.). We should also remember that there is also a feedback effect, i.e. identification can also increase participation in the institution, and thus the individual's conduct (doing work, attending class) is made stronger and/or more and more clearly constructs identification as a university student.

So it is necessary to distinguish between intellectual and emotional acceptance of the institution's basic values: value of knowledge, value of study, etc., and the process of accepting norms (institutional regulations), because these are partly imposed by the institution and enable a certain amount of negotiation in the relation between the agents of the university, students and teaching staff. Therefore, in this context of differing values and negotiable norms it is possible to construct different student identities and find places both for students with eminently expressive objectives and those with basically instrumental objectives. In this regard, we depart from the idea of the institution completely determining individuals' identities and forming their roles (Boudon, 1981).

On the other hand, social identification includes both the effect of sharing standards and values with the university peer group (for this is the individual's reference group), and the way the individual participates in the institution's social activities, for example going to the university cinema or sports clubs, attending university parties…).

With respect to the first aspect, there is a need to distinguish between those students that have an academically identified group of friends and those who do not. When a student feels academically identified and also has a group of friends that shares the same standards and values, then their identification process is intensified. But there are students whose reference group is not academically identified with the university institution (they skip lectures, they do not take their studies seriously, etc.), which can have negative effects on the academic environment.

The student also has parallel peer communities outside of the university and it is necessary to analyse whether these are academically identified or not, as these also have repercussions on the individual and ultimately on their academic performance. The comments by Merton (1964) on relative privation that were revised by Gambetta (1998) are relevant here. The individual compares their own situation with that of their peer group. The important point is that individuals compare themselves with the peer group of reference and not the one to which they belong, in other words, they compare themselves with the group they want to belong to (Lizón, 2007). If there is a wide distance between one's own situation and that of the reference group, then the individual will be highly frustrated, while if one's own situation and that of the reference group is similar, then individuals do not feel frustrated and can cope with the situation better (Christie et al., 2004). Therefore, the influence of the peer group is important both for one's own competence and for the relative evaluation of the process itself, given that one sees oneself in relation to others.

METHODOLOGY

This article presents the results of the first phase of a research study that is currently in progress[7] into the factors that influence university students' learning. Of all of the factors dealt with by the research, selected here are the ones related to aspects of academic and social integration, identity, participation, reference peer groups and elements of the most directly related contexts to these.

The research on which the results of this article are based focused on an analysis of 10 degree courses at four public universities in the metropolitan region of Barcelona, through 8 interviews with students on each of the 10 courses (80 interviews in total). Considering that the institution plays an important role in providing an incentive for students to identify themselves with the university, we also analysed the context of each of the 10 courses studied through interviews with the people in charge of them and by obtaining secondary data. Table 1 shows the five areas of knowledge, using the criterion of the hard-soft division (Health, Engineering and Sciences as hard and Social sciences and Arts as soft). In each

area, we selected one course with a more defined professional profile and one with a less defined one, along the same lines of applied rather than non-applied criteria used by Becher (2001). The courses are distributed among the four universities in the metropolitan region of Barcelona: UAB, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; UB, University of Barcelona; UPF, Pompeu Fabra University; UPC, Polytechnic University of Catalonia.

Table 1.

Areas of knowledge		Definition of the professional profile	
		More defined	*Less defined*
Hard	Health	Nursing	Pharmacy
	Engineering	Architecture	Telecommunications Engineering
	Sciences	Biosciences	Chemistry
Soft	Social sciences	Social Education	Business Studies
	Arts	Translation and Interpretation	Humanities

We should explain that some of the courses had already been using more active pedagogical practices for many years, pedagogic renewal movements began in our context more than three decades ago and have been gradually entering the university system. These pedagogic changes have sought to consider the new profile of students now coming into the university system and their demands, although it is true that some students are declaring that they are not fully satisfied with the way that some of these innovations have been implemented. There have therefore been different scales in terms of the introduction of the Bologna Process to the ten degree courses analysed. For example, in Translation and Interpretation the implementation of Bologna has simply involved continuing along the same pedagogical lines that have been followed for some time (language learning by nature requires continuous learning and interaction with others). In contrast, there are the cases of Business Studies and Chemistry, courses that have not yet officially entered the Bologna Plan, and where the pedagogical innovations have only affected some subjects or groups of students. Also, all of the courses that this study analysed contain elements that could be considered to be in line with Bologna's pedagogical reform, some with a clear intention to change and others through imitation of what was happening on other courses.

Nevertheless, in the results developed below, citations can be found from all ten of the courses we analysed, and despite the clear differences between them, the analysis has shown us that there are enough common elements for a primary vision of the whole to be of considerable interest.

On the basis of the results obtained up to now (both those presented in this article in relation to integration process and other results related with other aspects of the research) and taking contributions from other authors and questionnaires in

other contexts into account, we are creating a questionnaire that will be given to the students in November 2010 in order to obtain statistically significant results. Notwithstanding, the results presented speak for themselves and mean a significant scientific step forward.

Below is a description of the initial research questions that were posed and which have contributed to demonstrating how institutional changes have brought about changes (not previously anticipated) in the relationships between the students and the institution, and between different members of the University. This in turn has led to modifications in their identification.

Questions:

– Have the changes introduced through the Bologna Process meant changes in student learning?
– Have the changes introduced through the Bologna Process meant changes in the quality and quantity of relations between the students and the different members of the university institution?
– Does the increase in relations at university produce changes in the reference peer group and therefore, in identification with the institution?

RESULTS

The qualitative results presented here are based on the 80 interviews conducted, while similar results have also been obtained in other research studies in recent years on the experiences of university students at the institution (Masjuan & Troiano, 2009b; Masjuan et al., 2009; Elias, 2009).

We shall now present the most representative citations.[8] The aim of the qualitative research is not to quantify the number of individuals that make a certain statement, but to make a general appraisal of the different opinions and contributions with respect to a given issue. The 80 interviews reveal the different comments made by the students and the results of the questionnaire can be used to differentiate the number of students in each position. The information presented has been obtained from interviews carried out with students, accordingly explanations that they have given for their perception of the phenomena. In any case, it should be pointed out that the data have been triangulated, interviews have been carried out with people holding positions at the university (deans and coordinators) and the secondary data have been analysed. All the results point in the same direction as the perception shown by the students.

We should also state that it is necessary and conceptually useful to make an analytical distinction between the academic and social dimensions and between cultural behaviour and aspects. Nevertheless, in student discourses this distinction is, logically, not always reflected as the different aspects are interrelated. Firstly, the results relating to the behaviour and actions of the students are presented (behavioural aspects), these being the most visible and conscious. Further on, there are also some quotes from students who claim to be aware of their internal process of identification (cultural aspects).

This reiterates that there are differences between subjects with respect to the implementation of the Bologna Process. Nevertheless, a global analysis of the ten courses has shown us that there are similar general tendencies with respect to student identification in all of them and it is therefore useful to begin the analysis by describing the results in conjunction.

Question 1: Have the Changes Introduced Through the Bologna Process Meant Changes in Student Learning?

By analysing the interviews, it has been found that the changes that the Bologna Process made to pedagogic methodology have had consequences for students' experiences as they go through university. In terms of the academic factors, it has implied an increase in workload and, consequently, in the time students dedicate to their studies. We should say that it has been detected a considerable increase in work as continuous evaluation is increased, and students sometimes declare a certain displeasure regarding the large amount of work they have to do. This increase in time spent studying has consequences for their identification with the institution. The longer the time spent at university and time spent studying, the greater their participation and therefore their identification with the university (remember that this is related to sharing the rules and values of the institution and this may be instrumental or expressive). In the same line, there is a need for a certain academic identification (instrumental or expressive) with the institution in order to achieve good academic results.

> When I first came to university, I expected...well, they'd told me a lot of stuff about university, most of all that at public ones you don't do anything, that you go there to spend the day, nobody controls you, it's not like school... until they set up the Bologna Plan it was a bit like that, I mean, I went to lectures or didn't, I just borrowed notes, and then did what I had to pass the exam or studied at the last moment. (Student Business Studies.64)

> Crikey, I have days when there's loads, what with work experience and all that... and finishing essays, we get up at half eight nearly every day and then we've got two hours, half an hour's break and you get some breakfast, three more hours, then you might have time for lunch from one to two, then you've got practical and that's until, well, seven, and then we're here till eight. (Student Biology.18)

> (No! With this course and with that Bologna Plan, well, of course, there's more practical work, more stuff and you're at university more, and on this course the times aren't all in the morning or the afternoon, no, they change." Student Biology.21)

> S: No, I mean, from the very start, it's not like school wasn't hard as well, I met people from the very start and there's a lot of work to do every day, I mean, it's like at school in that you have to bring your homework done, I mean, they don't let you stay here to the end just doing nothing, no, here,

well, it's like the Bologna Plan, you have to get certain tasks done and from there you...

I: They examine or evaluate you, right.

S: But of course if you haven't done that they don't evaluate you and that means you learn more, because if you don't, if you leave it all to the last minute you come to... I mean, there is something in your head and you don't even know what it is and then you forget it, I think that's why I haven't noticed much change.(Student Architecture.38)

We also detect a positive effect on learning that is related to social aspects, social identification is also reinforced. Also the fact that students have contact with their colleagues indirectly affects their learning. The effect of social relations at the institution is dealt with more broadly in the following section but it is important to bear in mind that these have an indirect effect on academic aspects, and more specifically on learning.

I mean the report was on what you had done in practical sessions, but of course if you had done the same you'd say "I understand that, I understand that" but asking questions to each other helps, I don't know, I learned more. (Student Chemistry. 70)

Yes, it's like the undergraduate course and I was considering a whole lot of things [dropping out] and then my friends [said to me] "don't do it, come on! (Student Social Education.11)

When it comes to studying... I mean, the people at uni we do help each other a lot because, I mean, as they're studying the same as you, it's easier. (Student Pharmacy.79)

So they're really on your backs here and they make you do a lot of projects, you have to follow the course day by day, and that's perhaps what people don't like about Bologna, but that's what it is, it's the best way of learning! (Student Telecomunications.41)

I: OK, but in this case you'd say they motivate you, wouldn't you? But do you think these friendships have helped you make progress?

S: Yes, yes.

I: Why?

S: Yes, to stop me skiving, and oversleeping at eight in the morning, you do that and they tell you off.

I: It's like going to the gym, if you're going, then I'll come too.

S: Exactly, it's more or less the same "are you going tomorrow? No, I don't feel like it, me neither, but if you go, then I'll go" so I say: what the hell, let's go! We motivate each other because if we didn't this year really would be... (Student Business Studies.60)

Astin (1999) stated that all institutional policies and practices –whether aimed at academic or non-academic aspects- could be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they increase or reduce student participation. In the case of Spanish university, the implementation of the Bologna Process has involved the incorporation of new teaching methodologies aimed at, among other things, encouraging students' autonomy and prioritising more active participation. These statements show how the changes that occurred in the teaching methodologies have led to students being physically at university for more hours. So, through contact with colleagues, it seems that they feel more involved in university life. In general, the innovations implemented as a result of the Bologna Process have become agglutinating elements that have led to greater integration of students in the institution.

The interrelation of the academic and social aspects that different authors have mentioned (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Eggens et al., 2007) is fundamental for understanding the experience of university students. Therefore, the increased amount of hours that students dedicate to academic demands and have to be in the institution has translated to an increase in the contact with their colleagues and, consequently, in changes in the way they identify with the institution. In the same way, social identification has affected the way in which young people experience university; affecting, indirectly, their staying in the university and their learning.[9]

Question 2: Have the Changes Introduced Through the Bologna Process Meant Changes in the Quality and Quantity of Relations between the Students and the Different Members of the University Institution?

As for the social dimension, the changes generated by the Bologna Process and the subsequent increase in workload have meant that students spend more time at university. In this regard, in some cases these changes have led to an increase in relations between students, lecturers and the university. In relation to coursemates some students state:

> Yes, yes, there always are... as we have practical on so many afternoons, some of us stay for lunch whenever (...) Yes, even people in halls, because of course we finish lectures at 12:30, and start practical at 15:00, if you go home for lunch and come back, you've missed two wonderful hours! Then you finish practical at 7 pm and you're not going to start studying straight away so we always go for supper and then go to the library for a bit… (Student Pharmacy. 50)

> No, I think you meet up most with people from university, the people you spend most time with, practical work also helps you to get to know your coursemates better because you spend four hours together every day, every day and because you spend so much time with someone, you chat with them more, you make friends with them and all that, I think the people I see the most are my university friends. (Student Chemistry.65)

> Yes, yes, I mean, if, if, if you're getting lost it does you good [working together], but if you don't understand something yourself, I don't know, it's almost always good to have somebody because you're always going to have doubts and questions and the other person knows how to explain it to you. (Student Pharmacy. 74)

With respect to relations with teaching staff, the new methodologies also involve a closer relationship between students and lecturers. Continuous evaluation and group work mean that students do not see their lecturers as distant figures and make daily contact with them. However, differences have been detected between courses. The proximity between students and lecturers is closer on some courses than on others. We are not claiming that relationships between students and lecturers have radically changed since the Bologna Process came into force, for this change has been taking place for many years at some universities and the impulse of Bologna inspired pedagogical methodologies has consolidated that tendency. The closeness of these relationships is increasingly more accentuated these days, and has departed from many students' preconception of distant relationships and the non-direct implication of university lecturers in student learning.

> I feel that if I have problems, most of the lecturers are very willing to help solve any doubts asked to them and the course is more or less how I expected it to be. (Student Pharmacy. 79)

> But I'm learning an awful lot. I didn't expect that either, I thought that at universities there was a big distance between the lecturers and students, as if you're just a number, see? They give you a mark and that's that, but not here, here the lecturers know you, in fact if you get a good mark they sometimes send you an email to congratulate you! (…) They are very friendly and I didn't except that either, it's great! (Student Humanities. 25)

> I think so, I mean, lecturers I don't know, the School in general neither, but I find it pretty personal and the lecturers are here quite a lot, I mean that, I do think that the lecturer-student thing is taken quite into account because I've never heard any friend say "I going to see a lecturer because I don't understand something" but I have done it a lot. (Student Architecture. 33)

The same thing evidently doesn't happen to all students, some comment that they have very few relations with the institution and only go to campus for a few lectures. In that sense, focussing on academic aspects, it can be seen how there are degrees of identity. In the following statements students show less participation with the institution. They only go to university to fulfil their academic duties, and not to participate in university life.

> "I come here for my lectures and nothing else. (Student Translation and Interpretation.2)

> I- So as well as coming here to university, you do other activities apart from your course?

S- No. (Student Social Education. 11)

I suppose that because of my age I find it very easy to talk to the lecturers, well you see, I've not made friends and gone for coffees, but it's easy and I just come here to do the work and study and then I have to go and work for my job. (Student Translation and Interpretation.1)

I: OK. And what about the services you have found and the resources you can access, don't you think there's a wide selection?
S: Well, me, there isn't much missing … But the thing is...
E: Do you take part in the complementary activities they offer or...?
S: No
E: You come to study, then leave, and that's all.
S: Yes. (Student Business Studies.58)

Most of the students interviewed commented on an increase in the academic contact between students for solving problems or for doing group work, which has led to the creation of new friendships and changes in relations with the reference peer group. There is therefore an increase in social identification.

I- In relation to the atmosphere on the course, you said you made friends straight away.
S- Yes, I still have the same friends I made on the first day.
I- There's a good atmosphere in class.
S- Yes, we all know each other, there are lots of us, but we know each other and well. (Student Translation and Interpretation. 6)

(...) here everybody is themselves and we all go away for weekends together, we go off to a youth hostel, that's something we students organise ourselves, there are lots of contacts between courses, not just for note-taking, but for partying together and you go out with people from other courses and it's clearly like, well, like a family, isn't it? It's called the biofamily, we call it that, and it helps a lot, if you're going to be here perhaps eight hours a day, you either make friends, or you die. (Student Biosciences. 17)

Yes, of course, but you might have friends that say: "what do mean go to museums!?" But there are others that would love the idea! (...) Yes, yes, the nice thing is that we like the same things and you can talk about everything and well, well and it's... (Student Humanities.29)

Villar & Albertín (2010) stated that upholding different understandings regarding the type of social relations in the university and the social capital determined the type of contact established between colleagues. As regards our analyses, in the majority of cases, we found that students uphold a socio-emotional understanding which developed into friendships with the peer group. These have involved obtaining resources such as information, favours and friendships that have had a positive effect on the social and academic identification of the students with the university.

Question 3: Does the increase in relations at university produce changes in the reference peer group and therefore, in identification with the institution?

On the one hand, on many occasions these new friendships can lead to a progressive change in the reference peer group, which becomes the peer community formed at university. On the other hand, the process of identifying with the new university peer group can sometimes involve a gradual loss of contact with friends from outside of university that have not gone into higher education (external group/belonging). The distancing is sometimes due to different leisure pursuits, consumer capacities or different interests and values. The following quotations reveal how students change their relationships; they increase their social identification with classmates and lose part of the social identification with former friends.

> Well some no, no, some... it's because what I like is having friends that share a lot of my interests and most of my friends from school are at the ESADE[10] and they're fantastic, wonderful, they are very good friends but there comes a time when I'm not, I mean, all they ever talk about is the ESADE and the same old stuff... and perhaps they don't read a single book or you ask them who a certain painter is and they haven't got a clue and you say "bloody hell" and at the end of the day it's not just "going clubbing" there has to be more, doesn't there? And so I have stuck with the friends that have the most in common with me and then those friends introduce you to friends of their own and it turns out that you get on better with her friend than you do with her and things like that. (Student Humanities.31)

> S- With the people here it's more similar, they more or less want the same thing, or if not think the same, it's like there's dialogues, but then again there are people that aren't interested in studying or politics, economics, whatever it is that I'm interested in, and they're, like, more superficial, what are you doing today? It's another type of relationship and here it's all more profound, much more.
> I- And does that cause distance?
> S- Yes, in my case it does because I like conversations about my interests, all that what are you doing today, how's it going stuff is okay as well, but I also like people to offer me something, and so then I do put some distance between us because I haven't found what I want or what I feel like. (Student Translation and Interpretation.6)

> Well, one thing leads to another, I mean, you don't have the time to see them and in the end you lose contact and they've been lost … we don't have the same relationship we had before. (...) I see them very much "now and again", there are some I see more because one is my bike mechanic and another is my hairdresser, or whatever, I still see them, but there are others that are harder to see, but I know that they are there if I need them. (Student Telecommunications.42)

It should be noted that this phenomenon of the creation of friendships at university and a change of reference peer group does not occur in all cases. Students continue considering their peer community outside of the university to be their real friends. The absence of the construction of friendships at university, and therefore the lack of bonding with coursemates and the institution, is most of all a phenomenon that is found among the students at large institutions, in which relationships are harder to consolidate. Also, focussing on social aspects, it can also be seen that there are different degrees of identity.

> Yes, well me, most of my friends are from outside, eh? I mean most of the people I go out with are from outside, here now and again; we go out for dinner, see. But I don't really consider them my friends. They are university colleagues with whom I might go out or whatever, but not friends... (Student Nursing.53)

> I: You don't go out with people from the faculty, from the School?
> S: Yes, but not as much. Less because of course I'm used to seeing my friends every day at school and now I just see them once a week when I can go out because I spend a lot of time at university, well it's not that I wouldn't like to, but I don't get to see my friends from before. So I do go out with them, but not much. (Student Architecture.33)

> I: Have you made a group of friends at University?
> S: Group, group of friends, no, I've got colleagues that I have known since the day I first came here, who I see in the library, we go for dinner together and all that but like friends, friends, I have that. But I mean no, not a group of friends. (Student Telecomunications.45)

> For me, to be sincere, the people with whom... we're not... I mean I don't like the people here, no... I don't think much of them... we don't have much in common, you know? I don't know if it's the way they dress but the way I see it all the girls dress the same, you know? As for the guys... I don't like them at all, you know? The first year I made friends with three people, you know? And those three people told me that there are people you get on with and that are fun but that you have to search a lot among the people. I mean, to be honest, I have little to do with the people in my class. But as the years have gone by I've got to know more people because… you know? (Student Business Studies.58)

As other research has pointed out (Hughes, 2009) it is clear that the social aspect of university holds least importance for university students, and the academic aspects are fundamental to engagement and learning. Moreover, academic identification is necessary to succeed at university, and social identification is a bonus, but not necessary for all students. The intermediate point would seem to be the students that despite making friends at university, still have no problem maintaining their relationships with groups of people from before made of people that did not go into higher education.

I: And are you more friends with your boyfriends and girlfriends from here or those from outside or... do you also go out with them like friends?
S: Yes, yes. With all of them, it's always good.
I: Without mixing?
S: No, we also mix them, I mean that as well… very well. (Student Nursing.54)

I: Would you say that if you have made friends at university, you have formed a gang of friends?
S: Yes, I've gone on holiday with them to Rome, Berlin, so yes, great.
I: Do you keep your friends from outside of university?
S: Yes, yes. (Student Architecture.38)

I: These friends you have outside, apart from studying, are they friends you share other things with, like leisure, going for walks?
S: Yes, yes.
I: But not the ones at uni?
S: No, with them as well...
I: As well?
S: Well, I have a group, not from my year but the third year, but we are always going...
I: Going out together.
S: Yes, yes.
I: For fun, so, as much here as outside, they're mixed?
S: Yes, yes. (Student Biociences.21)

On this point, some quotes by students who have consciously reflected on their feelings and their perception (cultural aspects) are presented. For the students that create friendships, and that lead to a change in the reference peer group, the process of identification with the university is clear. Students mention that they feel that they form part the university student collective with which they share norms, values and interests.

I: In values as well. What you like, studies, the type of leisure you prefer?
S: Yes, yes, all of that, I mean, what we talk about, while other people might ask what club you went to the other day, with us it's what's the last book you read? We do humanities, what are we expected to do! And yes, it shows that we're humanities students because well … (Student Humanities.25)

I: And in relation with your school friends... do you feel more friends with your school friends or your university friends?
S: Well, it's a different kind of friendship, because you can't speak about certain things to friends from school but with them I can speak about them for three hours, well, it's another way of doing things. What I've found at university is that my friends are people that have tastes and interests very like mine, and whether you like it or not that's important, but also the way people are, at school we were friends because we came from the same place but the

same way of being, no? I mean, they're people that give you different things. (Student Humanities.26)

As we explain in theoretical background part, social identification includes both the effect of sharing standards and values with the university peer group and the way the individual participates in the institution's social activities. As has been seen, not all students increase their contact with university colleagues, and there are also cases of students that develop no identification with their university. In this sense, it can be concluded how it is possible to negotiate the identity and to construct different student identities. The institution not determined individuals' identities and forming their roles. In following quotations we can see who some students do not feel an active part of the institution.

I: Do you feel that you form an active part of the School, as a student?
S: No, no, well perhaps because I haven't got involved, I mean there are things, some organisations, but I don't.
I: For students perhaps, are they?
S: Yes, yes, but I haven't approached them either. (Student Architecture.33)

I: Do you feel, do you form part, I mean, when you're at university is it because you like studying or because you feel you play an active role, you feel that it's a university with a certain name, don't you? Because they do things well and, does that count for you?
S: Well, it doesn't count for me.
I: That doesn't count?
S: No.
I: The most important thing for you is that your studies are going well and that's all, right?
S: I am happy with the studies, to be precise, not the university, for me the [Name of University], well... (Student Biociences.18)

I: Would you say that you feel part in any way, that you form an active part of the centre? More than the students that come here, go to lectures, and then leave, or...?
S: I don't feel an active part of the university.
I: Of the faculty itself?
S.: No!
I: The fact that you work at the centre means you get access to more information, to...
S: Yes, yes, but apart from that, I mean, regardless of that I don't feel that I'm part of a family, if that's what you're asking.
I: Is there not the feeling, I mean to say, is there not a belonging? A feeling of belonging to a faculty, to a course, to a...
S: No, no. (Student Business Studies.60)

The heterogeneity of the profile of students attending university as a result of the educational expansion and the mass university has led to a series of changes in the way in which young people tend to understand their time in university. McInnis (2002), in his analysis of Australian universities, showed how first year students felt less integrated and declared a lack of commitment to the institution. The fact that they spent less time on campus and that they prioritised other activities –e.g. paid work- over university demands represented what the author called signs of disengagement.

These signs, in the case of Catalan universities, may have changed with the incorporation of new teaching methodologies such as continuous assessment or group work. As has been observed, these changes have affected the increase in the workload that has had an impact on the time students spend in university and the contact they have with their colleagues. The formation of friendships between colleagues and the identification process with the new university group lead to a feeling of belonging, and, therefore, identification with the university. In short, the innovative measures implemented as a result of the Bologna Process have become elements which bring about new ways of understanding and behaving at university which can become new signs, in this case, of reengagement.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen from the students' answer to the first question in this qualitative section of the research, the pedagogical methodologies related with the Bologna Process require the students to perform many tasks and more physical presence at the university. It has been seen that this brings a greater degree of academic and social identification by students with the institution given that they participate more and therefore shares the rules and values of the institution. It is therefore considered that the proposed terminology, related to identification and which maintains the need to separate academic aspects from social ones and the cultural angle from the behavioural one, is useful and necessary for making an exhaustive analysis of the process.

For the second and third questions in the research, we have found that the Bologna Process' changes to pedagogic methodology have led to changes in how students identify with the institution. In terms of academic aspects, students spend more time at the institution and have more contact with the institution, teaching staff and colleagues. This also affects their social identification, both with the institution and with their peer group. The creation of new friendships with university colleagues involves, in some cases, a change in reference peer group and a departure from the group to which one belonged previously. All of these relationships increase social and academic identification with the university as an institution, and can help to improve learning.

This leads us to certain provisional descriptive conclusions that can serve as a working hypothesis for the quantitative part of the research, which can examine the extent of each profile, the relations between them and the specific contexts of each university and course.

On the basis of the results presented it can be stated that:

– The introduction of the Bologna Process to the four studied universities has caused students to spend more time at university because the pedagogic methodologies require that.
– The increase in physical presence seems to lead to more academic identification with the university among students.
– The increase in physical presence tends to increase the interactions between colleagues and lecturers.
– The increase in interactions contributes to an increase in social identification with the university among students through the constitution of university reference peer groups.
– The increase in social identification with a university reference peer group seems to have a positive effect on the students' academic identification.
– There is need for a certain academic identification (instrumental or expressive) with the institution in order to achieve good academic results.
– Students negotiate their identities as they make transitions between different forms of being at university, both academically and socially.
– Social identification seems to be a value added to academic identification, if a student feels academically and at the same time socially identified with the institution, he or she is more likely to get even better academic results.
– Certain signs of the reengagement of students with the institution have been observed. In some cases, there seems to be a departure from the previous tendency that led to disengagement and distancing between students and the institution.
– We need to see what exactly happens to the students with employment or that feel overloaded by the amount of work that the new methodology generates.

In terms of future research different elements have been proposed for consideration[11]:

– Firstly, although there are no results in this respect, a large number of students have been found that have problems combining their studies and jobs, because the pedagogic methodologies related with Bologna require more tasks to be done and for more time to be spent at university. It should not be forgotten that the type of student that studies and works at the same time is increasingly more common at universities and that the implementation of methodologies that do not enable students to work many hours elsewhere may leave such students without opportunities. The policies could be implemented without the need to lower levels, such as an increase in the use of NICTs and the adjustment of timetables. The introduction of the variable of social class is also therefore necessary in the analyses.
– Second is the need to carry out more exhaustive analysis of the context of the different qualifications to be able to decide whether there are significant differences between then, both in terms of identification and other processes that university students are involved in (Daza, in press).
– Finally, a careful analysis should be made of the process that emerges when students do not feel identified with the institution (they do not share the rules

and values of the institution) and therefore risk dropping out or holding back other students, as in the example of the free riders in the working groups (Masjuan & Elias, in press).

NOTES

[1] The authors form part of the GRET, Grup de Recerca Educació i Treball at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The written version of this article has been redrafted and discussed with the other members of the GRET (http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/gret) that participated in this research: Lidia Daza and Helena Troiano.

[2] Part of this report was presented at the 23rd CHER Conference, Oslo 10–12 June 2010.

[3] This was also analysed by Herzberg in the field of employment (1969) through his two-factor theory (motivational and hygiene), and applied to the field of education by Cryer & Elton (1986) and Elton (1996).

[4] The effect can evidently occur in the negative, whereby the institution implements such incoherent and damaging actions for its students that their expressive identification is reduced, and they thus prioritise the instrumental objective in order to pass the course. The case may even arise whereby there is a student that prioritises instrumental identification with studies but that maintains a professional expressive identification, for he or she is clear about what job to do in the future and therefore wants to get the certificate.

[5] Following these authors, there are also intentional and instrumentally rational explanations for the reasons for identity. Therefore, reasons for identity and instrumental rationality are not exclusive; rationality towards ends and rationality towards values are both present in social actions.

[6] In this sense, we are also approaching the vision of the last project to be developed on this subject. The SOMUL project (What is learned at university: the social and organisational mediation at university) carried out by a team at the Open University showed that different identification processes occur in universities today, where the bond between students and institution can involve different characteristics and is typified by an imperative individualisation process.

[7] This research forms part of the "Plan Nacional de investigación científica, desarrollo e investigación tecnológica" (CSO2008–02812) financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, under the title "Los estudiantes ante la nueva reforma universitaria".

[8] In the citations, the letter I refers to the interviewer and S to the student being interviewed.

[9] There are clearly differences between courses with respect to the implementation of the Bologna Process and the effects it generates upon student learning, which we will be referring to later throughout the article.

[10] ESADE is the name of a private business school.

[11] On the basis of an analysis of the interviews we are now completing a questionnaire to present to third year students in 2010. In producing this questionnaire, we are also considering internationally recognised indicators and instruments (Questionnaire Universitarie Internations -QUISS-, Course Experience Questionnaire –CEQ- Learning Community Scale –LCE, Weidman questionnaire, National Student Survey Engagement –NSSE-, SOMUL project questionnaire); as well as other questionnaires that have been used by our own research group. Using this questionnaire we aim to compare and quantify the qualitative results and/or improve our conceptualisation.

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