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# FACTORS LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF ALLIANCES. EVIDENCE FROM ETER

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# PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

- ❖ Research Aims
- ❖ Theoretical framework
- ❖ Methods
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Conclusions
- ❖ Questions for Discussion

# MECHANISMS OF ALLIANCE FORMATION – RESEARCH AIMS

- How can we characterise the individual alliances in terms of composition? >>> What are the Mechanisms of Alliance Formation across the European Universities Initiative?

## Caveats:

1. In the two calls (2019 and 2020) *116* applications were received and *41* European Universities have been funded. Our observations are based on those final results of the two calls.
2. We hypothesise about the mechanisms at play as outsiders to the process, by observing existing data available through various sources.

## Mechanisms of alliance formation

### Similarity

- the tendency for alliances to be formed by organisations that share or are similar in terms of some attributes (Siciliano et al., 2021), e.g. reputation and status, values, but also size, age, geography and social environment, or the demographics of 'clients' served.

### Pre-existing network ties

- Organisations are more likely to form alliances with actors with whom they already have ties, organisations they trust, and share a history of a rich exchange of information. This both helps to reduce the search costs and mitigates the risks associated with opportunism (Gulati, 1995; Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999).

### Complementarity

- To create innovation and greater value, organisations must find partners that are somewhat different from their own – as a mechanism, it appears to be both more common and leading to more successful outcomes (Gulati, 1995; Hamel et al., 1989; Mitsuhashi & Grave, 2009).

**We expected to observe a mix of the three mechanisms, aiming to identify which is a predominant one, or which of three operate in tandem**

# METHODOLOGY

Mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative analyses:

- Characterisation of alliances: Use of ETER-based HEI classification.  
Source: **Lepori, 2021**; using data from **ETER**
- Analysis of network ties:
  - "Research" ties: Intensity of collaboration in Horizon 2020 projects (2014-2020)  
Source: **EU Open Data Portal**
  - "Education" ties: Intensity of Erasmus+ student exchanges (2014-2020)  
Source: **EU Open Data Portal**
  - "Institutional" ties: HEIs' joint membership in pre-existing alliances or networks
- Directed content analysis of publicly available information  
Source: **EUAs' factsheets and websites (relevant information found for 39 alliances)**

# METHODOLOGY

Six classes of HEIs (Lepori, 2021):

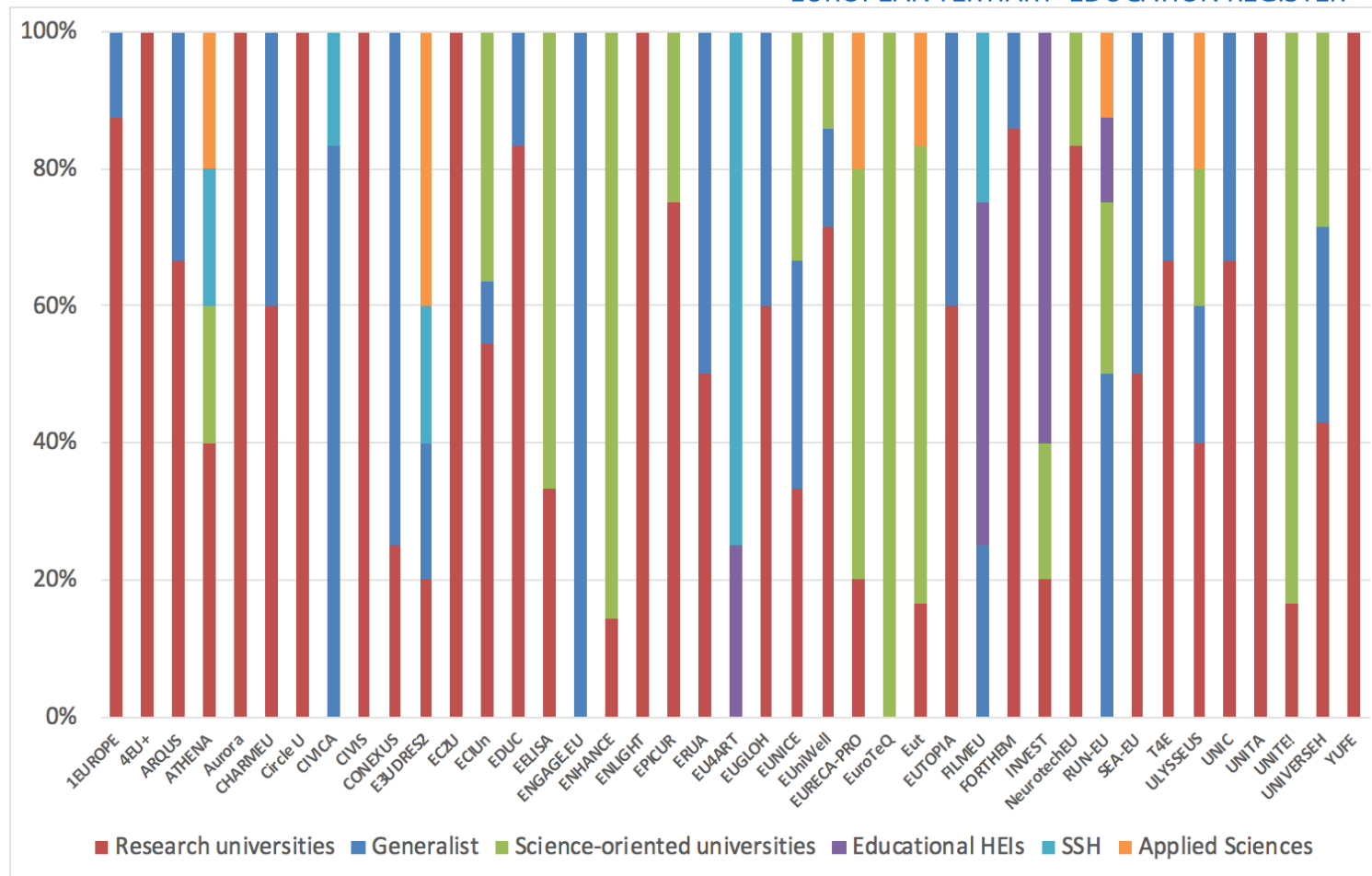
- *Research Universities*: PhD-awarding HEIs with large research output and multidisciplinary.
- *Science-oriented Universities*: PhD-awarding HEIs oriented towards natural and technical or medical sciences, with high research and patent intensity.
- *Generalist HEIs*: Middle-size HEIs enrolling most of the students in social sciences and humanities, with average research intensity.
- *Applied sciences HEIs*: HEIs without the right to award a PhD with an orientation towards natural and technical sciences.
- *SSH-specialised HEIs*: small and specialised institutions in social sciences and humanities, such as academies of arts and music, with a high intensity in PhD education.
- *Educational HEIs*: non-PhD awarding institutions, without research and technology output.

Source: Lepori, B. (2021). The heterogeneity of European higher education institutions: A configurational approach. *Studies in Higher Education*.

DOI: [10.1080/03075079.2021.1968368](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2021.1968368)

# RESULTS

- Composition of EUAs by classes:
- 8 EUAs are fully composed of **Research Universities**, e.g., Circle U, YUFE, with further 13 EUAs including only one other class (most often generalist, including 2 with ½ Research-Generalist composition)
- 4 are fully or mostly (i.e. including one other class) composed of **Science-oriented Universities**, e.g. EuroTeQ, EELISA
- 3 are fully or mostly composed of **Generalists** institutions: CIVICA, ENGAGE.EU
- 1 includes **SSH** and **Educational HEIs**
- 12 EUAs can be considered as heterogeneous (>2 classes represented)



# RESULTS

- Subject orientation (22/39)
- Activity profile (18/39)
- Specific type of institutions (6/39)
- Geographical characteristics (18/39)
- Reputation (13/39)
- Local and/or regional engagement (12/39)
- Common values (6/39)
- International orientation (4/39)
- Age (7/39)
- Size (3/39)
- Legal status (2/39)
- Diverse student bodies/focus on inclusiveness (3/39)
- Past experiences of bilateral or network collaboration (17/39)

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THE EDUCATIONAL OFFICE

## Members

ENHANCE represents a new alliance of research-intensive universities with a focus on science and technology, based on long-standing bilateral or network cooperation among two or more of the member institutions in other configurations. Our Alliance can thus draw on the experience, tested models and methods of collaboration at different academic levels in the various predecessor arrangements, scale these up to the level of the new confederation and enhance them by developing new structures and processes to make a quantum leap in cooperation.

**ERUA - European Reform University Alliance**

**WHO WE ARE**

5 pioneers	27 associates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis (France)</li> <li>Roskilde University (Denmark)</li> <li>The University of Konstanz (Germany)</li> <li>The University of the Aegean (Greece)</li> <li>The New Bulgarian University (Bulgaria)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 cities</li> <li>2 regional authorities</li> <li>4 higher education institutions</li> <li>3 research centres</li> <li>10 international networks</li> <li>5 businesses</li> </ul>

**OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

ERUA is built on a common ambition to develop a new kind of cooperation, which not only connects universities within Europe but also reimagines the role of European universities in a global context. As re-form universities we foster the critical function of the modern university by reflection upon, assessing and advancing alternatives to current models. We share a vision of universities as creative spaces, an assessment of the power of experimental approaches.

Our students come from both the top and the bottom of the socio-economic spectrum, from rural and urban settings, from local and global backgrounds. We propose an original field of study ecosystems thanks to:

- our strength in Social and Human Sciences and Arts and our connection to Natural Sciences, Computer Sciences and Engineering. Together we span Europe. We offer students a rich and diverse environment with a shared pedagogical approach focused on project-based learning, societal challenges and critical thinking.
- ERUA is based on the critical assessment of how changes in higher education relate to wider societal crises, risks, promises, trends, but also opportunities. Together we aim to contribute to shaping a more just, open and inclusive society.

**Ulysseus**

**ABOUT GOALS COMMUNITY INNOVATION HUBS CAMPUS MEDIA CONTACT JOIN US! ENG**

**A strong community is what pushes us forward**

**THE ULYSSEUS ALLIANCE: DIVERSE AND COMPLEMENTARY**

Ulysseus thrives on a strong sense of community. From the oldest to the youngest educational institutions, from comprehensive to specialized business and technical Universities, from established, research-based centers to experts in entrepreneurship and academic innovation, our motto is to combine efforts, connect Europe, and gather the best of each region. This is the crew for our travel.

**PARTNER UNIVERSITIES**

**ATHENA - Advanced Technology Higher Education Network Alliance**

**WHO WE ARE**

7 pioneers	53 associates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instituto Politécnico do Porto (Portugal)</li> <li>Hellenic Mediterranean University (Greece)</li> <li>Universität Siegen (Germany)</li> <li>Univerza v Mariboru (Slovenia)</li> <li>Università Degli Studi Niccolò Cusano Telematica Roma (Italy)</li> <li>Université d'Orléans (France)</li> <li>Vilniaus Gedimino Technikos Universitetas (Lithuania)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 businesses</li> <li>25 cities</li> <li>6 regional authorities</li> <li>2 national authorities</li> <li>15 NGOs</li> <li>4 chambers of commerce</li> <li>4 research centres</li> <li>4 European associations</li> <li>11 students' associations</li> </ul>

**OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

ATHENA aims to shape the digital transformation of societies. It will support the development of an inclusive, sustainable and safe digital economy. We envision delivering inclusive, innovative, high-quality educational education permanently aligned with global market needs, addressing societal and environmental challenges as well as European research priorities, thus granting the highest employability standards, effective career transitions to our students and adding value to our ecosystems. A focus on skills and research driving Europe's digital transformation, an innovative pedagogical, research and development, multi-set, social inclusion, cooperation with local communities and excellence through intensive internationalization will open the way for ATHENA as a high-quality standard in the European Education Area.

The ATHENA pedagogical model - based on internationalized, inclusive education based on research - will promote a sense of European citizenship and intercultural awareness placing students in diverse environments where they will be prepared for the global workplace.

Educational cooperation will be based on complementary strengths and innovative instruments. Through these instruments, ATHENA will also offer to students international, diversified and personalised education, combining the different fields of research and teaching expertise and thus significantly enhancing



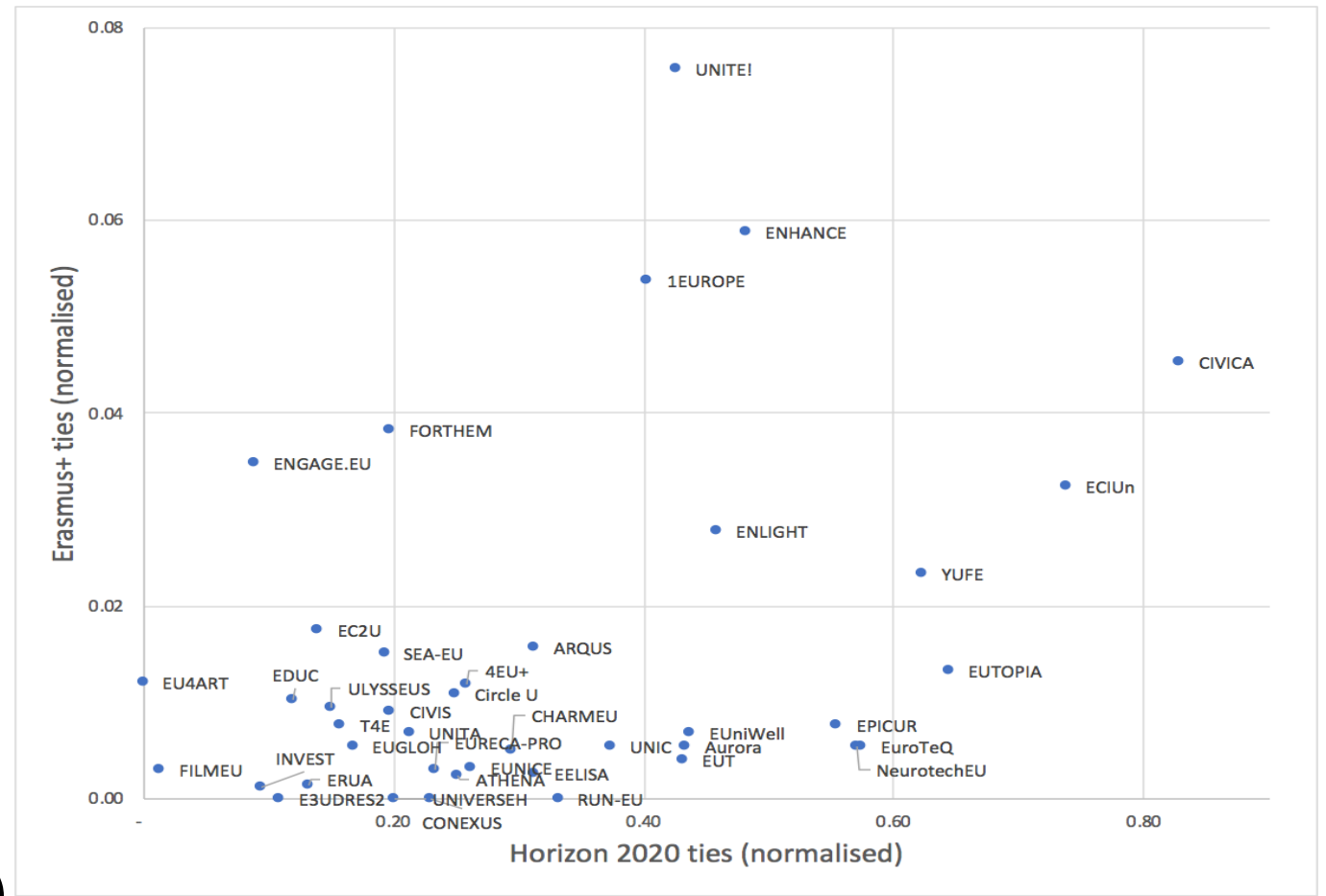
# RESULTS

## "Research" and "Education" ties:

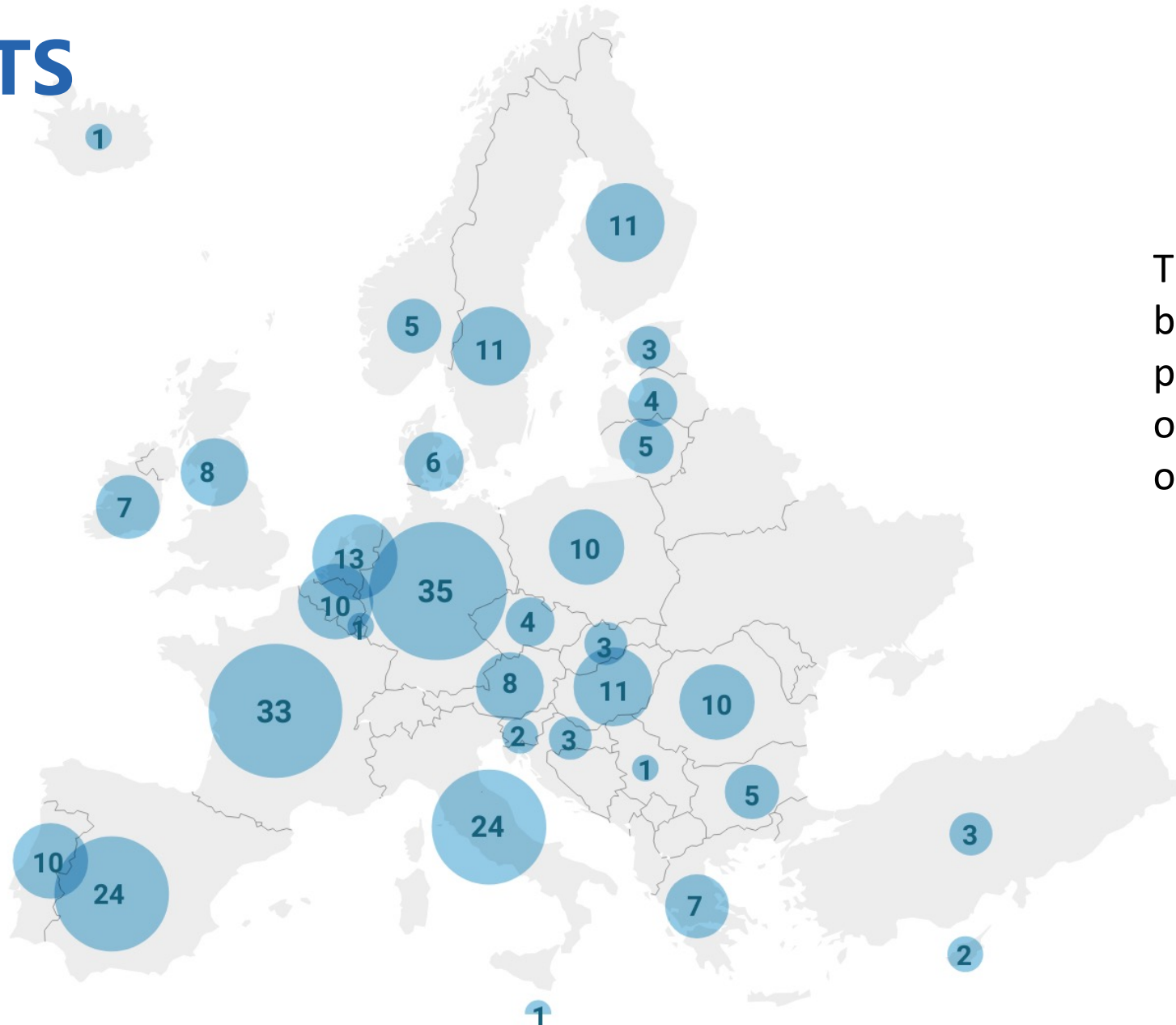
- Higher research & education ties: CIVICA, ECIUn, ENHANCE
- Higher research ties and lower education ties: NeuroTech, EuroTeq
- Higher education ties and lower research ties: ENGAGE.EU, FORTHEM

## "Institutional" ties:

- Common memberships in one pre-existing alliance, e.g., ECIUn (ECIU), YUFE (YERUN), ENHANCE (CESAER)
- Combination of two or more memberships, e.g., UNITE! (CESAER/CLUSTER), 4EU+ (LERU/UNICA)



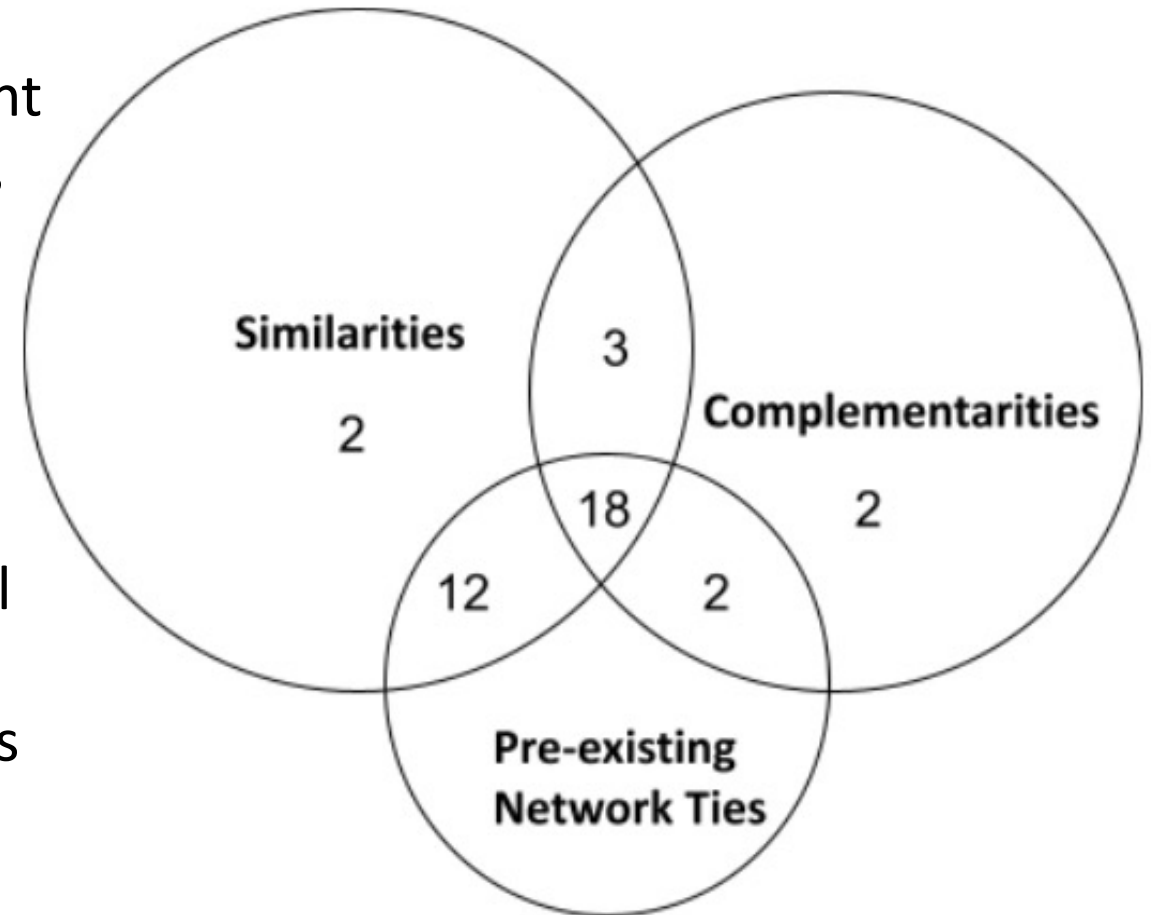
# RESULTS



The EUI is geographically balanced with participation proportional to the number of HEIs in the different parts of Europe.

# CONCLUSIONS

- As expected, **all three mechanisms** appear to have been present in the formation of **18** of the 41 alliances
- **Similarities** and **Pre-existing network ties** are more prevalent
- **Complementarities** become visible through qualitative analysis but relate predominantly to the geographical balance in the composition of alliances, i.e. members representing different parts of Europe
- Complementarity with other studies



# DISCUSSION

- How do you interpret the evidence on the mechanisms of alliance formation?
- What further analysis could be done in relation to alliance formation? With which data?



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# THANK YOU !

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