



# EHC

EUROPEAN HONORS COUNCIL

*Networking for talent development*

Maarten Hogenstijn

Nordisk talangkonferens

Vasa, September 22-23, 2016



**HanzeResearch**  
University of Applied Sciences

Professorship Talent Development  
in Higher Education and Society



@EUHonorsCouncil

# Positions and background



Professorship Talent Development  
in Higher Education and Society

Senior researcher in Research Centre for Talent Development  
in Higher Education and Society (led by Marca Wolfensberger)

Project leader Honors in Europe, mapping honors education  
and encouraging network formation



Secretary

## *Background*

Former honors student

Ph.D. in human geography

*Jeg prøver å lære norsk*

# Aims of this presentation

1. Give you more insight into the factors influencing the development of talent initiatives, based on experience from higher education
2. Provide you with examples of the power of talent initiatives
3. Encourage you to intensify networking, for example through the European Honors Council



# Inspiration and common language



*“It should not be forgotten that one of the purposes of democracy is to provide each individual with the opportunity that is best for him (...) The ideal for democratic education good enough to meet the needs of the post-war world must not be security but excellence”*

(Aydelotte 1944)

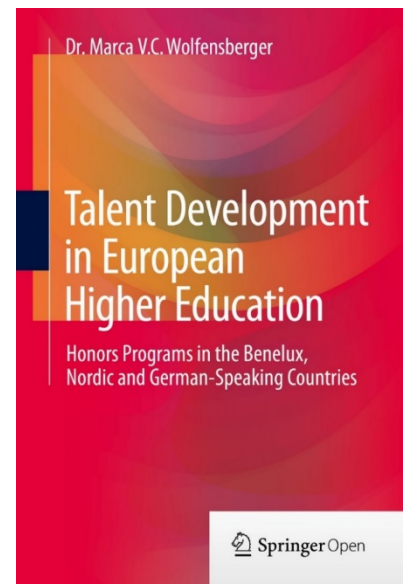
# Definition

“Honors programs are selective study programs linked to higher education institutions. They are *designed* for motivated and gifted students who want to do more than the regular program offers. These programs have clear admission criteria and clear goals and offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than regular programs.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Wolfensberger, 2015, p. 12; based on NCHC, 2010 and Wolfensberger et al., 2012

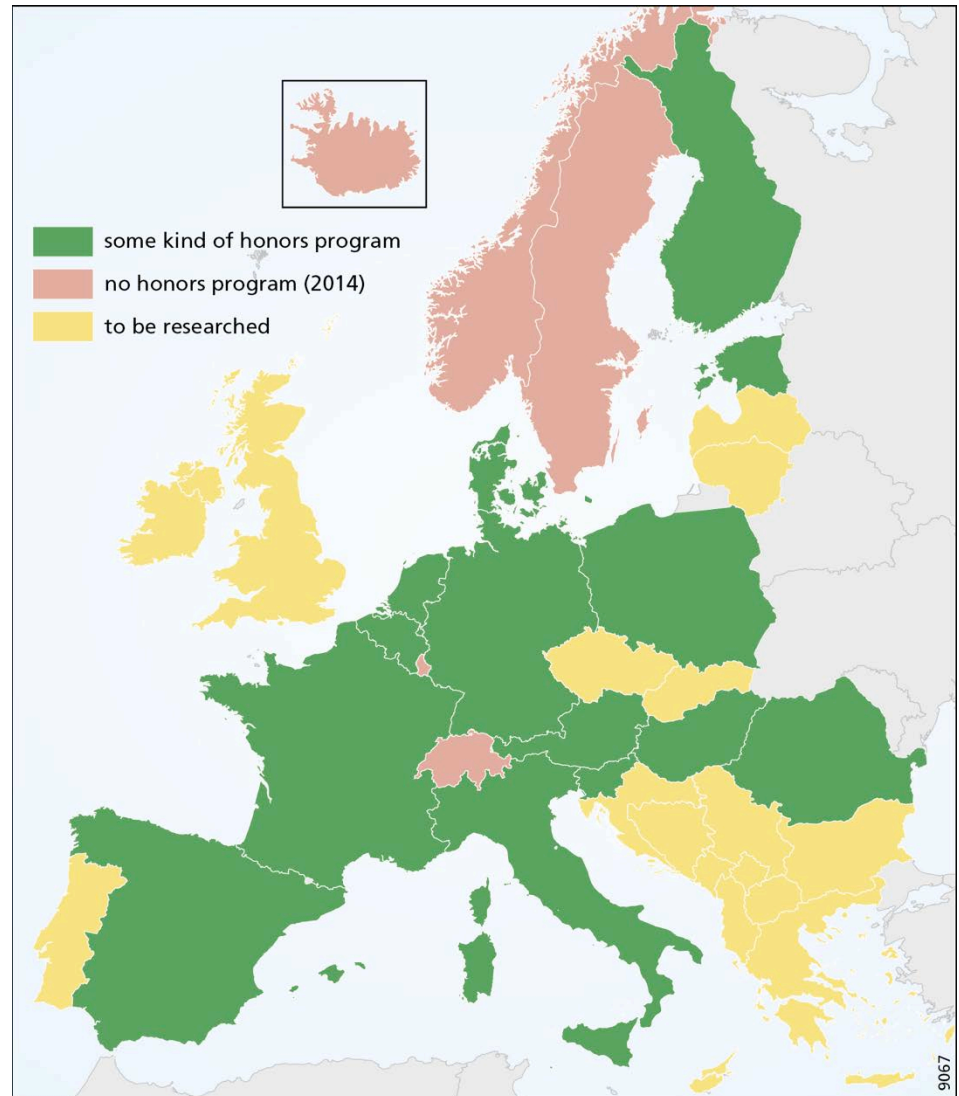
# Honors in Europe

- Research project about special provisions for gifted and talented students in Higher Education in Europe.
- Phase 1: Eleven countries studied: Benelux, Nordic and German-speaking countries.
- Inventory of programs at 303 Higher Education Institutions (4 million students)
- Book published in open access at [Springer](#)
- Around 40,000 downloads since Feb 2015
- Article about Scandinavia in Education Sciences
- Phases 2 and 3: Southern and Eastern Europe



# Honors in Europe

Preliminary results





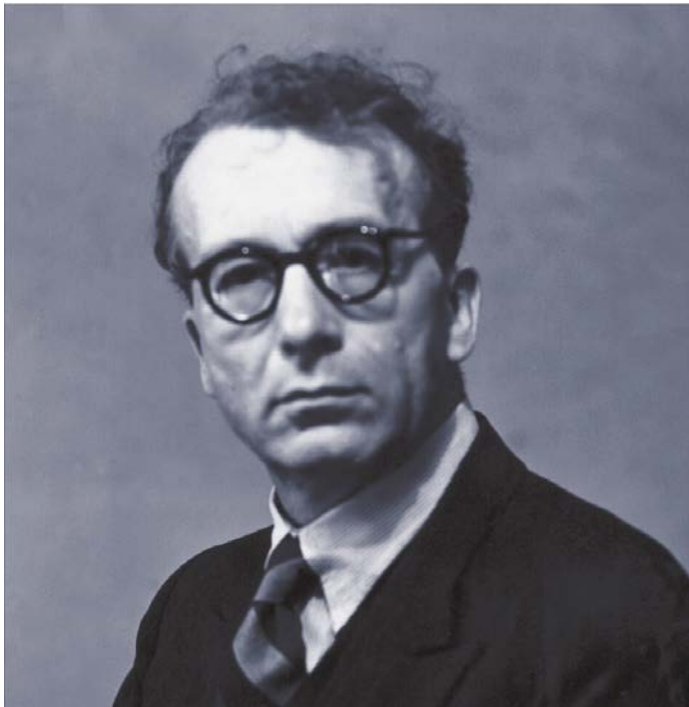
# Common factors influencing development of honors education

1. Ideological factors at national level: culture, politics and educational philosophy
2. Institutional factors at national level: progression in education system, competition, excellence programs
3. National place in international context: comparative reports (PISA) and international policy context (Bologna Process / Horizon 2020)
4. The role of innovative and pioneering individuals: teachers and students

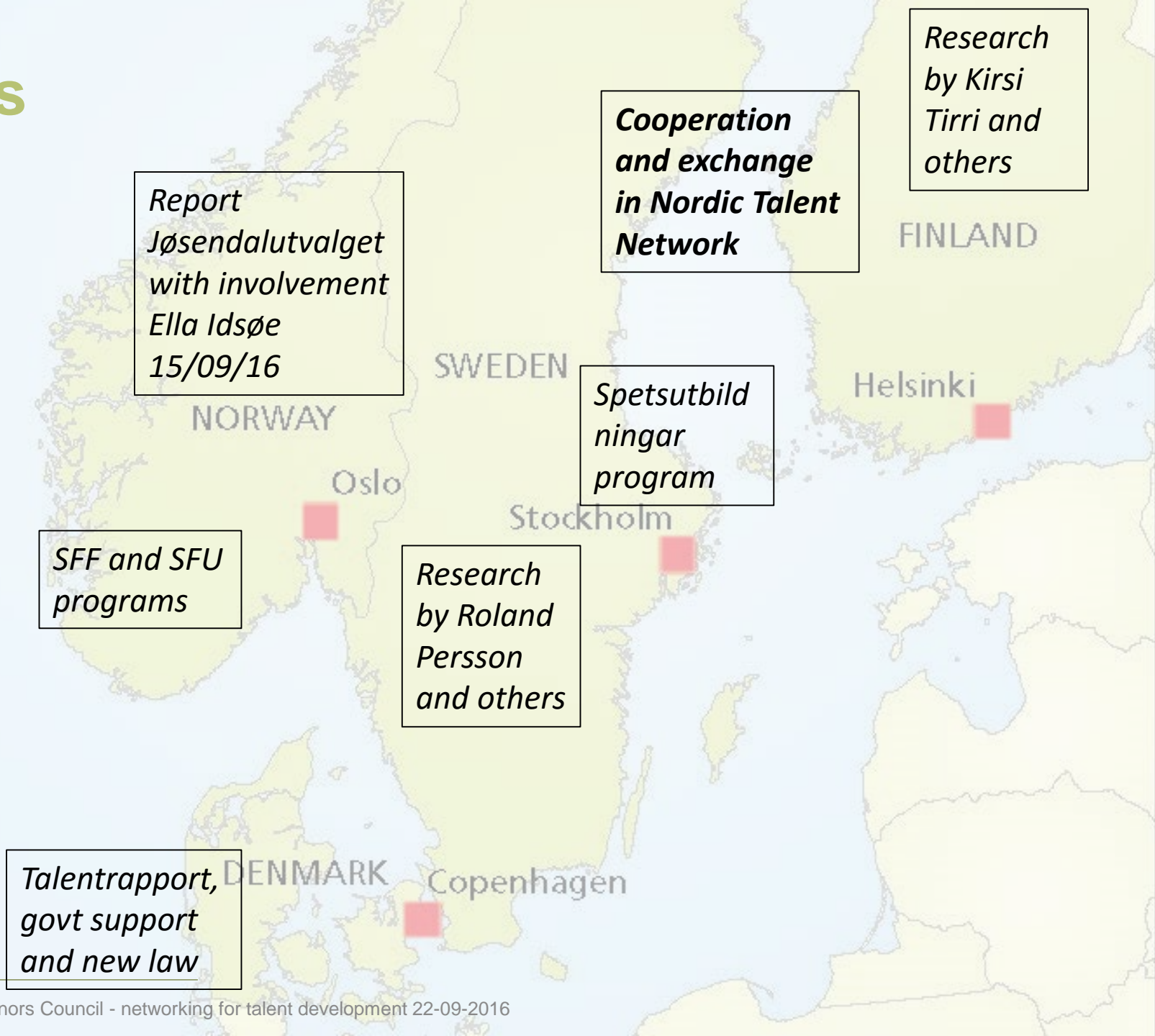
# Nordic countries: traditional view

Institutionalized ideology of egalitarianism

<https://youtu.be/rxKA2raR6Yg>



# Signs of slow shift



# Cultural change is possible: focus on Denmark

Culture is not static: a more open culture towards talent development has developed over the last 15 years

Four factors explaining this change:

- External incentives
- Focus on quality of education
- Actions of pioneers
- Open-mindedness

See article in [Education Sciences](#)

# The power of talent initiatives

Can you give a good example of convincing others about the importance of a talent initiative?

# Benefits for institutions

Honors provides a stimulating education and research environment. For the institution, it forms a:

- Distinguishing feature in attracting the best staff and students
- Laboratory of innovation in teaching and research
- Positive influence on position on rankings
- Stimulating environment for relation to broader society: through social projects, business involvement, etc.

*'The honors program has served as a kind of incubator for all kinds of good teaching initiatives'*

# Benefits for staff

Participation in (the design of) an honors program enables staff to:

- Develop their braveness to be excellent teachers
- Interact with the best students in new roles
- Design laboratories for educational innovation
- Give room to their innovating and pioneering ideas

*'The opportunity to work with people who are so talented is extremely rewarding'*

# Benefits for students

Participation in an honors program enables students to:

- activate autonomy and self-regulated learning
- stimulate creativity and personal drive
- enhance innovative thinking and deal with complex situations
- foster a stimulating community
- kickstart their career in science or elsewhere with good results

*'The honors program helped me to learn to critically reflect, set up my own projects and think outside of the box. In my current Ph.D. project I can use this experience to my advantage'*



# Networks serving the common good

## International collaboration

*“Internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization.”*<sup>1</sup>

The importance of  
cultures of expertise and  
clusters of excellence<sup>2</sup>

1. Knight, 2004; 2. Stoeger & Gruber, 2014.



## What we offer

- opportunities for exchange of knowledge and good practices
- possibilities for student and teacher exchange at honors level
- joint research projects
- a platform to support the development of (structural embeddedness of) honors programs in national education systems

## Membership

Individual members are kept up-to-date and involved in all that is happening in talent development in higher education throughout Europe.

Membership is open to all involved or interested

Membership is free (for the foreseeable future).

Information is needed to further build the EHC. Therefore, to join the EHC, you fill out a questionnaire.

The membership questionnaire can be found at  
[www.honorscouncil.eu](http://www.honorscouncil.eu)

# More information



[www.honorscouncil.eu](http://www.honorscouncil.eu)



[www.hanze.nl/excellentie](http://www.hanze.nl/excellentie)

## Project Honors in Europe

[www.honorsineurope.com](http://www.honorsineurope.com)