

Doctoral Studies from Yugoslavian Times to the Bologna Process

Historical Milestones in the Establishment of Universities, Educational and Special Needs Educational Sciences and Doctoral Degrees at the Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb – and Oslo

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Introduction

The developmental history of the seven universities participating in project WB 04/06 provides an insight into the history of European universities. More specifically, these universities may be seen to represent two European outskirts in the south-east and north-west. These two outskirts share the recent history as Yugoslavian and Nordic welfare societies, with their presumed similarities and differences that have also influenced the development of their higher education systems and research activities. In the joint research plan for these seven universities, one of the important comparative aspects is formulated in the following manner:

With focus on countries in the West-Balkan region this research project has “regional-internal” comparative analysis between countries with a near history of the same

education policy and governance as one point of departure, and comparative analysis between two European regions with different social welfare society models, the North-West and South-East outskirts of Europe, as another perspective (Johnsen, 2013a).

This article focuses on a Western Balkan regional-internal comparative perspective when it comes to the development of education and special needs education, previously called defectology¹³, as a university discipline and of related doctoral degrees – but with a side glance at the northwest outskirts of Europe represented by the University of Oslo. This is the third of three articles about the development of doctoral studies, where the two former articles focus on the case of the University of Oslo; the former in a historical text study (Johnsen, 2013b) and the latter in an interview study with four senior researchers about their experiences and views concerning this development through the last half century (Johnsen, 2013c). The inspiration and overall intention of these three articles are to provide relevant information that can be applied to further development and cooperation between the seven project universities specifically, and also provide useful information in the wider international development of higher education in general.

The objective of this article is to present a brief overview of the establishment of universities, and of education and special needs education as university disciplines, as well as introduction and development of doctoral degrees within these disciplines. The overview is based on information compiled from texts found in books and on the Internet, mostly from the home pages of the universities in focus. Two doctoral research fellows at the University of Zagreb, the present Dr. Anna Wagner and Dr. Daniela Cvitković, have collected information of their colleagues from the participating Western Balkan universities and translated to English language. Other colleagues from these universities have provided additional information in the process of writing this article. Professor Dragan Rapačić, project coordinator at the University of Belgrade, has along with junior researchers, delivered notes and comments at my request throughout the writing process of this article. The information gathering has focused on questions related to establishment of universities, research disciplines and doctoral

13. The discipline was established as 'special education' in Norway and 'defectology' in the other participating universities, with the exception of the University of Sarajevo, where the collaborative partner is the Faculty of Educational Sciences, and there is no department of special needs education. Today the participating universities have changed this discipline's name. Therefore, for the sake of simplification in this article the discipline is called 'special needs education' when it is discussed generally, whereas current locally applied titles are applied when discussed in relation to individual universities.

degrees, as mentioned above. Special attention has been paid to recent years' development associated with the Bologna process of higher education. From the main author's external perspective, an underlying assumption has been that the development in the Western Balkan countries has evolved from rather similar conditions during Yugoslavian times to greater individual differences between the universities after the division into several nations.

Joining the tradition of European university history, this article takes "the birth of the University of Bologna", Italy, as the point of departure in a short overview of the development of universities in general and in the project countries specifically. The article moves between general university development and the establishment and further growth of education and special needs education as research disciplines. The origins of the doctoral degree, the establishment and development of education and special needs education and development of doctoral degrees in these disciplines are briefly discussed. Finally, the discussion moves to the changes of the two research disciplines in accordance with the Bologna process of higher education.

From Bologna to the establishment of Western Balkan universities

The institution that we today call the University began to take shape in Bologna at the end of the eleventh century, when masters of Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic began to devote themselves to the law. In the nineteenth century a committee of historians, led by Giosuè Carducci, attributed the birth of the University to the year 1088 (Universita Di Bologna. *Our History*. Home page, <http://www.eng.unibo.it>).

The university idea that was realised in Bologna had ancient models from what may be characterised as early forms of academia in China and the Arabic world, in the school of Alexandria, the Greek Academia and medieval scholarly monasteries (Kjærgaard & Kristensen, 2003; Simpson, 1983; Ståhle, 1996). The time for university establishments seems to have been ripe, since the idea immediately spread from Bologna and throughout Europe, and universities are now recognised as global institutions.

In the pre-Yugoslavian countries several precursors of what came to be universities were founded as schools within different disciplines. Some of these institutions were established, abolished and re-established in accordance with the perceived interest of differing ruling authorities. Thus, the University of Zagreb was founded in 1669 through a decree by Emperor Leopold I of the

Habsburg family, and it was “re-founded” and strengthened as a university through a new decree in 1874 (Anderson, 2004:232; <http://www.unizg.hr>). The first University of Sarajevo, Saraybosnasy Hanika, was established in 1531 as an Ottoman Islamic law college. It was reorganized as a modern university in 1949¹⁴. The precursor of the University of Belgrade goes back to 1808, and the first university act was signed by King Peter I in 1905 (Anderson, 2004:231; http://www.bg.ac.rs/en_index.php). The University of Ljubljana was founded in 1810 under the name Écoles Centrales, but was closed after three years due to a shift of power to the Austrian government. It was permanently founded in 1919 (http://www.uni-lj.si/en/mobility_programmes/contacts.aspx). Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje was founded in 1949 (<http://www.ukim.edu.mk/en>). The youngest of the participating universities, the University of Tuzla, developed from a college of mining in 1958 and was incorporated as a branch of the University of Sarajevo until it received status as an independent university in 1976 (Halilović, 2012:29).

As shown in a former article in this book (Johnsen, 2013b), the establishment of the University of Oslo took place within a similar historical period and in a somewhat comparable unstable political situation as the cooperating Western Balkan universities. Thus it was established in Christiania, present day Oslo, in 1811. This happened three years before the fall of Napoleon, where his former marshal, Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, who later became Swedish King Carl Johan, demanded Norway from the losing royalty in Denmark. In the meantime the Norwegian bourgeoisie had reinstated and modernised ancient laws to form a national constitution and establish the modern Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget). Thus the early development of current University of Oslo took place under the government of two neighbouring royalties for almost a century before Norway gained its full independence as a modern Nordic state in 1905 (Danielsen et. al., 1991; Johnsen, 2013b).

14. This historical information has been obtained from the homepage of the University of Sarajevo (<http://unsa.ba>) where a brief historical overview is written in the local language. The overview has been translated, sentence for sentence, to English in Wikipedia's homepage (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Sarajevo). The information is confirmed orally and by e-mail (Sehic). For the sake of historical source criticism, it is worth remarking that Faginović (2005) did not mention the foundation of Saraybosnasy Hanika in 1531 in her Master's thesis about the development of universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) from medieval times. However, this early establishment is currently part of the official history of the University of Sarajevo and is therefore mentioned here.

The origin of doctoral degrees

How did the university degree system develop and gain international recognition? As the number of European universities grew, a system marking different levels of knowledge soon developed. The ascending division in Bachelor and Master followed the pattern from the medieval guilds' division into apprentices and masters. It seems that a division between bachelors and masters, also called doctors or professors, developed during the thirteenth century. However, the underlying meaning of the titles seems to have been arbitrary and different between universities, and they did not reflect commonly understood levels of knowledge in the way they are attempted to be applied today (Kjærgaard & Kristensen, 2003; Simpson, 1983; Stähle, 1996). Uiblein (1978) describes how the doctoral degree was introduced at the University of Vienna, the first university in the German speaking part of Europe, established in 1365, following the trends of other European universities such as the University of Paris. When the University of Copenhagen was established in 1479, it was influenced by other European universities, and the three titles Bachelor, Master and Doctor, came to represent ascending levels of knowledge. Students from Norway and other neighbouring countries were enrolled in Copenhagen from the founding year onwards, and Norwegian scholars numbered amongst the professors. The doctoral degree system therefore seemed obvious from the establishment of the University of Oslo in 1811, and the first doctoral degree was defended there even before the first university act was passed (Johnsen, 2013b).

As mentioned above, the Western Balkan universities were also inspired by the development of universities in many European countries, not least because Western Balkan students studying at universities in other parts of Europe saw the need for similar institutional developments in their own countries. Thus in the University Law of 1905, the University of Belgrade introduced the doctoral degree at all faculties comprising the university at that time, which were the Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Law, Medicine and the Faculty of Technical Engineering. The first doctoral thesis was defended in 1907 by Jovan Lončarević (Baralić, 1967; (http://www.uns.ac.rs/sr/novosti_dogadjaji/promocijaDoktora/index_2012.html); confirmed by Rapačić & Stojković).

At the University of Sarajevo the Faculty of Philosophy was established in 1950, from which a great number of doctoral degrees have been defended (confirmed by Sehić). At the University of Tuzla the first doctoral degree was defended in 1962 at the Faculty of Technology, while the Faculty was still a branch of the University of Sarajevo (Halilovic, 2012; confirmed by Dizdarević).

Thus the Western Balkan universities established their own doctoral degrees step by step as they obtained a core group of researchers with doctoral degrees from other and often neighbouring universities. An example of this is the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Tuzla, where a group of researchers attained their doctoral degrees from the cooperating University of Zagreb before they set up their own doctoral study programme.

Education and special needs education as university disciplines

The focus of this article is on the emergence and subsequent development of education and special needs education as higher education and research disciplines. This section provides a brief description of the introduction of special needs education as a university discipline inspired from different traditions and scholars and having different titles, such as special education, defectology and the current special needs education. Special needs education has emerged as an independent discipline from education, even though it also relates to other research disciplines. Educating new generations of students was a main incentive behind the establishment of universities. The following account therefore starts with the question: Why was education not amongst the initial university disciplines?

If we look to the early development of the University of Oslo as an example, one reason for this lack might have been the strong position of epistemology, the study of knowledge, within philosophy. In addition preparation for elementary education was a matter of theology, as the church was given responsibility for this education from when the first law on the elementary school for all was proclaimed in 1739. The close connection between theology and elementary education was due to the Lutheran State Church in Norway as in the other Nordic countries. Theology and philosophy were amongst the first university disciplines. The strong position of epistemology in the Nordic countries was related to German philosophical debate involving scholars such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) at the University of Königsberg and a number of other philosophers, mostly German and Nordic, who advocated different traditions and trends within the study of knowledge. Niels Treschow (1751–1833), one of the first professors at the University of Oslo (then called Christiania) came from a professorship in philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, where he was renowned for his epistemological line of argumentation. Later several teacher training institutions, called seminars, were established in Norway

throughout the nineteenth century; however, it was not until 1936 that education was introduced as a research discipline at the University of Oslo with Dr. Philos. Helga Eng as its first professor (Johnsen, 1998/2000; 2013b).

How was the early development within Western Balkan universities? Only one of the collaborating universities in the research cooperation project (WB 04/06) was represented with the Faculty of Education, namely the University of Sarajevo. The faculty is the initial collaborative partner with UiO related to development towards educational inclusion¹⁵, while the six other participants are represented by special needs education. As a tentative answer to the question of when education was established as a discipline at university level in the Western Balkan countries, the case of the Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, is therefore applied here. With its historical roots reaching back to 1531 and the Ottoman Islamic college of law, philosophy and theology, the establishment of the Faculty of Education as the Pedagogical Academy in 1946 marked a new area in conjunction with several other higher education institutions. In 1949 some of these were gathered in the modernised University of Sarajevo. The Pedagogical Academy remained an independent higher education institution on college level, offering education of elementary and secondary school teachers. However, in 1969 the teacher education programme for secondary schools was transferred to the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. The Pedagogical Academy proceeded with a two years higher education programme for preschool and elementary school teachers. In 1999, after the atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), new efforts were made in the field of higher education. The Academy became part of the University of Sarajevo, and the educational programmes were extended to four years. Currently the Academy has changed

15. The international principle of Educational Inclusion, presented in UNESCO's *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (1994) and repeated in the UN's *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) presupposes close and flexible cooperation between education and special needs education in the local school (Johnsen, 2010). Educational inclusion was prioritised by the Pedagogical Academy, current Faculty of Education, when they were asked to decide on topics for cooperation with the international community after the recent atrocities. Thus inclusion was a main topic in the cooperation with the Norwegian Union of Education, where the main author of this article was invited to contribute with a seminar on micro-curricular consequences of the principle of inclusion (Johnsen, 1998). In this way the Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, was the initial collaborative partner with the Department of Special Needs Education, UiO. The cooperation was extended to current Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Tuzla, in the international cooperation project about *Special Needs Education towards Inclusion* (SØE 06/02), and further extended in the research collaboration between seven universities in the project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 06/04). Thus the University of Sarajevo is the initial cooperating university with UiO and the Faculty of Education the only project participant representing the research discipline of education.

its name to the Faculty of Education, and the educational structure is adapted to the Bologna structure of higher education with four year Bachelor and one year Master programmes, providing in turn opportunities for pursuing PhD studies at other relevant faculties and universities in a country participating in the Bologna process. As an example, the Master candidate at the Faculty of Education, who is participation with providing information about the faculty in this article, will defend her PhD dissertation at the Faculty of Philosophy (<http://unsa.ba>, confirmed by Sehić). The example of the University of Sarajevo shows that education was not amongst the original disciplines in the very early history of the University, but became a higher educational discipline even before the establishment of the modern university. This indicates that higher education of teachers was prioritised in the modernisation of the compulsory school as well as in higher education. It remains to examine to what extent this prioritization was also inspired by similar higher education institutions in other parts of Yugoslavia.

When did special needs educational topics become a part of public debate? When and how was it considered as an independent research discipline? In general the very early known history of education of persons with special needs and different kinds of impairments shows a development from scattered efforts to philosophical curiosity to foundations of special schools and other institutions. It allows us glimpses of conditions for persons with impairments from Ancient Greece texts, the Bible and the Koran, to Erasmus of Rotterdam's (1469–1536) carved alphabets and “the less known Spanish Revolution” of successful tutors for deaf pupils (Enerstvedt, 1996; Johnsen, 2001). The fragmentary findings give the impression of ambivalent attitudes, balancing between care, love and interest on the one hand, and on the other hand lack of responsibility, exclusion and an increasing tendency to categorise different kinds of impairments. These distinctions have often (but far from always) coincided with the borders of poverty. The conditions for single persons with disabilities as well as their families and societies have mostly remained in the shadow of history. However, philosophical debates are written on the pages of historical texts. Thus it is documented that the British empirical philosopher John Locke's (1632–1704) focus on the fundamental importance of the senses for understanding and learning inspired philosophers and educators to pose the question: “How is it possible to learn when one of the senses is not functioning?” Paris became the great hotbed for development of different teaching and learning approaches related to visual and hearing impairments and, later, for treatment of insanity or psychosis and severe developmental impairment. From Charles-Michel de l'Épée's pioneer school for the deaf founded in 1770 and Valentin Haüy's

(1745–1822) first known school for the blind in 1784, schools and institutions for different kinds of disabilities were established throughout Europe and on other continents. Theologians, medical doctors and educators were amongst the pioneers. Curing, treating and educating persons with impairments and special needs evolved into a new discipline called by different names, such as *sonderpädagogik* (special education) and *heilpädagogik* (curative education) in German speaking areas, special education in several English speaking areas and the Nordic countries and defectology in Russia and Slavic speaking areas (Johnsen, 2001).

According to Knox and Stevens (1993), Russian defectology was concerned with so-called abnormal psychology, learning disabilities and special education. In the early years of the Soviet State, Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) became associate director of the new Defectology Section at the Faculty of Education at Moscow State University II, directing research towards a cultural-historical foundation. He also organised a research laboratory in 1925–26, which became independent in 1929 and known as the Experimental-Defectological Institute (EDI). After several years in the shadow of political pressure under the Stalin period, Vygotsky's laboratory was re-organised by some of his former students to form the Institute of Defectology in 1943 (Bein et.al, 1993; Johnsen, 1999–2000; 2001; Knox & Stevens, 1993).

The need for professional education and research within this field grew all over Europe, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Swiss scholar Heinrich Hanselmann (1885–1960) founded a number of *heilpädagogical* institutes. Hanselmann became the first known professor within this field in 1931. German special education and Hanselmann's work in particular greatly influenced Nordic special needs education, where the first Norwegian professional study started in 1961 and developed into the current Department of Special Needs Education at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, UiO (Johnsen, 2001b). In later decades the works of Vygotsky and his associates, such as Alexander Luria and Alexei Leontiev became known, not least through the application of their studies by the Norwegian scholar Ragnar Rommetveit (1972; 1992; 2008) and his American colleague, James Wertsch (1985) as well as through the English interpretations of Vygotsky's works in six volumes, whereof one volume is a compilation of his defectological texts (Vygotsky, 1993).

French, German and Russian influence also reached the Western Balkan area. The Slavic languages' close relationship with one another contributed to a much easier access to Russian literature than in the Germanic and Latin language based areas of Europe. Defectology became essential in the development of knowledge and skills related to working with disabilities. Research institutes,

departments and faculties of defectology were established in the Slavic speaking countries of Europe and several of their neighbouring countries, and the Western Balkan countries were no exceptions.

When and how was special needs education established as an independent research discipline at the cooperating Western Balkan universities? From where did they seek inspiration and support in further developing this discipline? Were there some common traits between the Western Balkan developments of special needs education as a university discipline? Were there similarities and differences between the development of the discipline in the Western Balkan universities and at the University of Oslo? The following brief review of each project university is based on information from the universities' and faculties' home pages and other information in English in addition to selected excerpts from literature in local languages translated into English and confirmed by colleagues in the WB 06/04 project.

According to Obradović, Milojević and Radulović (2009), education of special educators was first organised in 1926 by the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia¹⁶ in the form of courses in special education. Starting in 1947, the education of special teachers was conducted at the Department of Special Education of the Pedagogical College in Belgrade, and in 1963 the College for Special Pedagogues was opened. In 1967 it was transformed into the College for Defectology, which from 1975 was further developed as the Faculty of Defectology, University of Belgrade. In 2005, pursuant to the Decision of the Commercial Court in Belgrade, the Faculty of Defectology, University of Belgrade, changed its name to the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation (confirmed by Rapačić & Stojković).

In Croatia the provincial parliament¹⁷ decided to establish a College of Defectology in 1962 in order to create a scientifically based development of professionals. The education programme was to focus on diagnostics, therapy and rehabilitation of persons with difficulties in psychosomatic development. The College became part of the University of Zagreb in 1965, and in 1973 it was transformed

16. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–1939/1943), also called the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, was formed after World War I as a merger of the southern Slavic speaking former parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, covering approximately the same territory as the post-World War II state of Yugoslavia.

17. The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was established after the World War II in 1946 and later named the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It consisted of the six republics; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia, and the two autonomous provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo, each with its own regional parliament. The disintegration of Yugoslavia into several independent states started in 1991.

into the Faculty of Defectology, University of Zagreb, following the procedure in the Academic Council of the university initiated by a university commission in cooperation with the Faculties of Medicine and Philosophy. The Faculty's history is marked by constant transformations following the development of theoretical knowledge of defectology under the influence of related research disciplines such as social sciences, humanities, theology and bio-medicine. In 1998 the name of the Faculty of Defectology was changed to the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. In 2012 the Faculty celebrated its 50 year anniversary (Faculty of Defectology, 2012; Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, 2009).

As indicated above, the two universities of Belgrade and Zagreb established defectology or special needs education, as a research discipline in the Western Balkan countries. It came to be the University of Zagreb that signed a formal agreement of cooperation with the University of Tuzla in 1996. At that time the university had arranged courses in defectology since 1993. The noted eye surgeon, Professor Dževdet Sarajlić, was an enthusiastic promoter of the establishment of defectology as a university discipline. His counterpart from the University of Zagreb was Professor Ljiljana Igric, specialist in inclusive education and psychotherapy¹⁸. This was the first cooperative agreement in the field of higher education between the two countries (Salihović, 2008). The Faculty of Defectology at the University of Tuzla later changed its name in accordance with changes at its counterpart in Zagreb and as a sign of contemporary changes in the field of special needs education. From 2004, it has been called the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation (confirmed by Dizadević).

1993 also marked the beginning of studies in defectology at the Institute of Pedagogy, which was part of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Macedonia. This was an important milestone in a development which started with part-time studies arranged by the University of Belgrade. A next step was taken in 1996 when studies in defectology were organised in an independent Institute of Defectology at the same faculty. The study programme is currently of four years including alternative specialisations within different areas of disability, and awarding with the title Graduate Defectologist. It qualifies for work in professional teams in regular pre-school and school institutions as well as in health and social-protection institutions. At

18. Professor Sarajlić has participated in two cooperation projects with the Department of Special Needs Education, UiO; in the former project as project coordinator on behalf of the University of Tuzla (SØE 06/02), and during the later project as an active professor emeritus (WB 06/04). Professor Ljiljana Igric is the coordinator on behalf of the University of Zagreb in project WB 06/04.

present the institute is called Institute for Special Education and Rehabilitation (<http://www.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/>; <http://www.mnza.org.mk/>).

What does this brief overview tell about the development of the two disciplines of education and special needs education in the participating Western Balkan countries? Concerning the establishment of education as a university discipline, the history of the participating Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, was applied as an example. It shows that education was not amongst the initial disciplines at the old university. However, two year higher education programmes for pre-school, elementary and secondary school teachers were established even before the reopening of the University of Sarajevo in its modern form. Thus, the Sarajevo example indicates that schooling was seen as so important that education became a prioritised discipline in the post-World War II development of higher education in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, since this is only one example, further investigation is necessary in order to draw general conclusions about the place of education within the history of higher education in the Western Balkan countries.

When it comes to special needs education, the subject became relevant when the first courses were started in Belgrade in 1926 under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and transformed to higher education after World War II in a reunited Yugoslavia. The University of Belgrade came to be the oldest and leading university within defectology along with the University of Zagreb. Many defectologists from other parts of Yugoslavia studied in either of the two universities and in this way prepared the soil for establishment of the discipline as other universities were established and developed. In close cooperation the two universities provided midwifery when new faculties or departments of defectology were established at other universities even after the division of Yugoslavia. The courses offered at the different universities and the specialisations within a broad range of different disabilities indicated that the younger faculties were inspired and supported by the two most experienced universities. The names of the faculties or departments as well as the four year duration of the study programmes were similar in all the Western Balkan universities. However, the change from defectology to using more updated names of the discipline indicated which university had been the main supporting partner; the University of Tuzla chose the same name as in Zagreb and the department in Skopje the same as in Belgrade.

What about similarities and differences between the Western Balkan universities and the University of Oslo? No specific contact seems to have been made between the two parts of Europe concerning special needs education until after the division of Yugoslavia. Early similarities may therefore be seen as common

European trends. Thus the focus on disabilities, difficulties and special needs in education seems to have been introduced in higher education well after education. Another shared characteristic seems to have been that special needs education was connected with and even originated from the educational discipline, and at the same time related to a number of other research disciplines. Further studies may, however, shed light on concrete aspects of interdisciplinary collaborations in the project universities as well as in other European universities. Both the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Norway started the trend of establishing and developing one national educational institution. The discipline developed from higher education at the college level into a university discipline. Special needs education rapidly became an attractive discipline within other higher education institutions as a one or two year independent study programme or as a part of a study programme within education. While still being an independent university college, the current Department of Special Needs Education gave academic and formal support to a number of universities and university colleges in their local establishment of special needs education, similar to the actions taken by the Universities of Belgrade and Zagreb. When it came to study content, a combination of general and disability specific specialisations was introduced early on in both European areas (Johnsen, 2001b).

It is, however, interesting to observe how much earlier Yugoslavia was to establish education for special educators in Belgrade (1926) than Norway (1961). The establishment of the Norwegian education programme coincided with that of Croatia (1962). An obvious difference mentioned previously are the early names of the discipline; defectology in the Western Balkan universities and special education in Norway. As also mentioned, this may indicate that early dominant influence have come from different sources within the European special needs educational discourse. This indication is interesting and invites to further studies focusing on foreign influence as well as prominent local scholars and research within the universities in both geographical areas. Another relevant and interesting question for further research concerns which other research disciplines had the greatest influence on special needs education and how various related disciplines have participated in the establishment and further development of special needs education within the different universities.

The steps towards a comprehensive research discipline have gone from the college to university level and towards offering the highest level of education, which is the doctoral degree. The overall intention of this article is to examine the development towards doctoral studies, and this is the topic of the next section.

Doctoral studies in the field of defectology and special needs education

How has the doctoral degree been established and organised in the Western Balkan universities? Dr Anna Wagner and Dr Daniela Cvitković¹⁹, University of Zagreb, are amongst the doctoral research fellows participating as young researchers in the WB 04/06 project. They have followed the traditional pre-Bologna doctoral studies and describe the structure in two notes. In addition the WB 04/06 project team at the University of Belgrade under the leadership of Professor Dragan Rapačić has contributed a note on the development at their university. Authorised texts in books and on the Internet have also been consulted.

Generally speaking, traditional doctoral studies at the Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Ss Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, Tuzla and Zagreb have had many common features in recent decades or until the beginning of the Bologna process²⁰ (The Bologna Declaration, 1999). The doctoral study programme leads to the highest degree of education, and it is achieved by defending a doctoral dissertation based on individual scientific research generating new results in a specific field of science. In order to apply for a doctoral dissertation, the candidate must have a Master's degree and at least three scientific publications in the area of research related to the dissertation. The candidate must be author or co-author of the papers published in scientific journals or at scholarly gatherings. The procedure for achieving doctoral level consists of six formal steps:

1. Submitting application and thesis
2. Report on thesis
3. Researching and writing dissertation under the supervision of mentor

19. The following description of the process towards being awarded a doctoral degree before the introduction of the Bologna process is based on detailed descriptions and documentation in two notes by Wagner and Cvitković.

20. Wagner and Cvitković base their general descriptions on the following documents handed over by project colleagues at the other Western Balkan universities. The documents are referred to in the order in which they have been presented: • Refined text of Rules of University of Tuzla presented to the conference of Management Board of University in Tuzla 07.02.2003. • Refined text of Rules of University of Tuzla presented to the conference of Management Board of University in Tuzla 21.04.2006. • Law regarding high education based on article 24 paragraph 1 bulletin c) of Tuzla canton Constitution ("Official gazettes of Tuzla-Podrinje canton", no: 7/79. and 3/99.) and proposed by Government of Tuzla Canton, Tuzla Canon Assembly on a meeting 19.7.1997. • Supplement for doctoral studies from our legislative framework regarding higher education. • Official paper of Canton Sarajevo, nr.1/96, 16/97, 2/96, 3/96. • Pravilnik o poslijediplomskom znanstvenom studiju, Zagreb: 2003.

4. Submitting doctoral dissertation for revision
 5. Report on doctoral dissertation
 6. Defence of dissertation
- 1) The application is submitted in the form of a thesis or project plan that includes the working title of the dissertation, a draft of the table of contents, research topic, methodology and a few words about the expected contribution to the scientific field. The thesis is delivered to relevant faculty where a commission is suggested and eventually appointed by the University Senate. Members of the committee should have doctoral degrees in the relevant field. The committee assesses the application.
 - 2) Within a certain predetermined time frame the commission reports their assessment of the application with a recommendation to the academic-educational council, which in turn has a certain time frame to accept or reject the application and forward their decision to the University Senate. The applicant then has 15 days' notice for a possible appeal. When accepted the scientific-educational council of the faculty appoints one of the commission members as supervisor for the candidate in the process of completing the dissertation. The supervisor should be an associate professor, professor or professor emeritus with publications within the same field as the candidate.
 - 3) The supervisor supports the doctoral candidate with the research and writing of the dissertation.
 - 4) The candidate submits a complete unbound doctoral dissertation to the scientific-educational council of the faculty. An adjudication commission consisting of three members is proposed for the doctoral dissertation. The faculty council hands over an exemplar of the dissertation to each commission member.
 - 5) The adjudication commission reviews the dissertation and submits a written recommendation on the thesis to the scientific-educational council of the faculty within 6 months. The faculty's scientific-educational council then acts in accordance with the three alternatives; a) accept the dissertation as ready for defence, b) reject the dissertation in its current form, recommending certain changes or c) reject the dissertation completely. Once the scientific-educational council has accepted a dissertation, the faculty council announces the date and time for the dissertation's public defence along with the candidate's full name and the theme of the doctoral dissertation, inviting interested parties to the defence, which should take place within a time frame of one week to three months from its announcement.

- 6) The president of the commission coordinates the public defence, opening by announcing the candidate's biography to the audience, introducing the candidate's scientific work and expert papers and confirming that the candidate has satisfied all requirements pertaining to the defence of his or her dissertation.

According to Wagner and Cvitković, the above outlined process towards being awarded a doctoral degree applies for the University of Zagreb as well as for the other Western Balkan universities participating in the WB 04/06 project. For the University of Belgrade, as an example, the process is documented in a series of revisions in *The Law on University (1992–2002; confirmed by Rapać & Stojković)*.

As indicated above, a certain number of doctors and professors are needed in order to be able to supervise and assess doctoral candidates on behalf of an academic scientific discipline at a university. Pioneer doctors within a discipline have, as a rule, defended their dissertation at another faculty or university. In addition some disciplines have started out at the college level and developed into university disciplines. This was the case with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, which was founded as an independent college and developed into a university department (Johnsen, 2001b). The first doctoral degree, *Dr Scient in Special Education*, was defended in 1989 (Ostad, 1989). Similarly, former *Pedagoska Akademija* has recently developed into the current Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo. The number of graduates with doctoral degrees is steadily increasing, but most of them are still defending their doctorate at the Faculty of Philosophy, which has developed a tradition for doctorates within education. According to Matejic-Đuričić, Kašić and Dimić (2005), the first *Dr. Scient in Defectology* at the University of Belgrade was defended in 1978 when doctoral degrees were awarded to Janković (1978), Nikolić-Simončić (1979) and Pihler (1978). At the University of Tuzla the first doctoral degree in Defectology was defended in 1998 (Salihović, 2008; confirmed by Dizadević and by Rapać & Stojković).

Doctoral studies within the Bologna process of higher education

In 1999 twenty-nine European ministers signed the Bologna Declaration, and in 2003 all the six countries participating in the WB 04/06 cooperation project;

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and Norway had become signatories. (Bologna Declaration, 1999; The Official Bologna Process Website July 2007 – June 2010). The intention with the declaration was to streamline European higher education through developing comparable degrees, common quality assurance systems and fair recognition of foreign degrees within the signatory countries. The same system of study credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System; ECTS) and the same or similar length of study programmes based on three years' undergraduate and two years' graduate cycles were important goals, even though allowances were made it was room for flexible solutions such as four + one year Bachelor and Master cycles, which are practiced at certain universities and university colleges in Norway as well as in the Western Balkan countries. Later on in the Bologna process, a third PhD cycle of three years was added.

One of the main goals in the WB 06/04 project was to share knowledge and experience related to the Bologna Process. This activity was an extension from the earlier project SØE 06/02 between the universities of Tuzla, Sarajevo and Oslo. The argumentation for this project goal was as follows:

The Bologna principles and process of choices and practices of content and structure of higher education are of great relevance for all participating universities, who find themselves at different places in the joint European co-ordination process. To change traditional study structures and limit them in order to fit into a study structure based on three cycles of 3+2+3 years reveals a number of dilemmas and difficult priorities for most university disciplines. So also for regular and special needs education. The objective (...) is therefore to use the possibility that the project workshops give to proceed with sharing of knowledge and experience related to implementation of the Bologna process (WB 06/04).

The Bologna process was discussed as a special programme item on the workshops, which were held every semester during the project period. In this article focus is on the question if and how the Bologna principles have affected the organisation of doctoral degrees in education and special needs education at the participating universities.

In Norway the Bologna Declaration and subsequent university act together with incitements from the newly established Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) led to fast and radical changes and cuts in course structure regarding the first two cycles of higher education. The length of the already established organised doctoral programme was, however, in accordance with the expected three years. The PhD degree, which had occasionally

appeared in Norwegian university debate since the mid-twentieth century, was now constituted as the future degree for all organised doctoral programmes, and already in 2003 the University of Oslo (UiO) presented Regulations for the PhD degree or Philosophiae Doctor (Johnsen, 2013a). The only main change with the PhD degree was, however, the change of name from a joint Dr Polit degree borrowed from the Faculty of Social Sciences to the PhD degree which is common for all organised doctoral degrees, albeit with an additional title related to the relevant faculty and department. Thus within the Faculty of Educational Sciences, UiO, there is a PhD in Education and a PhD in Special Needs Education. Obligatory course content and supervision as well as procedures with respect to doctoral defence are the same or somewhat simplified compared to the organised doctoral degrees constituted in the late 1980s. In addition Norwegian universities have kept the traditional so-called free Dr. Philos degree²¹ (Johnsen, 2013b).

Two of the participating universities have described the Bologna process related to their doctoral programmes, the University of Zagreb and the University of Belgrade.

At the University of Zagreb the academic year 2007 – 2008 marked the beginning of a new doctoral degree structure in accordance with the Bologna process. The Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences started a new doctoral study programme entitled Prevention Science and Disability Studies as partners of a joint degree including social sciences, biomedicine and healthcare, humanities as well as interdisciplinary fields (Rules concerning Scientific and Artistic Fields, Subfields and Areas, Article 5). The new degree, representing an interdisciplinary network connecting several scientific fields and subfields, is the first of its kind in Croatia. This revision coincides with the following structural changes in the philosophy of educating researchers. Thus the new doctoral degree programme is:

- interdisciplinary
- collaborative, aiming at interchange of instructors and researchers from within Croatia and abroad
- focusing on research partnership with the public sector and non-governmental organisations
- encouraging additional funding of excellent research candidates, candidates with disabilities and other important target groups

21. For more information on Norwegian doctoral degrees, see Johnsen, 2013b and 2013c).

- supporting international development of education and rehabilitation sciences through inviting international candidates and cooperating with other universities.

The doctoral degree programme admits graduates from the following study programmes as prospective applicants; a) the former undergraduate degree programme (four or five year programme), b) the former postgraduate degree programme (old Master's degrees) and c) the new Bologna programme (holders of new Master's degrees). Applicants may be from Croatian and foreign universities. Those applicants who satisfy admission requirements are to have the same rights and obligations regardless of their previous education. The doctoral study can be taken as a full-time or part-time programme, and it is as a rule financed by tuition fees. However, cooperation with a number of official foundations and offices is taking place in order to create and increase the number of research fellowships.

The Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Belgrade, began offering postgraduate studies in 1983 within the five research departments of deaf studies, visual impairment studies, physical disabilities and behaviour difficulties studies and studies of intellectual challenges. Based on the new Master's degrees, procedures for pursuing further research towards a doctoral dissertation were established in accordance with the Law on University (1992–2002; confirmed by Rapačić & Stojković). From this point in time, a completed Master's degree took the place of three published articles, which had previously been a common prerequisite in the Western Balkan universities, as described above. In addition to having completed their Master's degree, the applicant has to deliver a plan for a doctoral research project. This is assessed by a qualified commission, and when the applicant has received a written approval, he or she may enter the doctoral study programme.

In the academic year 2006–07 the first faculties at the University of Belgrade started a new PhD programme in accordance with the Bologna Process of Higher Education, when their draft regarding new programmes had been accepted by all necessary university organs and established by the Law on Higher Education (2005). They were followed by other faculties, and from 2011 new doctoral study programmes exist in all faculties, including the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation (Doctoral and Specialist Study Programs, 2011; http://www.fasper.bg.ac.rs/o_fakultetu.html). The PhD programme leads to the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education and Rehabilitation (PhD) with the following goal:

...to train students who will, upon their completion and public defending of a PhD thesis, be able to independently plan and conduct scientific research in the field of special education and rehabilitation; analyse and present obtained results in accordance with the highest scientific standards; perform horizontal and vertical dissemination of results of scientific research; critically evaluate scientific research of other authors; understand and apply the basic principles of evidence-based rehabilitation in everyday research; understand and hono(u)r ethical postulates in research based on the code of good scientific practice, especially in the field of assessing persons with special needs. PhD students fully master the methodology of scientific work, and conduct scientific research which represents a foundation for writing a PhD thesis. PhD thesis is based on original scientific papers, printed in extenso in international journals, leading national journals, or national journals (minimum one paper published or accepted for publication) (Doctoral and Specialist Study Programs, 2011:24).

A third university has given a brief description of the transition to the Bologna system of higher education. In 2005 the Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, changed the structure of education within the boundaries of the Bologna principles to 4 (Bachelor) + 1 (Master) + 3 (PhD) year cycles. As mentioned above, within a few years the Faculty has extended the Bachelor-level cycle from two to four years and developed the Master-level study programme. Currently, according to the Bologna agreement, mobility is granted for Master-level graduates in terms of enrolment in the third cycle at other universities that are partners in the Bologna process, of which universities in the Western Balkan countries are particularly relevant and where the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, is the most sought (<http://unsa.ba>, confirmed by Sehic). The Faculty of Education is now about to establish its own doctoral programme.

Summary and conclusion

The collected information²² draws a picture of the establishment of Western Balkan universities in early modern time and situates them in the turbulence of shifting political regimes, often by occupying forces. Europe, including the North Western as well as the South Eastern Outskirts, was unstable in these pre-democratic times, and those who held military power attempted to seek

22. Due to the main author's, Berit H. Johnsen's, poor reading of Slavic languages and scarce access to available literature within these languages, there is good reason to assume that there are more and richer sources of reliable information available about the topic of this article. Findings should therefore be interpreted as indications.

fulfilment of their dreams of having any kind of a common Europe under their rule. Thus higher education and research have developed in a European historical context of development, downsizing, manipulation and integration.

The summarising of this article is divided into two parts, starting with a regional-internal summary of similarities and differences between the Western Balkan universities supported by the main author's impressions as project leader through two cooperation projects. The second part consists of a brief summary of similarities and differences between the north western and south eastern areas of Europe. This last section concludes with an argument concerning the trustworthiness of the collected information along with suggestions for further studies into the history of development of the two disciplines, education and special needs education in the participating universities as well as in an extended European and international context.

Based on what is found about the participating Western Balkan universities, the development of special needs education seems to have followed similar paths; it was influenced by a defectological tradition, developing a four year professional basic education programme consisting of a combination of general special needs education and specialisations within traditional areas of disability and difficulties. Similarly, further development of the university discipline during later years and currently related to the Bologna process of higher education has led to establishment of Master-level and organised PhD study programmes. The cooperation within the WB 06/04 project supports the impression of similarities and "familiarity" between the universities, since the participants had a more or less joint history of acquaintanceship from before the WB 06/04 project. During the project period, they also participated at other regional-internal conferences and in other connections. During the preparation of the WB 06/04 project, this sense of familiarity also appeared when representatives from the two Bosnian universities in the former SØE 06/02 project suggested extending the cooperation to colleagues at the universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Skopje and Zagreb – across borders of division and recent wars. The impression was that the Western Balkan participants formed a joint undercurrent of professional and human unity across borders.

It is precisely these previous relationships that also demonstrate differences regarding the traditions of these universities. When the project workshops were situated in Belgrade and Zagreb, some of the participants visited "their old university" and the faculty where they had taken all or parts of their education as defectologists in earlier years. Thus the universities of Belgrade and Zagreb

played a leading role in general and also within special needs education during the period of the Yugoslavian state. Later other universities and faculties were established in their modern form, often after having been branches under a leading university. As an example modern higher education and research in Sarajevo started as branches from the University of Belgrade, and later the University of Sarajevo established branches in Tuzla, which became the first and founding faculties for the establishment of the University of Tuzla.

As mentioned in the introduction, an underlying assumption of the main author before starting this study was that the development in the Western Balkan countries has evolved from rather similar conditions during the Yugoslavian era to greater individual differences between the universities after their division into several states. However, the findings indicate the opposite. As summarised, the era of modern universities in Yugoslavia started with centralisation around first one and then two universities, in Belgrade and Zagreb, and slowly, but surely adding more universities. This development continued after the division of Yugoslavia. As a steadily rising number of areas established universities, the structure of the faculties and departments of defectology became rather similar, as documents and the notes of Wagner and Cvitković show. It also seems that the joint European Bologna process has led to even more streamlining in the structure of the three cycles of higher education programmes.

Building up a strong national university and developing the university structure from centralisation to an accelerating decentralisation of independent units seems to have been a general trait in European development of research and higher education, characterising the Western Balkan area as well as Norway. Several other similarities between the two European “outskirts” are mentioned earlier, such as joint relationships with education, additional cross-disciplinary connections, a combination of general special needs education and specialisations within traditional areas of disabilities and difficulties, development from the college level to a full-fledged research discipline at universities with Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes and joint partnership within the Bologna process of higher education.

As mentioned, this article is a result of cooperation between the main author, who is external to the Western Balkan universities, and colleagues from these participating universities; both co-authors and other colleagues from some of the universities who have contributed by answering questions, contributing comments and additional information through e-mail and telephone conversations (see list of informants). The article has also been presented in an open

lecture at the Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, in February 2013. As mentioned, the article is based on a joint text study of published books and articles and the universities' home pages as well as notes from colleagues. There is, however, reason to assume that more knowledge exists in texts and personal-professional experience than this article builds on. Moreover, some universities are poorly represented. These shortcomings are challenges to the trustworthiness of the article, and there are therefore good reasons to look at the presented information and discussions as tentative and possible conclusions as indications.

Thus this article poses more questions than answers, such as the following: What is the content of the traditions of special education and defectology? The assumption is that they are not two clearly different static traditions, but dynamic and developing traditions consisting of several sub-traditions.

Even though special education and defectology share a relationship with several other research disciplines, there are a number of questions regarding these relationships. How close have the relationships been over time? How should the relationships be described; as inspirational, as dependency, as competitive or as supportive?

What aspects of special education and defectology traditions have been dominant in the development; knowledge and skills regarding assessment or diagnosis, regarding supportive educational practices, or regarding development of new practices related to specific disabilities and special needs?

When it comes to the local universities, who may be described as outstanding researchers or research groups within the history of defectology and special education? What are their contributions and within what historical and cultural contexts did they work?

The concepts of defectology and special education have been used above due to the historical dimension of the questions. Regarding the current international trend towards social and educational inclusion, an important question is how each participating state and university downsize large institutions and develop high quality special needs educational support in their communities. Are, for example, special needs educators employed in local schools? Do we find research related to cooperation between teachers and special needs educators? Have locally employed teachers and special needs educators developed professional networks? If so, have participating universities developed some kind of cooperation with and support of these networks? The goals of the two cooperation projects, SØE 06/02 and WB 06/04, have been to answer some

questions related to education, special needs education and inclusion. However, at best the projects may be seen as contributions to a beginning joint research cooperation in this direction.

The tentativeness of this article is therefore an important challenge to further cooperation in studying the joint regional-internal as well as the inter-regional history of education and special needs education in Europe and wider international perspective; to learn from the past in order to apply for the future.

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