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HIGHER EDUCATION DYNAMICS

VOLUME 12

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CREATING THE EUROPEAN AREA OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Voices from the Periphery

Edited by

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> It is plausible to hold that our cognitive ethic is such that doubt is a more serious obligation than faith.

Ernest Gellner, *La trahison de la trahison des clercs*

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements..ix
Chapter 1
Introduction: COM(91) 349 final and the Peripheries of European Higher Education…………………………………………....1
Voldemar Tomusk
Chapter 2
What is the Use of Bologna in National Reform? The Case of Norwegian Quality Reform in Higher Education…………19
Åse Gornitzka
Chapter 3
The Bologna Process in Finland: Perspectives from the Basic Units…...43
Jussi Välimaa, David Hoffman, Mira Huusko
Chapter 4
Searching for the Sub-Plot Between the Lines of Bologna: Qualms and Conservatism of the French Academia in the Face of European Competition ……………………………………………… 69
Yann Lebau
Chapter 5
Emergent European Educational Policies Under Scrutiny: The Bologna Process from a Central European Perspective…………....87
Marek Kwiek
Chapter 6
The Bologna Process: An Estonian Perspective………………………117
Karmo Kroos
Chapter 7
What the Bologna Process says about Teaching and Learning Development in Practice: Some Experience from Macedonia…………141
Dave Carter
Chapter 8
Restructuring Bulgarian Higher Education: The Bulgarian Strategy Towards The Bologna Declaration…………………………......169
Snejana Slantcheva
Chapter 9
Turkish Academics in Europe: An Autumn Tale...............................…185
Deniz Bayrakdar
Chapter 10
The Challenge of Bologna: The Nuts and Bolts of Higher Education Reform in Georgia ………………………………209
Lika Glonti, Marine Chitashvili

Chapter 11
Pizza Bolognese á la Russe: The Promise and Peril of the Bologna Process in Russia…………………………………………227
Voldemar Tomusk
Chapter 12
European Students in the Periphery of the Bologna Process…………..251
James Cemmell
Chapter 13
The End of Europe and the Last Intellectual: Fine-Tuning of Knowledge Work in the Panopticon of Bologna..................………269
Voldemar Tomusk

Index...305

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Writing this book has taken us almost three years. We started the project with preparing a panel discussion at the annual forum of the European Association of Institutional Research with a group of East European higher education policy researchers in Prague in September 2002. As that went reasonably well, we decided to expand the group, the topic, geographical area and write a book on the issue that was extremely important to all of us and even more importantly – had been, and still is not sufficiently discussed within the critical academic community. And here the problems started. As new authors joined the group previous ones disappeared. Within six months all the initial panelists were gone and although I still had the project, all the authors were new and we started pretty much from the square one. Opening this book I would like to remember and thank the members of the first team – Nadya from Russia, Dimka from Bulgaria and Iago from Georgia without whose enthusiasm this book would have never appeared. I also deeply regret that for various reasons they did not finish the race.

If there is anything I have experienced in my life similar to writing and editing this book, this was running a marathon. Many years ago I thought that cutting my marathon time by mere two hours would solve most of my problems – that would have lifted me among the best runners in the world, something my small country would certainly have appreciated and appropriately rewarded. As with time passing this hope vanished with, I have found my fair share of trouble in a different area.

This project has been both directly and indirectly supported by the Open Society Institute, and although we, the authors are responsible for our words and what has been written in this volume does not represent the positions of the Open Society Institute or any of the related entities, we fully acknowledge that OSI has offered us intellectual freedom to scrutinize a politically highly charged process independently of any political agenda. In the academic community driven by stakeholders the freedom we have had has been almost unprecedented.

I would like to thank Dr. Peter Maassen in Oslo for his intellectual guidance to writing, editing and polishing this volume and numerous colleagues who have contributed their thinking commenting on various parts of the manuscript - Prof. Roger Dale in Bristol, Ms. Marianna Jo in Budapest, Prof. Johan Olsen in Oslo, to mention just a few. Prof. Guy Neave, once the examiner of my doctoral work in educational sociology which, as he said, “represented a very old genre of *literature*”, has been present in his spirit and sometimes more than that throughout the years completing this work has taken. The latter does not necessary mean that our flesh has always been able to live up to the standards offered by the greatest souls among the scholars of higher learning, and that our work does not carry signs of such inadequacies. But this is already our fault, not that of our teachers and intellectual guides.

I would also like to thank all the authors for their hard work and patience, both writing their chapters as well as waiting for the final outcome. With regard to reaching the latter, Mr. Michael J. Rédey-Webb has done an unimaginable amount of work as the language editor of this volume, editing chapters written in dozen different English languages into a commonly understandable volume. Cooperation we have had on that over more than a year long period has been extraordinary, and at least for me, a rare source of deep satisfaction.

As always on such occasion we remember people who suffer because of our special interests in the written word – our families. I have to mention the somewhat mysterious smile on the face of my wife Anu on the days and nights of paper writing (or should I say - ‘typing’?) frenzy by somebody whose many deficiencies are almost too well known to her, although after two decades together I still do not fully understand what the exact meaning of it is. One may, though, suspect that in a manner natural or perhaps supernatural, this might somehow be related to a short story I happened to write in my student years more than twenty years ago in a language and genre different from those of the most of my current preoccupations, entitled *The Birth of a Graphomaniac*.

Needless to mention that once again, our five children have been missing time with their father. Though, with a degree of pride and satisfaction I notice that it has increasingly been the case during preparing this book that I am no longer the only one sitting at the desk at 3 o’clock in the morning. It quite often happens now that our older sons Erik and Karl in their studies work on their own pieces of poetry, fiction or (highly) critical social commentary. Perhaps not always need we complain about the corruption of the young generation. I also do hope that the discussion in which we engage by presenting this volume to our learned readers would not only lead to better education becoming available to my own five children but also to many others in Europe, continent which despite all the learning she represents has so very much suffered because of her ignorance.

Voldemar Tomusk

London, Budapest, Dushanbe
Spring and Fall 2005

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

COM(91) 349 final and the Peripheries of European Higher Education

Voldemar Tomusk
Open Society Institute – Budapest

> For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live.
>
> Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

1. REDEMPTIVE IRONY OF *STRATEGIES* AND *PROCESSES*

It is unfortunate to a degree that as soon as we begin discussing our human condition in the third millennium since mankind was offered its salvation, and the state of our *institutions* that structure and guide our existence as social beings in order not to act as beasts or mere social animals, we cannot avoid the word ‘ironic’. For the people of intellectual calling who cannot but try to make sense of what is happening around, in and with us beyond digestion in the broad sense of the term, that is beyond the consuming the resources of the earth, *ironic* is the word without which nothing can be said any longer. ‘Deliver Us from Irony’ is the title of a recent paper by a young historian discussing the last great post-modern historian Hayden White in his approach of employing *epistemological irony* against *moral irony* (Paul 2004). The degree to which our existence has become ironic is truly tragic, though it could be worse. Human existence has become ironic so much that one can but weep.

However, there are other ways to explain the situation. It may well be that it is not the late-modern human condition that has become ironic on a large scale, but that this only appears to be the case to a small group of

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individuals of a particular calling to whom irony is one of the tools for understanding the world and that this has belonged to their toolbox since the times immemorial. Edward Said explains:

> There is something fundamentally unsettling about intellectuals who have neither offices to protect nor territory to consolidate and guard; self-irony is therefore more frequent than pomposity, directness more than hemming and hawing. But there is no dodging the inescapable reality that such representations by intellectuals will neither make them friends in high places nor win them official honors. It is a lonely condition, yes, but it is always better one than gregarious tolerance for the way things are (Said 1996, p. xviii).

The position of epistemological irony allows one to maintain a moral position, while in becoming deadly serious about positions the irony of which is obvious, like many of the recent political declarations full of great expressions and massive ambition though not always realistic and sometimes not even meaningful, one takes the risk of appearing utterly ridiculous or intellectually corrupt:

> The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (Council 2000).

It is rather tragic that a number of highly capable individuals, facing a choice between adopting a critical position of working for a meaningful alternative to oversimplified, technocratic and reductionist solutions and a cynical one of advocating for what one does not believe in, while fully understanding the level of intellectual compromise involved, have chosen the latter. In this sense, perhaps unfortunately so, the current volume includes in addition to its fair share of irony an element of human tragedy. However, we are living in a fast world so that it does no longer take centuries or even decades for the ironies detectable by a naked eye of a simple mortal to emerge from grand programs. As the European Council, five years after approving the Lisbon Strategy declares:

> Five years after the launch of the Lisbon Strategy, the results are mixed. Alongside undeniable progress, there are shortcomings and obvious delays (Council 2005, II A 4).

And

> To that end, it is essential to relaunch the Lisbon Strategy without delay and re-focus priorities and growth and employment (Council 2005, II A 5).

There is perhaps hardly any need to explain that in case there were *any* results at all there would be no need to *relaunch* the Strategy. The Lisbon Strategy is being relaunched not because halfway through it showed *mixed results*, but because it had no results whatsoever. Economic growth in Europe, instead of surpassing that of the United States, remains at the level of 1.5 per cent annually, that against the set target of 3.0 per cent and 2.25 per cent experienced in the United States. Public sector share in Gross Domestic Product in Europe remains at the level of almost 50 per cent as against that of 35.6 per cent in the Unites States and according to some estimates, per capita income in the Eurozone constitutes 30 per cent less than that in the USA (Ramm, Bishop 2005). This, one may well agree, is not exactly in line with "becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world" in five years time.

What is ironic about this situation is not the difficulties Europe is experiencing. It is about the way Europe is dealing with them, apparently paying little attention to possible deficiencies in the top-down process of launching political campaigns and then spending significant resources on attempts to implement those, including on researchers and public policy experts, whose intellectual commitment as hired knowledge workers to the common cause may be weak or missing.

The latter takes us a step closer to the topic discussed in this volume – the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) better known as the Bologna Process. It is well known that since adopting the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, the Bologna Process has been increasingly seen as an element of the former. Higher education is seen as one of the key factors to allow Europe becoming *the most competitive...,* etc. At least this was the way those in a position of talking on behalf of European higher education have presented it to Europe as manifested by the European Commission. However, it is increasingly problematic to which extent higher education, and by it we mean individuals who constitute the universitas – students and professors[1] – are ready to identify with such a program that, depending on the level of its expected support to economic competitiveness, may mean reduction of its claim on public resources, becoming economically self-supporting by selling its services on the terms of the market, or producing outcomes that would support economic development beyond merely releasing the burden it has been causing on the public purse.

---

[1] Indeed, the word university means originally such a group or corporation in general, and only in time did it come to be limited to guilds of masters and students, universitas societas magistrorum discipulorumque. Historically, the word university has no connection with the universe or the universality of teaching and learning; it denotes only totality of a group, whether barbers, carpenters or students (Haskins 1923/1957, pp. 8-9).

As the contributions in the current volume clearly indicate, there is very little thinking going on in European higher education on what it could honestly contribute to Europe's development. It is easy to understand that European universities are not willing to give up their privileges, transforming themselves voluntarily into factories of knowledge. The experience this volume brings together from around the continent suggests that instead of having a one-dimensional process of implementation of the Bologna Declaration leading to consolidating the European Higher Education Area, we experience a complex political process in which different actors representing different interests and values are looking for a variety of outcomes – realistic and unrealistic, sacred as well as profane. Seen from such an angle, it is not entirely correct to talk about the *implementation* of the Process in a region almost twice as large as the European Union. What we see is a complex multi-dimensional political process, very little of what filters down to the level of universities and other institutions of higher learning. And from this little that reaches universities, virtually nothing relates to *producing* new knowledge or improving the content, quality and effectiveness of the educational process. Carter (Ch. 7) demonstrates obvious difficulties of the one who tries to add an educational dimension to the Bologna Process, which seems to be much about each interest group trying to get its own message to be added to any of the official declarations or communiqués. Cemmell (Ch. 12) also offers some unique insights to the Process in that regard. From that perspective it is extremely unfortunate that some great achievements of Europe, for example, the *European social model* are being hijacked by those who tend to think that the best way to proceed would be to delay changes by all means, including that of building a massive bureaucratic machinery at the *center*.

The fact that the most large-scale educational reform process the World has so far seen does not address the issues of education is an irony that may turn into tragedy for the next generation. In light of the recent discussions in the United States on renewing the liberal arts curriculum in research universities (see e.g. Katz 2005; Delbanco 2005) one may wonder how Americans can have a debate on philosophy and purpose of university education without a Bologna Process and puppet masters pulling the strings of a *voluntary initiative* (see Ch. 13) from their Brussels offices, and Europe has only *Tuning* – re-packaging education understood as skills and competencies into credit hours (Ch. 13, Tomusk 2004). It so appears that Europe is systematically undermining her own greatest achievements in preparing men and women of high intellectual calling and personal integrity in an attempt to occupy a niche in the market of fast-food education and is re-engineering its universities to make them fit for such a market niche.

Although, as Chapter 13 extensively argues, one should not prophecy such things, it should come as a little surprise if after what has happened to the Lisbon Strategy, the Bologna Process would eventually also be declared having achieved *mixed results* and then be *relaunched.* Based on what various chapters of this volume reveal about the implementation of the Process in countries such as FYR Macedonia (Ch. 7), Bulgaria (Ch. 8) or Russia (Ch. 11), but also such highly advanced countries as Finland (Ch. 3), it can be argued that higher education systems represented in the Bologna Process are far too diverse, their level of quality far too mixed and political interests to report success far too prevailing over representing the real situation in the universities (see particularly Chapters 7 and 11) to allow an internationally competitive European *brand* of higher education (see e.g. Zgaga 2003, Tomusk 2004) to be carved out of it. In that sense, this volume would well serve as a handbook for those who are going to re-launch the Process suitable for a two- or three-tier Europe. This need might eventually rise as we see countries already reporting on having implemented the Bologna Process, while the actual results at the institutional level remain mixed or less. Expectations of the European governments and even more so those of the European Commission to use the Process for making universities in the European Higher Education Area attractive for money outside of it are fading away rapidly. At the same time no attention has been given to creating real attractiveness – academic excellence (see e.g. Nybom 2005) – in place of what by this time should already constitute a truckload of self-congratulatory declarations, the real value of which cannot be kept hidden for much longer.

It seems to be obvious that mass higher education faces problems of a massive scale, many of them related to the compromised integrity of the academics under permanent pressure to produce knowledge. It is unfortunate that even our best universities are forced to play a zero-sum game, where somebody's rise would necessary mean somebody else's fall, and the policies such as the well-known publish-or-perish one expose individuals to survival situations known from the darkest periods the human species has experienced, when decent people suddenly begin acting according to the dictum *Eat your own bread and if you can, that of your neighbor* (Levi 1987). Chapter 13 discusses some issues of moral degradation in academia under the extreme pressures for productivity and practical relevance. How good are we measuring our distance from the absolute bottom of human existence despite the unprecedented prosperity is perhaps an issue no generation of intellectuals can afford ignoring.

Reports on semi-illiterate academics who steal paragraphs (and more) from each others' papers (see e.g. Bartlett and Smallwood 2004) offer an insight into the bottom of moral degradation in academia. In singularities like these, there is no irony left. The redemptive power of strategies such as Lisbon and processes such as Bologna lies in their epistemological irony and although cynical professional report-writers also mentioned in this volume keep mostly silent about it, even they know. Though the *Queen's shilling* (Neave 2004) might make them *somewhat blind* (Teichler 2003) to see the moral position clearly.

But it is also true that by the end of the day certain fundamental questions need to be raised and perhaps also answered. Though asking a question is always the easier part of the job. Have the knowledgeable classes committed treason and betrayed the higher intellectual values as argued in Chapter 13 along the lines of the example offered by Julien Benda back in 1928 in one of the most influential jeremiads against moral corruption among the intellectuals in his *La trahison des clercs* (Benda 1958)? Or is the situation somewhat more complex as Ernest Gellner has always suggested it was and as he argues in the essay *La trahison de la trahison de clercs* (Gellner 1990), turning, while discussing the responsibility of the intellectuals, the critique against Benda and other similar moral purists themselves? For Gellner, there is no simple solution as the very fact of charging the *clerics* (i.e. intellectuals) with a moral treason may itself constitute an intellectual treason committed by the criticizers:

> What I *am* saying is that the task of *not* committing [a treason] is far, far more difficult than an appallingly simplified model of the intellectual's work situation would have us believe. We live in interlocking world, in which no sphere and no area is insulated. To assess consequences is appallingly difficult. We cannot do everything at once, and must choose our priorities, and do it on the basis of inadequate evidence. To disregard consequences in the name of purity of principle can itself often be a kind of indulgence and evasion (Gellner 1990, p. 27).

There are no final truths and judgments presented in this volume. What we have written bears no ambition of constituting a *scientific* analysis, as a different brand of purists and other commentators may demand from us. Our writings are meant to serve only the modest goal of contributing to the discussion, a *discourse* some may prefer calling it, which we should necessarily hold in Europe in order to allow meaningful experience in higher learning to continue for the generations to follow ours.

While one may argue, and there may well be some substance to it, that positions presented by the academic community on matters related to large scale reforms may not necessarily constitute expert views but instead expresses the interests of any particular group looking for its own stability, carrying on with reforms that drive higher learning on the continent to the lowest common denominator may not be the best possible solution either. In this respect academics who have criticized the European Commission for *vulgarizing the debate* (Olsen 2005, p. 33) may also have a valid point to make. Our voices from the *periphery* represent no intention to settle the scores with institutionalized powers on the continent once and for all. However, many of us realize that unless we carry on a broad and forward-looking, well-informed public discussion, things would not necessarily move towards the better, although as Olsen also suggests, some may see it as an entirely futile if not counterproductive exercise:

> The Commission, finally, sees itself as surrounded by ignorance and a lack of commitment (Olsen 2005, p. 22).

And elsewhere:

> The Commission also claims that the time of "heated debates" over university organization have come to an end (…), thereby framing reforms as technical questions of finding efficient organizational forms consistent with necessities and shared goals (ibid. p. 21).

In our view, ours may well be the last moment indeed to start some *heated debates* in order to prevent the rather unfortunate recent developments in European higher education becoming an irreversible decline, as Nybom warns:

> The principal reason behind this argument [i.e. irrelevance of the Humboldtian ideas] is my deep conviction that today's European universities – with the possible exception of the Golden English triangle and a handful of academic institutions scattered over the western parts of the Eurasian land-mass – through a deadly combination of political incompetence, ideological blindness, economic stupidity, *and* academic arrogance are disappearing as a living form of institutional order (Nybom 2005, p. 10).

We have no intention to contribute to what to this generation looks like a rather hopeless, if not unnecessary task of reviving the Humboldtian university. However, the 19th century tradition of amateur gentlemen's and ladies' scholarship that once flourished at some of the sites Nybom mentions, may, if only temporarily, offer a program that would save a part of the lost game in days when those in charge of expert knowledge have obviously compromised the principles of intellectual integrity.

The same message, though from a slightly different angle, has been echoed by Chris Pattern, a former European Commissioner and current Chancellor of the Oxford University:

> Only two European Universities – Oxford and Cambridge – would get into the list of the top 150 American universities in terms of private benefactions, and the American taxpayers have also been more generous to research universities than their European counterparts. (Patten 2005, p. 288)

Here the dilemma Europe faces is to how to reconcile European past with her future, or to put it more bluntly – how to find money for higher learning and research without disappointing M. Chirac and his appetite for agricultural subsidies. "Self-confident societies" as Lord Patten suggests "invest in their futures and leave and intellectually legacy to future generations" (ibid. p. 289). French self-confidence, as Lebeau indicates in Ch. 4, has taken a few hits during the 20th century. Although the European solution to the mounting funding problems without necessarily disappointing a great leader of Napoleonic pretense (see e.g. Patten 2005), as being worked out from the unnamed headquarters of the Bologna Process may appear on the first sight ingenious, as various chapters in this volume suggest – it is neither consistent nor does it represent a good sense of social justice.

2. HISTORY AND POLITICS OF THE BOLOGNA

History is obviously of no interest to those who design technocratic utopias or busy themselves with catching-up with the United States of America. This is unfortunate, as seeing the process of creating the European Higher Education Area from the historical point of view would be helpful to avoid mistakes such as perceiving the Bologna Process in terms of a mere technocratic exercise outside of historical, cultural and political contexts.

One does not necessarily need to return to the Bologna of 1088 to gain an adequate understanding of the Bologna Process, though it is often the only historical signpost we see. A few other historical details should be remembered instead. One of them is that the modern European university has developed within the nation state, serving its needs for training the national elites and being protected by it. Having just a vague sense of the European history – which has been that of an endless war between the nations and alliances – would also suggest that higher education systems developed under such conditions are perhaps neither highly compatible nor have they been particularly keen on recognizing each others' achievements. Until the official 'completion' of the Internal Market in Europe in 1992, there was little in Europe that would lend itself as the European system, or even *model*, of higher education. Incompatible institutions, degrees, programs and qualifications developed historically within the nation states more focused at waging another successful war against the neighbor than allowing its own young to be corrupted by the others' mischievous *professors*. The professor was entrusted his position by the Prince who granted him the autonomy, which the former had full freedom to use praising the wisdom of the latter and cultivating the identity of the nation against those of the surrounding barbarians or semi-barbarians, better to be wiped out.

While it is pleasing to converse over a good meal on great traditions of the medieval university with its free movement of students and masters, there is very little there that would help one to tackle the practical issues of bringing higher education on the continent together. After almost four hundred years that separate us from the peace of Westphalia of 1648 that ended the Thirty Years' War and gave birth to Europe of the nation states, the ten years we have been offered to undo its consequences is a very short time indeed. Lebeau (Ch. 4) offers some helpful insights to difficulties French academia experiences developing an adequate response to perceived threats to its cultural identity. As the French case indicates, while universities are ready to proceed pragmatically, launching Master programs in the not-so-much-loved English language, the elites are desperately looking for ways to balance that influence.

Another important historical fact is that until the late 1980s, early 1990s, many of the signatory countries of the Bologna Process belonged to the so-called communist block. These higher education systems have not exactly blossomed over the past fifteen years. Instead, they have been massified under the conditions of extreme funding difficulties. While the World Bank (2002) has been suggesting for Sub-Saharan Africa that higher education of acceptable quality could not be offered by spending less than 1,000 US dollars per student per annum, at least four of the countries discussed in this volume, Bulgaria (Ch. 8), Georgia (Ch. 4), Macedonia (Ch. 7), Russia (Ch. 11), spend significantly less, Estonia (Ch. 6) lingering somewhere on the boarder of that threshold established for the poorest countries. We do not mention Turkey (Ch. 9) here, as its relation to the process and European integration constitutes a case on its own. One does not need to be an economic determinist to understand that creating a common higher education system (called *Area* despite what EU needs is a *system*) in a region where per student cost differs as much as one hundred times between its various parts, offers a real challenge, entirely independently of what one may think of the qualifications of the professorial staff in the respective universities or their past achievements. In a world where the cost of good higher education is increasingly being determined by global factors – the cost of information, equipment, internationally competitive faculty, etc., there tends to be a significant correlation between the quality of education and its costs.

As Chapter 11 demonstrates, the Russian strategy of joining the Process relies exactly on that massive cost difference, suggesting that even modest access to European resources could save a day or perhaps even more for Russian universities. However, the issue is not only about the need for additional resources, as Kwiek suggests in Chapter 5. The issue is also that much of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe has seen little reform and constitutes a run-down version of state-socialist higher education, trying to survive against all odds and perceiving the Bologna Process as additional means for doing so. While Zgaga (2003) suggests that involving a wider group of countries than the EU membership in what he calls the *Bologna Club* 'can only give additional dynamism to the Process', one may argue that this dynamism would be too much and that eventually it will compromise a fundamental objective of the Process – that of increasing international competitiveness of European higher education.

Be as it may, the Bologna Process stands on the crossroads of currents of European history over centuries and the significance of that should not be underestimated, not only thinking what would be the role of France in this, but also that of Turkey (Ch. 9), which has played a significant, though often not well-remembered, role in European history.

2.1 Magna Charta Universitatum and the Undeniable Value of the Distant Past

It cannot and should not be ignored that the Bologna Process has been intended as, and certainly is a part of a larger political process of building federal Europe, still following the thinking of Jean Monnet. In this sense, the beginnings of the Process date back to the days of drafting and negotiating the Maastricht Treaty. Despite its reference to the great cultural values and traditions of the European university, Magna Charta Universitatum makes a clear reference to the process of transforming the European Communities into the European Union, as the preamble to the document states:

> The undersigned Rectors of European Universities, gathered in Bologna for the ninth century of the oldest University of Europe, four years of the definitive abolition of boundaries between the countries of the European Community; …. (Magna Charta 1988).

Magna Charta is one of those inspiring declarations nobody disagrees with, because it does not commit anybody for anything. Instead, it allows for celebration and a rare opportunity for everybody to be happy. As the Rector of the University of Bologna says in his introductory statement to the Magna Charta:

> The aim of this document is to celebrate the deepest values of University traditions and to encourage strong bonds among European Universities (Monaco 1988).

However, it did not take too long before the document found new political purposes. As early as the late 1980's academics in East European universities applied it as a fulcrum to create additional space where their university could exercise its autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 11, fifteen years later this now almost forgotten document is still being used in Russia against excessive control by local bureaucracies in the fight for university autonomy on matters academic as well as administrative and financial. Despite of having been occasionally harnessed for causes revolutionary or rebellious, one may still agree that the intention of the document was more about celebration and creation of a sense of togetherness than inspiring struggles against excessive state control or erosion of the last remnants of the communist establishment.

On cultural grounds, providing a momentum to move European higher education towards a common identity was perhaps the main achievement of the Magna Charta. As usual, this is being achieved not so much by means of identifying any real commonalities between universities at any particular time, but instead constructing abstractions devoid of real-life references. That allows for avoiding dealing with divisions and differences, offering a highly elastic identity to be stretched over any particular practice and organizational setting. With this the four fundamental principles of the Magna Charta – autonomy of the university, inseparability of teaching and research, freedom of research and training, and the universality of the European university as the 'trustee of the European humanist tradition' – (Magna Charta 1988) say neither much about what had been accomplished nor what is to be done, but create a positive emotional ground for bringing universities together, apparently to celebrate something very few have ever experienced.

While one may argue over the sources of inspiration the Confederation of European Rectors' Conferences had in drafting the document and organizing the celebration in Bologna in September 1988, the mobilization it inspired has been more university-focused than the parallel supra-national political processes. In the course of the Process to follow the Magna Charta has been sacrificed without much hesitation and in the context of the Bologna Process university autonomy, academic freedom and unity of research and teaching, not to mention the European humanist tradition, sound particularly parochial, while global competitiveness of European higher education has become the imperative the rest of the agenda is meant to support. It took a decade since signing the Magna Charta to water it down, replacing celebration with a controversial non-reform process, the outcomes of which are still far from obvious.

2.2 Higher Education for the Internal Market

Although in various periods the process of bringing European higher education into greater unity has been dominated by different agendas, first cultural, later political and eventually economic, it still has proceeded in parallel with the development and consolidation of the European Union. From that point the document *COM(91) 349 final*, adopted in November 1991 by the Commission of the European Communities and titled 'Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community' as the one that paved the way for the Bologna Process, should attract highest interest. The purpose of this document was to envision European higher education as it would 'make the completed Internal Market work' (COM 1991, p. 1). As the document states:

> A European dimension in higher education is perceived as a practical economic necessity apart from its desirability on cultural and political grounds (p. 40).

Despite what the politicians may say and the lawyers argue, both the Magna Charta and the Memorandum serve the aim of moving towards the European system of higher education. While the process started from declaring the fundamental values of the European university in Magna Charta, with adopting the *COM(91) 349 final* it gained a good share of pragmatism, being related directly to the economic needs of the European Union in the making. The critical development areas of European higher education were identified as follows:

- Participation and access in higher education.
- Partnership with economic life.
- Continuing education.
- Open and distance education.
- The European dimension in higher education.

The 'European dimension' was interpreted as consisting of the following components:

- Student mobility.
- Cooperation between institutions.

- Europe in the curriculum.
- The central importance of language.
- The training of teachers.
- Recognition of qualifications and periods of study.
- The international role of higher education.
- Information and policy analysis.
- A dialogue with the higher education sector (ibid. p. 41).

The final statement of the document declares

> [the] memorandum is designed to serve as a basis for discussion, particularly in the universities and higher education institutions themselves (ibid. p. 44).

Still the extent to which the events following the adoption of this document can be seen as a result of discussions in the universities and higher education institutions *themselves* remains debatable, as it also remains open whom currently the European University Association (EUA), one of the driving forces of the Bologna Process, actually represents.

In one way or another, the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education (Declaration 1999) constitutes an outcome of these discussions among officials and official activists of European higher education. While the Bologna Declaration has adopted some of its goals from the list offered in the Memorandum, others have been excluded. Well-known by now, the Bologna Joint Declaration lists the following six objectives:

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- adoption of a system based on two main cycles
- establishment of a system of credits
- promotion of mobility
- promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance
- promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

Three additional objectives were included at the first high-level follow-up meeting in Prague on 18-19 May 2001:

- introduction of lifelong learning
- involving higher education institutions and students in the Process
- promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

What one may suggest constitutes the main change from the Memorandum to the Process is a shift from stressing a broad social and economic relevance of European higher education for the purposes of a unified Europe to product design. One may actually wonder if according to the Process-thinking, issues such as dialogue between society and higher education, participation and access, partnership with economic life, information and policy analysis, no longer appear on the list for the reason that the very same tools of product design and marketing, which are expected to make European higher education products more attractive and desirable worldwide, would take care of them by means of market intermediation.

In the Bologna Process, as it may appear, two needs have been mixed. One is the need of the European Union for a higher education system that produces a highly qualified European labor force and knowledge, and it remains doubtful if for this end higher education should be vocationalized, and modularized as the plan goes. The other need is to sell it. It is dubious that the two have been mixed and that somehow an attempt has been made to decree the high reputation of European higher education. Perhaps cases from countries such as Norway (Ch. 2) demonstrate a successful implementation of the Bologna Process as well as the way it could be mobilized to support local educational reform needs, but it also shows the limits as to how far the Process can reach even in the best possible circumstances.

2.3 Bologna and Expansion of the European Union

One of the main contradictions of the Bologna Process appears to exist in the imbalance between its membership and goals. While the goal of the Process is to create an open higher education area that could in one way or another support the European internal market, its membership is defined by the list of signatories of the European Cultural Convention. The latter broad group is obviously not in a position to honestly commit to the agenda EU members may agree on, neither can it be asked to do as some of the members of the EU Commission have recently done (Tomusk 2004). There are various reasons why this broader group of countries still desires to join the Process (see e.g. the Georgian case in Ch. 10), including the expectation that the Process will bring these countries closer to the full EU membership and relieve their major public sector funding difficulties.

Over the decades Europe narrowly understood as the European Communities and European Union has only had one external policy towards its neighbors – that of expansion. The fact that it has grown in half a century from six to twenty five members demonstrates a degree of success as well as how its external policy resource is being spent. Expansion is likely to continue for another fifteen years at least, by which time three more large countries – Romania, Ukraine and Turkey – may gain full membership as well as a number of smaller ones, particularly countries of the Western

Balkans. For the most part countries' strategy to start European integration from higher education in an expectation to move in due time to other areas, achieving a free movement of labor being one of the most attractive ones, is realistic and politically justified. Still, this does not mean that the EU should not start developing a policy for the time when it no longer expands.

As for the latter, Russia discussed in Ch. 11 offers a most interesting case. Although both sides admit that Russia will never become an EU member, the external policy tools the EU is using are still its traditional ones leading expectedly to membership. While on the Russian side one can see certain benefits being calculated, Europe for the time being remains confused, perhaps having no good plan how to behave if six million Russian students decide to become mobile or its thirteen hundred universities, many of them of mixed quality or less, start milling out low-priced European diplomas and diploma supplements.

3. PERIPHERIES OF EUROPE AND HER HIGHER LEARNING

One line that can be traced in all contributions to this volume is that of periphery. The Bologna Process that is being implemented in a top-down manner, does not seem to have any center at all. While the visible part of the Process is about permanent negotiating and drafting of communiqués and declarations, the voice from behind the scene calls for discipline and unity, having the authority to decide, as Cemmell argues in Ch. 12, which of the stipulations are important and which one could be well ignored. The center, for better or worse, seems to be hiding itself. Kroos in Ch. 6 has tried to shed light on that.

It is ironic that one of the two countries that stand in the very center of European integration – France – can be seen in this context as periphery, though this is exactly the case as Lebeau compellingly demonstrates. Perhaps it would provide little comfort to argue that even if the other core country – Germany – would be represented in this volume, there would be no difficulty demonstrating its peripheral connection to the Process either. Peripherality of other countries' location in the process is even easier to argue, as the authors have done.

In addition to countries and geographical regions and the prevailing moods there towards the Bologna Process, we also discuss two distinct groups of individuals – those who constitute the universitas – students and *masters*. As Cemmell argues in Ch. 12, students have been effectively marginalized in the political process. The situation with respect to the academics is of a different nature. It may well be that the good days of expansion and abundant resources are a matter of the past. Universities are being asked to become productive as any other service sub-sector. This obviously puts intellectuals in a very difficult position as the freedom of inquiry and contemplative life-style increasingly become a privilege of a selected few. The rest, as the Process foresees, will sell skills and competencies packaged in credit hours and produce their daily rations of advanced knowledge, or perish. At least for the time being no good alternative to that gloomy prospect has been offered. One may wish that in some places some universities may be saved from the Process, not to forget entirely what education can be. In that sense, one would agree with Nybom in that what Europe actually needs is not reducing her higher education to the lowest acceptable level to meet the expectations of international students with largely touristy interests, but creating

> 50-60 adequately funded *European* elite universities devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, the rigorous and critical appreciation, and the academic and professional training of persons at the highest level (Nybom 2005, p. 13).

Given the current mood on the continent we would be extremely lucky indeed if our flagship universities will be allowed, perhaps by a benevolent act of an *enlightened government*, to remember Kant (1798/1992), to continue their often economically irresponsible seeking for truth and wisdom in the margins of the Brave New World of a European knowledge industry and not be wiped out entirely.

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Chapter 2

WHAT IS THE USE OF BOLOGNA IN NATIONAL REFORM?

The Case of Norwegian Quality Reform in Higher Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

Few national higher education systems or policies can claim to operate in total isolation from their international environment. Systemic changes and policy shifts in higher education are linked in various ways to what is happening in the international arena, as well as to developments in other national systems. This chapter discusses one such linkage; it explores how a process of higher education policy co-operation at the European level, the Bologna Process, has impacted in practice on the comprehensive reform of Norwegian higher education of the late 1990s and the beginning of this century known as the Quality Reform; and questions the extent to which the reform proposals that are part of the *Quality Reform* are a response to the Bologna Process, and how 'Bologna' was used in the context of this national reform.

The Norwegian higher education system is located on the northern periphery of Europe. Given this location and the ongoing Europeanisation of higher education, the Norwegian government and other stakeholders concerned with higher education are putting increasing political emphasis on the importance of internationalising higher education, and especially on strengthening its ties with Europe. In this the Bologna Process, being a part of the Europeanisation development, has received considerable attention. An important assumption in this chapter is that the nature of the peripheral status of Norway might have conditioned the use, and therefore ultimately the effects of the Bologna Process in the Norwegian *Quality Reform*.

The Bologna Declaration states that to establish a European Area of Higher Education and to promote the European system of higher

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education in the world, amongst other things, the following objectives will have to be attained:

- Adoption of a system of degrees that are easily readable and comparable in order to promote the employability of European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education
- Adoption of a degree system based on two cycles
- Establishment of a system of credit transfer, preferably based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
- Promotion of mobility, overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement for students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff
- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies

This chapter takes the adoption of the two-cycle degree structure, as one of the core items of the Bologna Declaration, as its main point of departure. It discusses subsequently how this new degree structure was introduced in the context of higher education in Norway. We also attend to several of the other items on the Bologna agenda that can be retrieved from the reform processes currently taking place in Norwegian higher education. This allows us to discuss the extent to which the reform of Norwegian higher education should be interpreted as a response to the developments in European higher education as embodied in the Bologna Declaration.

A key concept for discussing the use of the Bologna Process in national reforms is *translation*. This concept, borrowed from organisational theory and science studies, addresses the way in which ideas are transformed as they travel, rather than being *diffused*, because people translate them according to their own frame of reference. Our discussion focuses on two different, yet interconnected arenas of translation. The main part of our analysis discusses the translation of the items of the Bologna Declaration, especially the drive to create a converging degree structure in Europe, and how these ideas were picked up and processed in the Norwegian *policy context.* Thus, the focus is on the role of the 'European' ideas in national public reform efforts in the higher education sector. Special attention will be given to how these ideas were moulded and shaped by the local policy process, and how they were converted into tangible policy measures. We look into the normative and cognitive foundations of this translation process by analysing the underlying arguments and rationales. Furthermore, the analysis takes us to the *arena of public debate* on higher education as contextualised by the national reform processes referred to earlier. We will discuss how the core ideas of the national reform were perceived and received at an ideological level, and whether the ideas embodied in the Bologna Process featured in the public debate. We look at the kinds of arguments that were put forward in the discussions about Norwegian higher education and the recent comprehensive reform in the sector, i.e. the *Quality Reform*. As such we look for a possible 'public translation' of the ideas of the Bologna Process. As an introduction to the discussion we outline the main aspects of the 'peripheral' situation of Norwegian higher education. But first we give a brief outline of the analytical perspective used in this chapter.

2. DOMESTIC POLICY DECISIONS AND INTERNATIONAL IMPACT: AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

National government reform can be seen and analysed as a decision-making process, where the decisions consist of a confluence of policy problems, solutions, actors and choice opportunities (Lægreid and Roness 1999). The 'garbage can perspective' on decision making (March and Olsen 1976) allows us to untangle a decision and break it into different streams: problems, solutions, actors and decision-making opportunities. When these streams meet, a choice has been made. The basic idea in the garbage can perspective is that choices are not necessarily made in the 'normal' sequel, rather choice opportunities seek out problems, problems seek out situations where they can be aired, and solutions seek out issues to which they can be an answer (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972).

In this chapter we take a look at national higher education reform and discuss how international trends have impacted on the policy process. We could expect international developments to impact on the 'streams' that such reform consists of. In the study of policy change and changes in organisa-tional forms and structures there is growing attention paid to the role of diffusion in such change processes, including the spreading of policies and organisational structures that takes place among countries. Such impacts have been referred to as policy transfer, copying, imitation, emulation and diffusion (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Böllhoff 2002). However, borrowing from science studies, in particular Latour (1987) and Callon (1986), and the study of public reforms and organisational change (Aberbach and Christensen 2003; Czarniawska and Sevon 1996; Czarniawska and Joerges 1998; Olsen and Peters 1996), the distinction we make in this chapter between diffusion and translation refers to the essential characteristics of the way that inter-national trends travel across systems and how they are *used* in a national setting. In the case of diffusion, what is imported remains unchanged. The imported policy or structures will retain their essential features even when adopted in a new system or context. From this perspective we would expect the original definition of problems and solutions in a policy area and the links between them to remain the same. On the other hand, translation denotes a process where policies and structures are affected by the road upon which they travel from one context to another. The definition of problems or solutions may change, or solutions become linked to other problems, and in this sense a transformation has occurred. In the study of Europeanisation processes in areas other than higher education it has been noted that diffusion is not necessarily the mechanism involved. Rather, external changes are interpreted and responded to through existing institutional frameworks:

> In sum, European-level developments do not dictate specific forms of institutional adaptation but leave considerable discretion to domestic actors and institutions. There are significant impacts, yet the actual ability of the European level to penetrate domestic institutions is not perfect, universal or constant (Olsen 2002, p. 936).

Consequently, we could argue that whether the ideas, policy problems and solutions that are represented by the Bologna Process are subject to either diffusion or translation is largely dependant on the particular context of the national higher education system.

3. THE ‘PERIPHERAL’ CONTEXT OF NORWEGIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the particular features of the context of Norwegian higher education is its peripheral position. There are several aspects to this periphery. Despite the growing attention paid to globalisation, and despite physical distances becoming ever shorter through modern means of trans-portation and communication, geographical location is still a major defining characteristic of a nation-state. The territorial position of Norway on the northern periphery of Europe is a crucial dimension of the particular structures that constitute the backbone of the Norwegian economy, including access to and use of the natural resources of the North Sea, i.e. oil and fish.

Politically, the peripheral status of Norway is particularly evident in that it is not a member of the European Union; having twice rejected membership by national referendum (1972 and 1994), its political peripheral position is ‘self-inflicted’ from the perspective of the lack of political integration into Europe. However, although not a member of the European Union, Norway is, through the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, a part of the European internal market. Norway also participates fully in the Socrates and Leonardo programmes, and in the

EU's Framework Programmes for research and technology. The participation in EU research co-operation programmes has not been a controversial issue, and the Norwegian contribution to them has come to be substantial. The 'Europeanisation' of Norwegian knowledge policy has until recently been most noticeable in the area of national research policy. The internationalisation of research has meant that in research and development (R&D) funding Norwegian organisations do not merely fund domestic research, but also send their funds abroad for international research co-operation. There has also been a noticeable internationalisation of policy in the sense that Norwegian Ministries have increased their level of funding for international research co-operation (Wendt 2003). Moreover, there has been a shift towards the EU in research funding from the national govern-ment, both directly in the state budgets and also in the budget of the Research Council of Norway. Likewise, both in terms of collaboration and international co-authorship, at the practical research level there are definite signs of Europeanisation in Norwegian research (Trondal and Smeby 2001).

Norway has well-established traditions of sending students abroad. In the 1950s about 30 percent of the student body studied abroad, largely as a result of a lack of national capacity in Norwegian higher education. Today, the relative share is not that high (between 7 and 10 percent), but in absolute terms the number of students studying abroad is considerable (about 15,000 in 2002/2003). This aspect of higher education has not mirrored the unequivocal development towards Europeanisation that appears to have occurred in research collaboration. In terms of geographical destinations, Norwegian students going abroad have increasingly turned towards Anglo-phone countries (Great Britain in particular, and in recent years Australia) especially at the expense of the rest of Western Europe and German language areas (Wiers-Jenssen 2003, pp. 17-22).

From an international perspective Norway does not loom large in terms of the absolute size of its research and higher education endeavours. Norway's approach to internationalisation is thus framed in its position at the geographical periphery of Europe, and to some extent in the global 'knowledge periphery'. Clearly, emphasis on internationalisation as the main strategy for a small country has been amply emphasised in recent years in the national policy for research and higher education.

One aspect of Norway's geographical position is its set of neighbour countries, with whom ties are not merely geographical but also cultural and political. Norway has a long shared history with the group of Nordic countries. Across Europe there are a number of government-supported, regional, cross-border co-operation programmes in higher education, and the Nordic co-operation agreement in higher education is one of the most far-reaching in Europe. The vision of a common Nordic educational market was launched in 1988, long before the open European Higher Education Area was even conceived. The Nordic dimension includes an agreement on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education, the Nordic mobility programme and an agreement on admission to higher education within the Nordic region. For Norway the Nordic dimension is not only part of a policy of internationalisation of higher education but also an element for strength-ening the joint Nordic dimension in Nordic societies in several areas. It should also be noted that Nordic co-operation in higher education is far less based on structural homogenisation, e.g. harmonisation of grade structures, than are the ambitions of the Bologna Process (Maassen, Uppstrøm 2004, p. 29). The main arguments for Nordic co-operation are, first of all, the historical and cultural ties between the Scandinavian countries. In Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the Nordic language area is seen as a natural stimula-tor for co-operation, however, in the Finnish language area and Iceland language is something of a barrier to co-operation. The Nordic languages create a natural 'educational community' within the Scandinavian countries where there have also been similar approaches to higher education policy—an emphasis on equal opportunity access and no student fees (Sivertsen and Smeby 2001, pp. 26-27). However, Nordic co-operation in general is influenced by the developments in European integration, and in practice it has become more difficult to point to Nordic co-operation as an independent alternative between Europe and the nation state (Olsen and Sverdrup 1998, p. 23). In the area of higher education Norway's position as a non-member of the EU has also most likely served to underline the importance of Nordic co-operation to a stronger degree than in other Nordic countries that are EU members.

4. TRANSLATING BOLOGNA IN THE NATIONAL POLICY ARENA

4.1 The Quality Reform

In many respects the Bologna Process runs parallel to the current national reform process in Norwegian higher education. The work of the govern-ment's Mjøs Commission paved the way for this reform; the Mjøs Commission began its work in 1998 and presented its report in 2000: *Freedom with Responsibility—On higher education and research in Norway* (NOU 2000). The Commission's work was followed up in the government White Paper on Higher Education, submitted on 9 March 2001: *Do your duty—Demand your rights* (KUF 2001). The reform based on the White Paper is referred to as the *Quality Reform*. One of the main policy visions included in the reform is the internationalisation of Norwegian higher education. Consequently, one of the projects in the preparation for the implementation of the *Quality Reform* is specifically directed at *internationalisation.* As indicated above, in national research policy internationalisation has been one of the core issues for several years, and the Research Council of Norway has played a key role in promoting international research co-operation (RCN 2000, Simmonds *et al.* 2001). This was emphasised in the latest White Paper on Research: *Research at the Beginning of a New Era (*KUF 1999), and will be a core aspect of the White Paper on Research that is being prepared for 2005.

Internationalisation was incorporated into higher education policy documents in the 1980s and 1990s, but primarily with reference to student mobility. For instance, in the 1980s the government made changes in the student support systems that had a major impact on the mobility patterns of Norwegian students taking their full degrees abroad. The government White Paper from 1991 dealt more broadly with internationalisation, while at the same time mainly focussing on student mobility (KUF 1991). The intro-duction of the *Quality Reform* pushed the issue of internationalisation to the forefront of the national higher education policy agenda for the first time, extensively underlining the international dimension of research, teaching and learning.

The *Quality Reform* is comprehensive in the sense that it affects major aspects of higher education institutions (HEI), national agencies in higher education and the student body. The reform initiatives pertain to the status of institutions and institutional funding models, institutional governance, modes of teaching and learning, student support, as well as degree structure. The main changes introduced by the reform are:

- Change in governance at the institutional level.
- Increased institutional autonomy.
- New funding formula for institutions.
- Establishment of The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT).
- New degree structure.
- New forms of student guidance, evaluation and assessment.
- New financial support to students.
- Internationalisation.

Below we pick out the items on this list of changes that are also on the Bologna agenda in order to discuss the potential impact of this process on the definitions of solutions and problems in the national reform process.

4.2 Reforming degrees—resolving domestic problems or making Norwegian higher education compatible with Europe?

The *Quality Reform* introduced a new degree structure to replace the former system, which comprised of three types of degree encompassing 90 different degree titles and vocational qualifications. The universities offered degrees based on two cycles, four years of study for the first and two for the second cycle, and professional degrees (ranging from four to six years). Colleges primarily offered three-year professional degrees, although the teacher training degree entailed four years of study. In addition to this it is important to note that the *Cand. Mag* first cycle degree, which had liberal rules regarding the recognition of study credits, was eventually offered as a national first cycle degree that could be awarded by both universities and colleges.

The model for the new degree structure is the Bachelor's Degree (3 years), the Master's Degree (2 years) and the Ph.D. (3 years). In a few subject areas students will enroll for a five-year integrated Master's degree course. Medicine, Veterinary Science, Psychology and Theology are exempted from this new structure. These changes form the main element in the general reform of study that was proposed as part of the *Quality Reform* with the introduction of Bachelor and Master degrees for most fields of study in both universities and colleges.

The aim of the reform was primarily to improve the quality and efficiency of university and college studies. Some elements of the reform were inspired by the Anglo-American tradition in their emphasis on student-centred learning, closer supervision and follow-up in the course of studies, thereby underlining the responsibilities of the universities towards their students (cf. Aamodt 2003). Quality of higher education, as well as the issue of efficiency constituted the main foci of the *Quality Reform*. The nominal duration of studies was excessive, and what is more, in practice students took even longer to complete their studies. Initially, the Ministry of Education perceived the former six-year degree structure (4 + 2) as rather costly for Norwegian society; the change towards a Bachelor/Master degree structure implied a reduction of one whole year in the total study time, which was expected to reduce government spending considerably. In the White Paper that introduced the reform, the Ministry of Education argued, amongst other things, that one factor in favour of changing degree structures was a more cost-effective use of public resources. Problems of low efficiency among Norwegian students also led to a relatively high average age for students at graduation. By changing the degree structure and establishing a closer link between teachers and students (through tutoring, team-work, follow-up), it was argued that the issues of quality and efficiency would follow hand-in-hand (KUF 2001, p. 34).

In addition to the issue of study efficiency, the first cycle degree did not have a strong position in the labour market. If the first degree had been an effective ticket with which to enter the labour market, the share of students pursuing the second degree would have been significantly lower. Further-more, the first degree lacked a distinct profile. National regulation provided ample room for students to freely choose among academic study courses that could be included in the first degree. However, the freedom of students to choose caused delays in the progression of study. During the 1990s, several processes at the institutional level attended to the idea of reforming the first degree, but the reform process only gained momentum when the issue was included on the main agenda of the national reform effort and the work of the government commission.

The modern history of the degree reform in Norwegian higher education dates back to the 1960s. A higher education commission (The Ottosen Commission) proposed the shortening of the university degree structure in the latter half of the 1960s. The proposal was based on a 2+2+2 model. Opposition to reforming the university degree structure was massive and the proposal was killed-off with the issue remaining a political ‘hot potato’ in the years that followed. Moreover, the introduction of a binary system in the 1960s made it possible to cater for the need for shorter and vocationally-oriented studies by allowing the college sector to offer such studies without changing the degree structure for the universities.

In previous Norwegian higher education reforms, especially in the 1980s, features of the international input to the national reforms can clearly be detected in the treatment of the degree structure. An objective set in the 1988 government Green Paper on Higher Education (the Hernes Commission) and its proposed change of the degree structure nation-wide was to achieve flexibility between types of educational institutions and “a system that at the same time works well internationally” (NOU 1988, p. 92.). Yet the reform that followed the Hernes Commission in the 1980s did not pursue any comprehensive changes in the degree structure. The need to shorten the studies for academic degrees was an issue in most higher education systems, particularly in the transition to mass higher education systems, and in this respect Norwegian higher education was no exception. The theme had also been pursued before as a common international item on the agenda, especially by the national and thematic reviews of the OECD. In the Norwegian context, adjustments had been made to the degree system in the years before the advent of the *Quality Reform*, in particular, the duration of study cycles for professional degrees offered by the college sector was reduced. The introduction of new doctoral degrees and the organisation of doctoral education also placed pressure on the university sector to reduce the time-to-degree for the traditional second degrees and to improve efficiency. By the time the Mjøs Commission commenced its work in the late 1990s the degree system in Norwegian higher education was more than ready for a significant make-over.

The question of whether this aspect of the reform should be seen as the Norwegian way of implementing the Bologna Process or not, is not straight-forward. The theme of converging degree structures internationally may have played a significant role in the current reform. In the Mjøs Commission the issue of degree reform was given an 'international treatment', especially in comparing the Norwegian degree structures with the situation in other countries. The Commission, for instance, based its work on a separate comparative report that it had commissioned (Dybesland 2000). However, it also could be argued that the Bachelor/Master degree structure has been introduced as a means of solving other, more 'domestic' problems with respect to the former diversified degree structure.

In the original report from the Mjøs Commission, the primary rationale for proposing to change the degree structure was the lack of national flexibility that the old conglomerate degree structure entailed. There is ample reference to the Bologna Process when the issue of degree structure reform is being discussed, but based on international comparisons the Commission concluded that Norwegian higher education was better off than many other European countries when it comes to international compatibility. The major deviance in the former degree structure was the lengthy higher degree course offered by universities, as well as the limited freedom of students to choose between study programmes and institutions during their studies (KUF 2001). If we compare this menu of problems to those stated in the Bologna Declaration, the problem definition of the Norwegian degree reform is not parallel to the Bologna Declaration in its emphasis: degree reform was not primarily justified on the basis of making the Norwegian system of degrees "easily readable and comparable" *to Europe*. Also the text of the Bologna Declaration makes degree reform an issue of promoting employability and the competitiveness of the European system of higher education. This emphasis is not retrieved in the original policy documents of the Norwegian reform.

Looking back at the history of the reforms in this particular national context, the slowly emerging nature of the seemingly abrupt reforms is clearly visible. Second and even third attempts at launching both grading system reform and degree reform have had international reference points. In this respect Bologna did certainly not hit Norwegian higher education as a bolt from the blue.

Yet, one should not underestimate the role that Bologna has had both as a symbol and as menu of solutions. First, it represented an external reference point with an authoritative status that differed from any general reference to trends or status in other systems; and it represented a specific political development that the higher education community and higher education policy makers were aware of. Thus, it became a tangible external reference point in the area of study reforms that earlier commissions and policy makers had not had. After all, the Bologna Declaration had a clear official position in the Norwegian higher education policy community. Bologna also served to simplify the choice. When one takes the range of possible degree structures into account, without Bologna there would have been a practically indefinite list of alternative degree structures that might have had to be considered in a different way. However, a point of interest is the fact that while it was the 3+2+3 model that was defined as the Bologna model, the text of the Declaration equivocates in its promotion of that particular model. While the information leaflets from the Ministry specifically state that the 3+2+3 year degree structure is “adopted from the Bologna process” (UFD 2003, p. 5), nowhere in the Bologna documents is such a narrow requirement actually established.

One could argue that such a reference had more political clout nationally because at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century Norway had drawn much closer to the European continent by integrating into Europe through the EEA—by 2000 the nation had become accustomed to ‘bending the bananas the European way’. As such, one could argue that the international and in particular European references would carry more weight than in previous reform periods. On the other hand, the political effect of referring to international trends is not necessarily beyond dispute; ‘becoming like the others’ may not be attractive in certain domestic settings, it could be seen as an affront to national distinctiveness and consequently mobilize local resistance, as we will later discuss.

The Bologna Process cannot be seen as solely setting the agenda with respect to degree reform. As already indicated, the evolution of the national system over time necessitated a certain direction in the changes. National priorities seem to have been a strong driving force behind the introduction of the Bachelor/Master degree structure. The lack of strong opposition to the implementation of this model should not be seen as a consequence of the weight of European prescriptions in Norwegian higher education. Local conditions, such as the fact that the college sector degree configuration already fitted the new structure, favoured the implementation of the reform; also, it was prepared in such a way that key actors became a party to it, thus securing a sufficient amount of commitment to push it through to implementation.

Regardless of the driving-forces behind the introduction of the new degree structure or the introduction of an accreditation system in Norwegian higher education, the *result* is obvious. Through these reforms Norwegian higher education has become much more internationally transparent. Furthermore, what we have seen is that the Bologna Process probably gained importance as an element in the degree reform *with hindsight.* National policy makers have made ample reference to Norway's taking the lead in 'implementing Bologna' in national and international fora, creating political capital internationally.

4.3 Bologna's impact on student evaluation and assessment

With the implementation of the *Quality Reform*, the academic performance of students will be assessed both through final examinations, as well as through various term assignments. A new standardised grading system has been introduced, with a descending scale with passes from A to E and F for fail. Prior to the *Quality Reform*, Norwegian universities and colleges practised a variety of grading scales even within the limits of a single institution. The most commonly used scale was numerical, ranging from 1 to 4 with one or two digits, i.e. a scale that in principle made it possible to apply a minimum of 40 different grades. There was very little uniformity in how this seemingly extraordinarily precise grading scale was understood and used in different study programmes.

The present credit system of 20 credits per year has been replaced by a system in which a full academic year is equivalent to 60 course credits. The new grading scale and course credit system are both equivalent to those of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The academic courses will now be structured to a much greater extent than previously. There will be regular guidance and monitoring of each student. An Individual Study Plan containing both the student's and the institution's mutual commitments will be signed by both parties. This is to ensure that the student receives adequate guidance, as well as to provide the institution with an overview to ensure the proper use of resources. Thus, the *Quality Reform* has introduced significant changes in the grading and credit systems, a change unparalleled in the history of Norwegian higher educational reform.

Changing the grading system had been on the policy agenda in previous reform efforts and the impact of international experience could also be traced in earlier policy papers. For instance, in 1988 the Hernes Commission suggested a 6-point grading scale with reference to both the US system and also to work done in the European Community context to co-ordinate the grading scale (NOU 1988). Evidently, international references and solution-seeking had already had an impact on the national reform agenda. However, these proposals were rejected. In the *Quality Reform* the Bologna Process provided a solution to both the problems of the quality of teaching and learning and also to what was perceived as unnecessarily fine grading of student assessments. A need to be understood internationally was seen as a core aspect of the problem of the traditional grading scale. This invites two speculative questions. First, would the A to F grading scale have been the preferred solution if no link had been made to the Bologna Process? Second, would the proposal to introduce the A to F scale have met with such surprisingly scant opposition without the 'backing' of the Bologna Process? The answer to the first question is probably no. The issue of the lack of opposition must in all likelihood be sought not so much in the legitimising power of reference to the Bologna Process, as in the 'grand scale' of the reform. One could speculate on the kind of counter arguments and resistance that such a change might have mobilized if these changes had been presented to the higher education community as a single event. Clearly, the grading scale change and ECTS were part of a large package and other aspects received the bulk of attention in the responses to and discussions of the *Quality Reform*.

One area where the convergence of the Norwegian policy with European developments is easily detectable is that of the use of ECTS. All HEI are expected to actively use ECTS to reduce the barriers to student mobility. Along with the introduction of the Bachelor/Master degree structure, it will be easier for the institutions to use this system because all the study programmes will have been assessed according to a credit point standard. Also, in order to simplify and make qualifications more transparent for foreign higher education institutions and employers, the Ministry decided that all higher education institutions should issue a *Diploma Supplement* as a part of the standard diploma. The Supplement is in English and describes the student's individual study programme.

With respect to changes in student assessment and evaluation, it is important to look at the *Quality Reform* as a choice opportunity where national policy makers were able to toss in a number of the items from the Bologna agenda to mingle with the other substantial policy issues that were being processed. This is one part of the *Quality Reform* where the element of diffusion of the Bologna Process in terms of both problems and solutions is clearly detectable. The grading system and the diploma supplement as a requirement are examples of the direct import of the 'Bologna format'.

4.4 Organising quality—the establishment of a National Agency

NOKUT was established on 1 January 2003. The agency’s role is to be an independent state body monitoring the quality of Norway’s higher education institutions by means of accreditation and evaluation. NOKUT’s accredita-tion and evaluation processes are also designed to support the institutions in their own quality assurance and development. The terms of reference of NOKUT include assessing the quality assurance systems of HEI, and the accreditation of private institutions, in addition to institutions asking for a change of status (from *university college* to *university*). Accreditation of academic courses, when such accreditation is not within the authority of the individual institution, is also a part of NOKUT’s responsibilities, as well as monitoring and reviewing accreditation already granted. NOKUT has also been granted a significant international role with respect to assessing the overall quality of Norwegian higher education in an international context, and in the recognition of foreign education/diplomas (UFD 2003).

The establishment of both a new accreditation system in Norway and a new independent evaluation agency for higher education (NOKUT) can only partly be seen as a direct response to the Bologna Process. Several domestic issues are also linked to it. Arguments presented by the Mjøs Commission in favour of establishing a system of accreditation were related to an on-going process of ‘academic drift’ in Norway, with several of the state university colleges intending to become universities. The Mjøs Commission established the criteria for obtaining this status (a minimum of five Master’s degree study programmes and four doctoral education programmes), and suggested that the responsibility for checking the criteria should be given to an independent body (NOU 2000). The fact that institutional accreditation is given a very prominent place in the accreditation system, contrary to the more common system of evaluating study programmes in Europe, suggests that national policy issues have influenced the process quite strongly (Stensaker 2003). However, accreditation and quality assurance as an organised activity in higher education is clearly an area where international trends in general have been important, and where Norway on several occasions has been seen as a latecomer both at an institutional and national level (cf. Gornitzka 2003). This illustrates the complexity involved in singling out different sources of international impact on domestic developments and assessing the relative weight that they carry. In the area of quality assurance such effects are especially hard to isolate given the constant process of translation that occurs at a number of international locations. The diffusion and translation of different practices and organisational models for national quality assurance systems contain not only European, but also American ideas and experiences.

5. TRANSLATING BOLOGNA IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON HIGHER EDUCATION?

In recent public debates on the reform of higher education, which have primarily focused on the 'marketisation' of universities, a typical headline might be 'Freedom to be run by market forces' (Hansen and Midré 2000). This debate gained even more momentum in 2003 when another government commission proposed a change in the legal status of universities and colleges (NOU 2003). The discussion of the element of European con-vergence in the reforms—the introduction of the new degree structure, the new grading scale and ECTS—was eclipsed in the public debates that the Mjøs Commission's report and the subsequent White Paper aroused. It became a fundamental debate over the idea of the university and the possible normative threat that the reforms represented. The tone of the debate was set by a critical essay included as an appendix to the Mjøs Commission's report. This declared that the Mjøs Commission's proposal was an 'Atlantic' affront to the specific and fundamental values of Norwegian higher education based on the German von Humboldt's traditions (Slagstad 2000). Several contributions to the debate spoke in defense of traditional academic values and against submission to market forces. This is not to say that international debates and trends on higher education did not feature as items in the debate. The push for accountability, for performance-based funding and value for money were recognised as a part of international trends in the discussion, although the most prominent and tangible features of the Bologna Process were not singled out as such in the discourse. The debate triggered by the Mjøs Commission concerned the values and norms of the university that were seen by the academic community as being under pressure. The specifics of the degree reform, ECTS, the grading scale and the 3 + 2 structure, were not at the heart of the discussion. The extent to which they featured as elements was in line with a general discussion on the normative luggage carried by the reform. The major dispute concerning degree reform revolved more around the second degree as an example of how the pressure for study efficiency would be detrimental to the *bildung* aspect of a university education in the second cycle. There was strong opposition to the sacrifice of the country-specific traits of the university second degree, presented as "Norway's gift to the academic world" (Forr 2000), on the altar of international compatibility (Slagstad 2000, pp. 474-475). But as we have seen, the most significant changes actually concerned the first degree, i.e. the former first degree awarded by Norwegian universities was reduced from 4 to 3 years with the introduction of the Bachelor/Master system.

Reform was thus perceived and discussed in terms of which image of the university was embodied in the reform package. The public discussion, particularly as related the Mjøs Commission's green paper, was in principle a discussion of the ideology of higher education. Its major issues related to the Commission's proposal for changes in the governance structure of universities, the formal status of universities and changes in the funding system. Specific reference was made to the OECD and its review of tertiary education (OECD 1998). In the debate, reform proposals in the Green Paper preparing the *Quality Reform* were criticised for uncritically importing an international reform ideology that sees universities as service companies and society as a market place (Olsen 2000, pp. 240-241). How the Bologna Process was perceived in terms of the underlying values attached to higher education is far less clear, however, and in this respect it was not directly translated in the public debate on higher education.

In the public debate the political leadership of the Ministry promoted the notion of the *Quality Reform* being firmly rooted in the academic tradition of continental Europe. The Minister publicly defended the strong emphasis on the need to internationalise higher education and contribute to the efforts to establish a European Higher Education Area, inviting higher education on "a voyage through a Europe of Knowledge" (Giske 2001).

In order to discuss the normative impact of the Bologna process on a national system one has to have some kind of grip on the discourse promoted by the Bologna Process. What fundamental values are promoted in the Bologna Declaration and in the ensuing work? One of the main difficulties here is that the "meaning" of the Bologna Process is not fixed and is subject to continuous definition and redefinition. As such, the Bologna Declaration is a text in need of decoding (Neave 2003). This is a task that lies beyond the scope of this chapter. A general observation might be that the market discourse is probably more pronounced in the framework of the Europeanisation of research than with respect to the educational function of universities. Furthermore, the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) discussion carries a stronger flavour of commodification and commercialisation of higher education. This implies that the perceived challenge of the developments in the GATS/WTO negotiations is more readily seen in the pro-market discourse than in the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. It has been argued that the European Ministers of Education, by signing the Declaration, underlined higher education as a public good and accepted the public responsibility towards higher education (cf. e.g. Nyborg 2003). The Prague Communiqué also delivered the political message that higher education should be seen as a public good. In this respect the Bologna Process should not be interpreted as promoting the values of commodification and marketisation of higher education. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the text of the Declaration makes the connection between labour market exigencies and a new architecture for higher education in its underlying rationale. Also, the Prague Communiqué underlines that European co-operation needs to deal with the international competitiveness of European higher education but without addressing how this emphasis is made compatible with higher education as a public good (Hackl 2001).

6. DIFFUSION, TRANSLATION AND USE OF BOLOGNA—INTERPRETING THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE

Through the changes introduced in the *Quality Reform*, the introduction of the Bachelor/Master degree structure, the use of ECTS and of a new standardised grading system, and the establishment of NOKUT, the Norwegian government has implemented most of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration (Eurydice 2003). Norway has in this respect reached further than most other European countries in implementing Bologna. If there is a general consensus that the Bologna Process entailed the intro-duction of a Bachelor/Master degree structure, then we might conclude that a process of isomorphism has taken place.

Thus in the current implementation of the *Quality Reform* the Bologna Process has been funnelled into universities and colleges. Yet, we argue that this is not a case of clear and simple domestic implementation of a European commitment.

First, we should be aware that national reform had already been scheduled before the Bologna Declaration was signed. The domestic reform process thus provided a choice opportunity that made it possible to incorporate the international trends into a national change process—in this respect it caused Norway to shift from being a 'reluctant reformer' to a 'forerunner' (Stensaker 2004). However, having this kind of decision-making opportunity is not something that can be easily reproduced in other systems. Second, we argue that the translation process in the policy arena clearly is characterised by national policy makers using the European agenda as a *menu of solutions* for *domestic problems*. This seems particularly to be the case with respect to the reform of the degree structure. In the explanation to the Bologna Declaration it is stated that the declaration "reflects a search for a common European answer to common European problems" (p. 3). In the context of the Norwegian degree reform, we have argued that domestic problems have been linked to a European solution. With respect to other items on the Bologna agenda, especially the introduction of ECTS and the A to F grading system, the process resembles more what we would expect from a diffusion model where both problems and solutions are diffused from the European to the national level.

Analysing such processes easily ends up in discussions of contra factual hypothesis. As a research strategy that is seldom advisable, but as an analytical heuristic it can be useful. So if we ask: Would the current *Quality Reform* have looked the same if there had been no Bologna reform and 30 Ministers of Education had not signed such a declaration? In the particular case discussed in this chapter, it can be argued that the degree reform would have been introduced, but perhaps not as quickly and with greater controversy. However, the A to F grading scale would most likely not have been introduced.

With respect to higher education, the most specific items on the Bologna agenda—degrees, ECTS, the comparable grading system and comparable criteria and methodologies in quality assurance—are recognisable in the Norwegian reform. However, one can also discern the more diffuse impact of European developments and general international trends impacting on the higher education policy discourse domestically: the import of perceptions about the roles of universities and colleges, the underlying values that are promoted, commodification of higher education, the import of new public management inspired organisational principles into higher education, and the introduction of market discourse in higher education. The task of tracking the diffusion and translation of such a discourse is not easy, nor manageable within the frame of this chapter. A general observation is that the Bologna Process as a discussion space and as a setter of agendas is also important in the Norwegian domestic higher education policy arena. In the general debate Bologna has not been targeted as the main nesting place of an ideology that promotes the marketisation of higher education.

What kind of change does the impact of the Bologna Process represent? In part, there have been some significant structural changes, and a change in terminology. Whether there are significant normative changes in the reform of Norwegian higher education that are attributable to the impact of Bologna is more doubtful. The debate that the *Quality Reform* aroused was in its essence a normative debate that clearly took seriously the discussion of the role of higher education and the underlying value it represents, but the critique naturally targeted the national commission and the policy text of its report.

Is Bologna the explanation for national degree reforms? The Bologna Process is far from being the driving force of the internal process of reform. The situational contingency that Bologna and the national reform processes represent, the random or accidental combination of opportunity and international events, does play a role in explaining why

Norway introduced this particular degree reform. Yet, the juxtaposition of opportunity (national reform) with problems (national) and solution (international) provided by the Norwegian signature to the Bologna Declaration probably should not be interpreted as mere coincidence. The actors involved used the reference to the Bologna Process to some extent; in other words, the combination should not in itself be interpreted as a temporal accident, but rather as attempts to add legitimacy by reference to (1) trends outside the national system; (2) the obligatory aspect of the Norwegian signature. The Bologna Process represents more than 'international trends' in higher education; it is a formally acknowledged political commitment. The reference to it served as political clout when the reform was adopted.

Furthermore, the Bologna Process offered a major international definition of what constitutes an appropriate degree structure for a national higher education system that aspires to strong international connections. Periphera-lity and strong ideological support of internationalisation as a policy objective in the *Quality Reform* served to increase the political efficiency of Bologna and general international references. However, we have also seen in the public debate on the *Quality Reform* that referring to the need to adopt international trends is not necessarily a forceful argument when the perception is that national and academic traditions are threatened by an influx of foreign trends. It would not be a gross overstatement to indicate that colleges and universities, as well as individual academics see themselves as implementing a national reform rather than as directly adjusting to European developments. If we look at a national reform as the locus of translation in this case, it is fair to say that the layers through which Bologna has reached the institutions make the implementation setting domestically-orientated. This influences the actors' perception of what they are doing within universities and colleges.

Why would Norway's experiences in this matter be of any relevance to anyone beyond its particular national setting? As indicated above, Norway is cited as one of the top three countries in Europe in terms of its adoption of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration (Eurydice 2003). As a result of European level eagerness in monitoring and comparing developments, Norway has been officially recognised as having implemented Bologna. Domestically, this has also been noted. If the Norwegian case has a lesson to offer, then it must be that understanding the dynamics of the Bologna Process within a national higher education system is impossible without considering the local circumstances that translate the Bologna 'menu' and agenda into domestic change. The circumstances in this case are marked by the following characteristics. First, there was a strong political emphasis on internationalisation as a goal in itself, and this ambition was largely shared by the national higher education community. This we might argue made national policy makers and a small higher education system on the Northern periphery of Europe open and attentive to the Bologna Process. Also, the political peripheral position of Norway as a non-member of the EU might have made Norway's attention to the Bologna Process more pronounced—Norway could participate and excel in this arena without being encumbered by the lack of membership status. Second, the decision opportunity was provided by the broad general national reform process that ran parallel to the Bologna Process. In other words, while ministers were signing the Bologna Declaration the national Norwegian Commission on Higher Education was writing a Green Paper that, with some modifications, became the White Paper of 2000/2001. So the events in the European arena contributed to setting the national agenda. They provided one menu of solutions to the concurring domestic problems and challenges in higher education.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The case of the Norwegian Quality Reform and the Bologna Process shows some of the ways in which international processes of policy co-operation can impact on a national reform process. The Bologna Process can be seen in this particular instance as having penetrated the domestic level and produced significant changes. We have discussed the possible mechanisms by which this penetration occurred. The case illustrates how both policy problems and solutions can be *diffused* from the international arena to the domestic level, as seen when the Bologna Declaration, agenda and process, diffused into Norwegian higher education in the remodelling of the grading system and introduction of ECTS. However, diffusion is not the most dominant aspect of the linkage between the international arena and domestic policy change—our case underlines that this link involves the *translation* of internationally defined solutions as they are coupled to domestic problems. This we see especially with regard to degree reform and with respect to the establishment of a National Quality Assurance Agency. The Bologna Process and Declaration served as a menu of solutions to domestic problems in higher education. Finally the use of Bologna in this particular case is not merely a question of how international processes can make an imprint on definitions of problems and solutions in national policy processes but also how international processes can enhance the political clout of national reform proposals. The reference to the Bologna Process has been used as political leverage in a national reform process. On the other hand, this case also demonstrates the difficult task of isolating the effects of a specific international process. The Bologna Process itself is not without ambiguities, especially in terms of its normative and ideological flavour, and is also itself subject to several sources of influence and definition. This chapter has identified some of the elements that characterise the use and translation of Bologna in a specific national and peripheral context—it illustrates how the fate of the texts and ideas of the Bologna Process are in the hands of its later users, as with other texts and objects that travel across different contexts.

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Chapter 3

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN FINLAND

Perspectives from the Basic Units

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1. INTRODUCING THE OBJECT OF THE RESEARCH AND THE THEORETICAL DEVICES USED

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how the Bologna Process influences Finnish higher education by examining what changes are related to or caused by it. The study focuses first on the social field of national higher education policy-making, and second on the study of higher education institutions examined from the perspective of academic basic units.

The study is based on critical analysis of national policy documents and on a qualitative case study conducted at the University of Jyväskylä in the spring term of 2004. The qualitative case study was based on thematic focus group interviews. The themes of the interview can be found in the Appendix 1.

In order to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena taking place in higher education the choice of academic departments was influenced by studies of academic cultures (see Becher and Trowler 2001). A more detailed methodological discussion will be offered in section 5.

The idea of a *social field of action* is adopted from Bleiklie et al. (2000) to focus attention on the fact that the nature of Finnish higher education policy-making and the analysis of the Bologna Process should be understood as interactive processes taking place simultaneously at various levels of European and national higher education systems. It should not be defined as an example of a top-down or bottom-up implementation strategy. Theoretically, this study also borrows from the ideas of Czarniawska and

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Sévon (1996) who define the processes of change as *processes of cultural translation* rather than implementation or adaptation of reforms. In this chapter, we will ask how the ideas of the Bologna declaration (and those of the communiqués of the Prague and Berlin ministerial meetings) are seen and understood (in other words *translated*) within the university's basic units.

2. CONTEXTS FOR THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION

Finnish universities admitted 20,651 students, while the polytechnics accepted 25,662 young students and 6,175 adult education students in 2001. A comparison of these numbers with the size of the relevant age cohort reveals that about 70 per cent are offered a starting place in higher education (Välimaa 2001, 2004). There are 20 universities and 32 polytechnics in Finland at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a ratio of one higher education institution per 100,000 inhabitants. The expansion of Finnish higher education between the 1960s and the 1990s was both closely linked to and a result of a welfare-state agenda supported by all major political parties. All major provinces were allowed to establish a university between the 1960s and the 1980s. Finnish higher education became a mass higher education system in the 1970s when over 15 per cent of the age cohort entered higher education institutions (Välimaa 2001).

From a historical perspective it can be stated that university and higher education have been considered important aspects of the development of the Finnish nation and nation state. Traditionally, universities have been defined as national cultural institutions rooted in the Humboldtian ideals of the university. Training civil servants has always been an important social function of Finnish higher education, in part because the majority of university students are and have been employed by the public sector. In the 1990s, higher education institutions were defined as an important partner in the national innovation system. The high social prestige of universities and university degrees (and academics) remains a social reality in Finland in the twenty-first century (Välimaa 2001).

2.1 A short introduction into the social dynamics of Finnish higher education policymaking

Finnish higher education policy in the modern sense emerged in the 1960s, since when the development of Finnish higher education has been guided by various higher education development acts. The first Higher Education Development Act covered the years 1967 to 1986, after which new higher education development acts have become a necessary political routine. The first Higher Education Development Act was accompanied by the Council of State's expectations concerning the measures to be taken by higher education institutions, which is another essential element related to the implementation of the development act. It can be said that the Higher Education Development Act and the governmental decisions connected to it opened a new space for higher education policy-making: increased university funding for a mass higher education system legitimised the Government's endeavour to reform universities, or to put it another way, enabled hitherto unparalleled and unprecedented interference in the internal life of universities. This trend has continued but with different focuses in different decades. An essential fact in the Finnish context is that national higher education policy-making has been understood as a national instrument in increasing the efficiency and societal relevance of higher education, regardless of how these policy goals have been defined over the preceding decades. During the 1980s government 'expectations' emphasised effective planning and co-operation in research activities; productivity received more attention in the allocation of resources; and university evaluation was developed. These expectations were to be realised by increasing the autonomy of the universities (Välimaa 1994). In the 1990s, the trend was to make Finnish higher education institutions more efficient as institutions and more productive as part of the national innovation system. The main policy tool has been the steering system known as "Management by Results". The most important reform of the 1990s was the establishment of polytechnics in Finland (see Välimaa 2001) with the aim of improving the quality of higher vocational education to the international level and increasing the choice open to students in higher education.

2.2 The field of higher education reforms and the strategy of gradual reform

It is possible to identify characteristics common to all Finnish higher education reform: first, reform usually has a national goal that is defined in a higher education policy document; second, the reform processes are normally associated with experiments carried out in one or more higher education institutions. All Finnish experiments have been supported by follow-up studies (although their outcomes have not always been utilised); third, the aim of the reforms has been to establish new systems or practices across the entire higher education system (see Välimaa 2005).

3. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IN FINLAND

The Bologna Process is a hot topic at all levels of the Finnish higher education system. Finnish higher education policy makers aim to implement this reform at the system level, higher education institutions are developing institutional policies to implement the Bologna Process, and academics are occupied with the requirements of making curricula changes to take into account two cycles of degrees. From the research perspective, it is both interesting to analyse the changes taking place in Finnish higher education, and theoretically challenging to analyse how international pressures are translated in the local conditions and traditions of academic basic units. In what follows we will describe how the Bologna Process has been defined in the national higher education policy field, as well as the elements of the implementation strategy adopted by the Ministry of Education.

3.1 The nature of the Bologna Process at the national level

The expected impact of the Bologna Process on national higher education policy seems to have changed as the Process has been taking place. In its initial phase (1999-2000), it was important for the Ministry of Education to 'sell' the idea by focusing on general problems that the Bologna Process could help to alleviate in Finnish and European higher education. This policy was also necessary because Finnish higher education institutions were not eager to join the Bologna Process. At this initial phase the main problems the Bologna Process was intended to solve (Lehikoinen 2001) were as follows:

1. The high dropout rate from higher education—dropping out of higher education has been a consistent topic in Finnish higher education policymaking. It has been defined a problem both at the system and at the individual levels. Basically, this is a question of selection for higher education, as well as the social reproduction of society through education. It was assumed that the Bologna Process would decrease the number of dropouts because the chance of students receiving a degree would increase.
2. Transition from higher education to work—the transition from higher education to the world of work has been a problematic issue. It has been assumed that the two-tier structure of degrees will make it easier to move from higher education into working life.
3. Prolongation of studies—one of the traditional concerns in Finnish higher education policy has been that the time taken to complete studies

has been excessive, particularly in the universities. It was assumed that this problem would be removed when each student leaving a higher education institution had a degree.

4. The objective of lifelong learning would be better achieved — it was stated that the objective of lifelong learning would be better achieved with the introduction of a two-tier degree structure, comparable degrees and the modularization of studies.
5. Problems of student mobility — one of the national goals has been to increase the mobility of students. It was assumed that Bologna Process would help to make Finnish higher education more international.

Thus, *the benefits of the two degree cycles* would make it easier to make personal study plans, to increase the modularization of studies and advance student mobility in European higher education and the labour market. It was also interesting that in this early phase of Bologna Process argumentation, Finnish higher education was seen as part of the European Higher Education Area, with common problems that needed to be solved.

After the European Ministers of Education Meeting in Prague (2001) and Berlin (2003), Finnish national policy objectives related to the Bologna Process were modified. According to the Ministry of Education (MinEdu 2004) the main policy objectives are now as follows:

1. Adoption of the comprehensive structure of degrees—central instruments in reaching this objective are ECTS and the Diploma Supplement.
2. Unified degree structures—the structure of degrees will be developed on the basis of two main degree cycles. The first cycle is a three or four-year bachelor-level degree, which should also be relevant to the European labour market. The second cycle consists of MA and doctoral-level degrees.
3. The implementation of ECTS—the ECTS system will be brought into use.
4. Increasing mobility—the mobility of students, teachers and other staff will be increased significantly. Obstacles to mobility will be removed.
5. European dimension in quality assurance—European co-operation will be increased to find common methods and definitions of levels. The European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) will be an essential actor in this process.
6. Promotion of European dimensions in higher education—international co-operation and networking will be increased together with training in languages and cultures.

It can be seen that the national goals defined by the Ministry of Education repeat the goals declared at the Prague and Berlin meetings. From the perspective of research it is interesting to note that only two of the original national policy concerns (the two-cycle system of degrees and the mobility of students) have remained on the national political agenda of the Bologna Process. This may be interpreted in two different ways: firstly, it might mean that there could be significant differences between the initial phase of the Bologna Process and its implementation after the Prague meeting; second, it might also mean that the difference described is mainly a rhetorical change explained by the Ministry of Education's need to adapt to European policies. A committee report, which first mentions national goals and then those relevant to the Bologna Process, supports the latter interpretation (OPM 2004). A combination of these interpretations would be to assume that the Bologna Process has changed Finnish policy formulation even though it is not yet clear what the relationship between this symbolic reformulation and the reality of policy-making will be.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

As discussed above, since the European Ministers of Education Meeting in Prague and Berlin the main challenge for Finland has been seen in terms of adapting to the changes caused by the Bologna Process. This process of adaptation has in turn followed its own logic, being inspired by the goal of keeping up with the rest of Europe. The challenges of adaptation are threefold: to make changes in national legislation, to change both the content and structure of curricula, to create national and institutional systems of accreditation. Consequently, Finnish implementation of the Bologna Process is based on three main methods: national committees nominated to prepare changes in legislation, national seminars on the Bologna Process, and national co-ordination groups to make national curricula plans for each discipline. In what follows, each of these methods is described and analysed in more detail.

4.1 Changes in legislation

A number of committees have been set up to make Finnish higher education prepare for the changes caused by the Bologna Process. The committee has been mandated to draft the required amendments to legislation. The committees related to the Bologna Process are:

The Committee on the International Strategy of Higher Education Institutions—which completed its work in 2001. Although not directly related to the Bologna Process it did, however, formulate policy goals for Finnish higher education policymaking and higher education institutions (OPM 2001). For this reason, it is normally viewed as one of the committees preparing Finnish higher education for the Bologna Process.
The Committee for the Development of University Degrees—which was established in January 2002. According to public documents (OPM 2002):

> The mandate of the committee was to propose a reform of the university degree structure to comprise two cycles and measures needed to implement the two-tier structure in all study fields.

As the committee proposed, a two-tier degree structure is being adopted in Finnish higher education in all study fields from 1 August 2005. By that time an ECTS-based system[1] will replace the former credit system. The committee wished to emphasise that the reform should not lead to an increase in degree requirements and that the new syllabi should be based on field-specific core content analysis. The committee's proposal was that the Bachelor's degree should incorporate 180 credits (three years of study) and that the Master's degree would entail 120 credits (two years of study). The committee further proposed that:

> The universities develop specific master's programmes in response to the needs of research and the labour market. The students would be selected to these programmes in a separate application process. The admission requirement would be an appropriate bachelor-level degree, polytechnic degree or a corresponding level of education. In the case of substantial difference in the content of prior studies, the universities could require supplementary studies of 60 credits at the maximum (OPM 2002).[2]

The committee also proposes that universities arrange degree programmes taught in foreign languages, which had already been suggested by the Committee on the International Strategy of Higher Education Institutions.

The second national challenge created by the Bologna Process is the idea of quality assurance and accreditation mentioned in the Communiqué of the Berlin Conference. In Finland the *Committee on Quality Assurance in Higher Education* was established to analyse existing quality assurance systems and recommend the development of Finnish higher education quality assurance. The committee felt that a new context exists for Finnish higher education as a consequence of globalisation. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to the demands caused by international development when defining national quality objectives and quality assurance criteria. The Committee suggested that quality assurance in Finnish higher education should consist of three elements: national higher education policy, national evaluation and the higher education institutions' own quality assurance mechanism. In order to achieve these three elements the committee recommends that:

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[1] One year of studies would comprise 1600 student work hours and give 60 credits.

[2] The committee also proposes that the present 20 Decrees governing university degrees be revoked and replaced by one Government Decree on university degrees.

> Universities and polytechnics develop quality assurance systems, which comprise all spheres of operation in the higher education institution. The quality assurance systems should a) meet the developing quality assurance criteria of the European Higher Education Area, b) be part of the operational steering and management system, c) cover the entire operation of the higher education institution, d) be interrelated as part of the normal operations of the higher education institution, e) be continuous, f) be documented, and g) enable the participation of all members of the higher education community in quality work (OPM 2004).

The committee also states that:

> In response to the objectives set in the Berlin Communiqué, auditing of the quality assurance systems of universities and polytechnics will be taken into use in Finland.

Auditing in the Finnish context means a process whereby the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council will organise the audit in co-operation with the higher education institutions. The objective is that the audits will be carried out periodically and that all quality assurance systems of the higher education institutions will be audited once by the year 2010 (OPM 2004). As a starting point for these reforms the committee states, however, that the higher education institutions have the principal responsibility for the development and quality of the education they provide. Maybe it is for this reason that the committee says nothing about the practicalities of institutional quality assurance systems.

The third committee mandated to suggest changes in Finnish higher education was organised on April 5, 2004. The aim of the *Committee on the Framework of Qualifications* is to create well-structured and comprehensible descriptions of the framework of Finnish higher education degrees. The latter is expected to include the description of Finnish academic degrees on the basis of the following indicators: the amount of work required to finish a degree, the level of degrees, the achievement of defined learning outcomes, the qualifications for further studies, and students' professional competence.

4.2 Implementation plan

The implementation plan (see Figure 4.1) shows not only that the implementation of the degree reform is taken seriously, but also that it is strictly led by the Ministry of Education. The implementation plan of the Degrees Reform resembles the rational plan of the Great Degrees Reform of the 1970s with the exception of the small arrows trying to reach the Ministry of Education from the bottom of the figure (see Välimaa 2004).

The notion of rational planning is also repeated in the national disciplinary-based co-ordination groups. The Ministry of Education nominates these national co-ordination groups in the following fields of study: Dentistry, Economics, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities, Language Studies, Law, Medicine, Psychology, Pharmacy, Science, Social Sciences, Social Work, Technical Sciences, Veterinary Medicine (MinEdu 2004b).

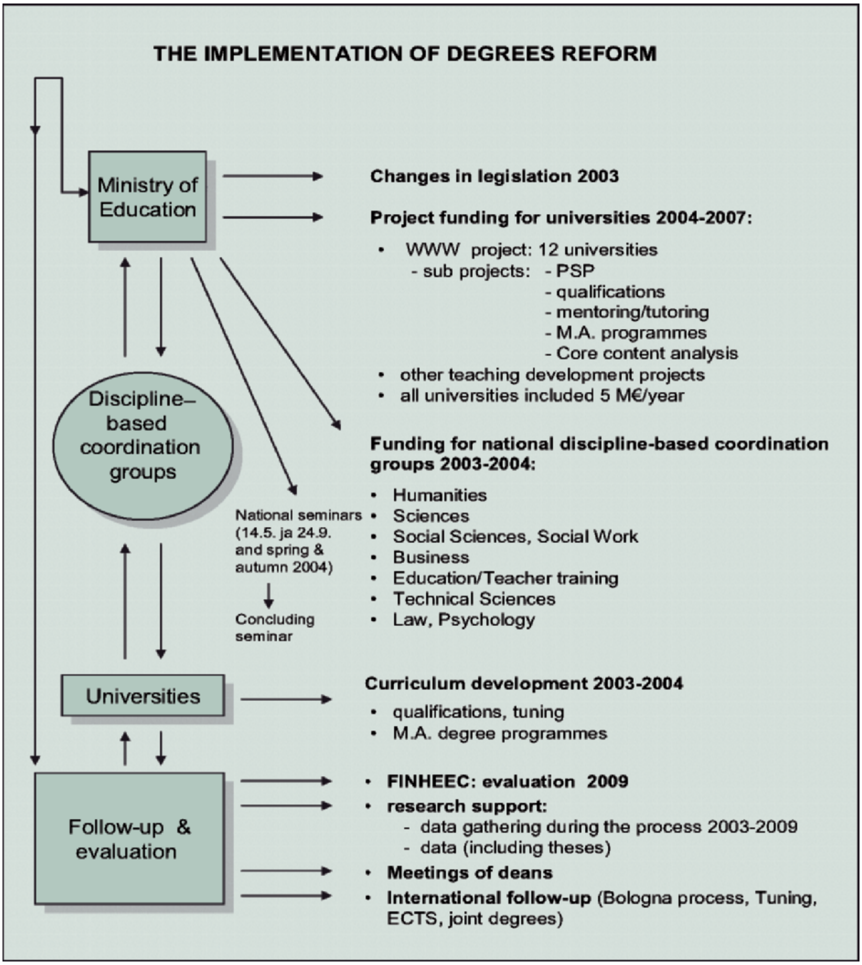
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEGREES REFORM
Ministry of Education
Changes in legislation 2003
Project funding for universities 2004-2007:
• WWW project: 12 universities
- sub projects: - PSP
- qualifications
- mentoring/tutoring
- M.A. programmes
- Core content analysis
• other teaching development projects
• all universities included 5 M€/year
Discipline–based coordination groups
Funding for national discipline-based coordination groups 2003-2004:
National seminars (14.5. ja 24.9. and spring & autumn 2004)
Concluding seminar
• Humanities
• Sciences
• Social Sciences, Social Work
• Business
• Education/Teacher training
• Technical Sciences
• Law, Psychology
Universities
Curriculum development 2003-2004
• qualifications, tuning
• M.A. degree programmes
Follow-up & evaluation
• FINHEEC: evaluation 2009
• research support:
- data gathering during the process 2003-2009
- data (including theses)
• Meetings of deans
• International follow-up (Bologna process, Tuning, ECTS, joint degrees)

Figure 4.1. The implementation plan for the reform of university degrees in Finland. Source: Ministry of Education (www.minedu.fi/opm/koulutus/yliopistokoulutus/bologna)

The Ministry of Education emphasises the following principles in the implementation of the Bologna Process. Firstly, that the change from study weeks to ECTS should not be based on a mechanical calculation but on comprehensive core curricula analysis. Secondly, the Ministry of Education emphasises the use of personal study plans (also because it has been emphasised in the political agenda of the national Government).

4.3 National seminars

The national seminars focused on the Bologna Process were intended to make the academic community commit to the process and disseminate information about it. The organisation of national seminars also shows the importance of the success of the Bologna Process for the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education offered a free lunch to each of the participants in the seminars. Participation, however, was voluntary (and every participant knows well that there is 'no such thing as a free lunch'). The themes in the national seminar on reforming curricula organised by the Ministry of education 24 September 2003 (MinEdu 2004c) also show the importance of the topics to be taken seriously during the process. The participants in the national seminar were organised into working groups on the following themes: personal study plans, core curriculum analysis, the process of reforming curricula, and reflections on various structures for two-cycle degrees.

5. PERSPECTIVES ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS FROM THE BASIC UNITS

As we have shown above, the implementation of the Bologna Process has begun at the national level in Finnish higher education policy-making. Higher education institutions have been, however, rather passive actors in the Bologna Process even though most Finnish higher education institutions have appointed some kind of co-ordination team to inform the institution about the Bologna Process and to prepare for the changes (see: Finheec 2004).

As far as we know, these institutional implementation plans have not been defined in great detail. Therefore, the analysis of the impact of the Bologna Process from the perspective of basic units reveals what is concretely happening in Finnish higher education institutions. Our main concern here is to analyse similarities and differences among six departments in the University of Jyväskylä with regard to how the Bologna Process is connected to the functioning of academic basic units.

The University of Jyväskylä is typical of multi-disciplinary and medium-sized universities in Finland. It has seven faculties (Business, Education, Information Technology, Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences and Mathematics, Sport and Health Sciences). There are about 15,000 students and about 1,350 permanent staff members in the university with an annual budget of about €95 m.

The aim of the case study is to analyse how basic units define the Bologna Process and how it influences their functioning. The goal of this type of qualitative research is not intended to be the production of knowledge that can be generalised throughout the Finnish system of higher education. Our aim is, however, to illustrate meanings and identify relevant social phenomena and processes that are related to the Bologna Process. We will also reflect on our findings in relation to our theoretical frames of reference (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Bleiklie et al. 2000; Becher and Trowler 2001).

5.1 On the method of focus group interviews

We interviewed 4-7 people from each of the selected basic units in the focus group interview (see Krueger 1994; Sulkunen 1990 in Pötsönen, Pennanen 1998) on the uses of the focus group method. In total 27 academics were interviewed: 8 professors (or heads of department), 5 lecturers, 3 senior assistants (or post doctorates), 4 assistants (or university teachers), 6 amanuenses (or other administrative staff members)[3] and three male students. The interviewees ranged between 30 and 60 years of age with 15 male and 12 female academic staff members. We selected the academic basic units using the categories described by Becher (1989): two from soft and pure disciplines (e.g. sociology, history), two from soft and applied disciplines (e.g. social work, teacher training), one from a hard and pure discipline (e.g. physics), and one from a hard and applied discipline (e.g. medicine, engineering, information technology). We will analyse the interviews based on the basic unit rather than the discipline (see Becher and Kogan 1992 on basic units). We will assume that the basic units have a shared understanding of the Bologna Process because they need to make the curricula changes together, even though Finnish basic units normally consist of several disciplines.

The procedure for the interview was the following: the interviewers worked in pairs, one as the lead interviewer and the other assisting (see the Appendix 1) with the roles being alternated between interviewers and interviews. The interviews lasted between one and two hours and they were carried out in the basic unit concerned. In addition to taping the interviews and writing down the contents of the answers, field notes were taken concerning the physical location and social interaction between the interviewees. These field notes gave us valuable information not only concerning the atmosphere in the basic unit, but also concerning attitudes to the Bologna Process. The field notes also influenced our interpretations on the content of the answers. For example, in one of the basic units the academics consulted their notes before answering our questions. This indicates that they were either not very familiar with what has been done in the basic unit or were not sure what they should say to us, although most interviewees could respond spontaneously about what they thought about the Process.

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[3] The groupings are based on the nature of the work (leadership position, administration, teaching, research).

The analysis of the interviews is based on themes that came up during the interviews. We analysed the answers by using the group as an entity without differentiating between individuals.

5.2 Understandings and definitions of the Bologna Process

We began our interviews by asking what the basic units understand by the Bologna Process: What is it all about? Most commonly the answer to this question was along the lines of: *The main thing as we understand it, is that this is a system of degrees, the Bachelor and then the Master; and that this would hopefully be a unified system in Europe for whichever countries want the agreement.* All basic units also added that the implementation of ECTS is one of the most important goals of the Bologna Process.

In addition to these general notions, there were significant differences between expectations of the Bologna Process. In what follows we will attend to three different approaches to the Bologna Process to show the degree of variation.

5.2.1 Soft-applied basic unit: positive expectations

This basic unit began its response by defining the Bologna Process as an opportunity to enhance the quality of curricula and to increase co-operation and networking in Finland and Europe. For them the Bologna Process opens an opportunity to discuss the pedagogical perspectives and potentials opened by the Bologna Process. They also considered it a positive development that the University of Jyväskylä has emphasised the pedagogical aspect of the Bologna Process by paying attention to curriculum development needs in and through the Bologna Process. Core content analysis is seen as a useful device in this context. In a broader perspective they also stated that the Bologna Process serves as “a counter strike” to Japan and the US in the name of the European ethos in higher education. Our European objectives are to make general rules to increase mobility, internationalisation, European homogenisation and economic compatibility. They also noticed that the two-cycle model of higher education is taken from the Anglo-American system of higher education. In Finland, the aim is to increase domestic mobility between and inside higher education institutions. In short, this soft and applied basic unit takes a positive view of the Bologna Process, which seems to open new opportunities for their internal development.

One of the internal reasons for their positive attitude may be the fact that they have not renewed their curricula for many years. It seems that external challenges opened by the Bologna Process are regarded as positive because it may also benefit their internal curriculum renewal needs. Additional external pressures to develop their curricula are caused by the fact that in Finland their professional education is organised by universities with the Master's degree being the normal basic degree, whereas in most European countries the BA is the basic degree with that education provided by lower-status higher education institutions.

5.2.2 Bologna Process from critical perspectives: "the Push from above"

Some of the academics criticised the Bologna Process strongly. In a soft-pure basic unit, the Bologna Process was referred to as "a new liturgy" which forces them to adapt to a new kind of rhetorical language. It also forces them to implement a two-cycle system of degrees, even though they regard it as absolutely useless in humanities and social sciences. Social scientists also defined the Bologna Process as one of the typical European processes initiated at the top level without taking into account the needs of the basic units. The goal of the Bologna Process was defined as an attempt to improve co-operation between universities and business enterprises.

5.2.3 Soft-pure basic unit: mixed feelings

One of the most revealing discussions around this question took place in a basic unit representing soft disciplines. The answer to the question started with the notion that the Bologna Process means "a lot of work—maybe for nothing". This somewhat cynical answer was continued with the statement that the Bologna Process attempts to fit the Finnish model into a pattern [Anglo-American], "which is not necessarily best for us". It was supported by the notion that the process has been started by "a push from above". However, these opinions were contrasted by another opinion focusing on the "interesting possibilities" that the Bologna Process may create, especially for students. It was also said that the Bologna Process offers an opportunity to reflect on what they think and what they appreciate in the department.

These discussions reveal the main themes related to the Bologna Process in most basic units. On the one hand, the Bologna Process was criticised as an example of a typical top-down process in the European Union. It was said to be forcing Finnish university departments into changes in the name of European unity. In this context, it was described as useless or even harmful. On the other hand, the academics interviewed also saw that the Bologna Process may open new opportunities, especially for students, and it may force departments to reflect on their activities critically and to improve their curricula and functioning. This perspective was especially emphasised by a basic unit in a hard and pure discipline.

5.3 Changes related to the Bologna Process

In addition to discussing attitudes and expectations at the basic units, we also were interested in knowing what they have actually done as a result of the Bologna Process. This question was problematic because the new curricula will have to be put into service in Finnish higher education from August 1 2005. This was not, however, the only problem with our causal assumption. More problems were caused by the variation between basic units: some of them have already reorganised or have begun to reorganise their curricula in the spirit of the Bologna Process, whereas at the other end of the continuum nothing has even been planned. Therefore, in what follows, we will describe the changes in all basic units that we interviewed. As a starting point we need to say that most basic units stated that the Bologna Process has increased their internal interaction and co-operation with other Finnish higher education institutions.

5.3.1 Hard-applied basic unit: reorganisation of Bachelor-level studies

This basic unit was reorganised a couple of years ago when two departments were merged (consisting of about 260 staff members). During the reorganisation they also renewed their curricula for Bachelor-level studies (first three years of studies). The curricula content was developed with the help of standards created by the Association for Computer Machinery (AMC) and using core contents analysis. Curricula structures were reorganised according to the core competencies required in the field, more than by providing teaching in the topics that traditionally have been taught in the two departments. As a consequence, the number of courses provided decreased from 180 to 130-160 in one year. The number of students remained the same. They have also prepared Master's degree curricula and begun to develop an international Master's degree programme. However, students do not normally finish their studies with a Bachelor degree because it is not regarded as a 'real' degree, but rather as a stage in their studies.

At the beginning of the curriculum reform, the objective was to create a modular model consisting of rather independent study modules. However, the idea did not work well, leading to the present situation with the two 'modules' of Bachelor degree and Master degree studies. Major and minor subjects are contained in these two 'modules'.

Some representatives of this basic unit have publicly stated that they have already implemented the Bologna Process (and continued: "what's the problem with the others?"). The interviewed academics said, however, that they would have started the changes even without the Bologna Process. It seems that the Bologna Process has supported them in continuing the processes of curriculum changes.

5.3.2 Hard-pure basic unit: preparing for change

In this basic unit the interviewed academics said that they have made many changes (e.g. to English-language course materials) even though they have not yet been implemented. They also plan to establish an English-Language Master's programme, an initiative influenced by the Bologna Process, although this will not be a radical change, rather a gradual development in the department, which they describe as "thoroughly internationalised". They also said that the Bologna Process might prove to be useful because the old and the new degree structures are so different from one another. However, it was suggested that the first (Bachelor) degree was not closely connected to the Finnish labour market, although the graduates may well find employment opportunities elsewhere in the European Union. Another important point they made was that *"The Bologna Process brings nothing new in terms of the subject material that is taught, it's mainly how it is organised."* This means that the discipline remains untouched while the institution, that is the manner of provision, is changing.

5.3.3 Soft-applied basic unit: preparing for change

This basic unit has taken their planning for the Bologna Process seriously, organising a committee and various development teams to prepare for the upcoming changes. This means that they have trained their staff and discussed the changes with practical change in mind. The focus is to reorganise not only their curricula but also to revamp teaching methods.

They said in the interview that the reform process enjoys wide support from the staff. They also recognise that the need to change their curricula and teaching methods is influenced by changes in the Finnish schooling system. They need to reconsider the qualifications of the professionals they are training.

They also stated that the Bologna Process has caused much travel around Finland in order to participate in national education planning meetings, which may also be a positive thing because they now know more about the national situation in other higher education institutions.

5.3.4 Soft-pure basic units: changes caused by the reorganisation of departments

In soft-pure basic units in humanities nothing much has been done. They will do what is required in the next academic year. They also mentioned that departmental merger operations a couple of years ago have influenced them more than the Bologna Process. A basic unit in social sciences, in turn, has not made and will not make any major changes. Compulsory matters, such as the Bachelor's thesis, will be introduced because of the Bologna Process. The interview showed that they will also have to adjust to new rhetorical language and increase co-operation with other disciplines in the basic unit.

5.4 Internationalisation and the Bologna Process

One of the most important policy objectives of the Bologna Process is to promote international mobility among students and staff, and make degrees easily readable and comparable. International mobility can, therefore, be defined as one of the indicators of internationalisation.

On the basis of the interviews it is evident that internationalisation is normally understood and defined as student or staff mobility, or research co-operation with other higher education institutions. The Bologna Process has the potential to make student exchanges easier by increasing knowledge about the level and contents of courses in exchange institutions. The two cycles of degrees may also make it easier to define the required academic qualifications when accepting students to international Master degree programmes.

Internationalisation also provides a topic that makes the academics reflect on the nature and purpose of international co-operation, especially in national disciplines. National discipline refers here to a discipline (such as Finnish history) that focuses on research on national topics using the national language in their research and teaching. In these disciplines it is difficult to see why they should try to establish international Master's programmes or hire non-native Finnish-speaking teachers.

As a conclusion it can be stated that academics do not see an increase in internationalisation, although the Bologna Process may have some impact on it. Academics in the basic units say that the Bologna Process may increase student mobility, even though the ERASMUS programme already increased student exchanges before the Bologna Process came into effect. Internationalisation in research depends, in turn, on personal contacts between academics. According to our interviews this has nothing to do with the Bologna Process.

5.5 Evaluation and quality assurance practices in the basic units

The Communiqué of the Berlin Conference states that "national quality assurance systems should include … a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures…" We were interested in the use of evaluation in the basic units because of the Bologna Process, but also because evaluation is an interesting phenomenon in Finnish higher education. There is a strong, almost twenty-year tradition of using evaluation as a tool for development, whereas the concept of accreditation does not exist in the Finnish language. Self-evaluation is the most common evaluation instrument used in Finnish higher education institutions (Huusko 2004; Välimaa 2004). Our main concern is, firstly, how evaluation is utilised in the development of basic units during the Bologna Process; and secondly, how basic units define quality assurance.

A couple of general notions emerged on the basis of the interviews. First is the notion that all basic units have collected feedback from their students. Having said this, they also admitted that they do not have enough resources to analyse the feedback. In other words, student feedback is defined as evaluation. The second notion is related to the first one. Namely, that it is clear that no system for using the feedback to develop the departments exists, if and when an evaluation system is understood as a permanent way of collecting data, analysing it and drawing conclusions based on the data. In other words, there is no system of quality assurance in the basic units interviewed.

Concerning quality assurance, the definitions and understandings of the basic units varied a lot. On the one hand, there was discussion concerning the certification or accreditation of degrees (in a hard-applied discipline) and rational considerations of hard-pure discipline on how to take into account expectations in industry. On the other hand, however, there was total ignorance of quality assurance as a concept in soft-pure disciplines. Rather than talking about quality assurance, the humanists referred to the academic level of a thesis as a sign of good quality in a basic unit. In social sciences they shared the same idea that the quality of theses indicates “real quality”, whereas quality assurance is defined as a liturgical entity with no connection to teaching development. This may indicate two things.

First, that there is a relationship between disciplines and society. In fields that have close interaction with the world of work, it is natural to think about the standards of degrees and their certification, also taking into account the qualifications required in working life. In disciplines that have more loosely defined connections to the labour market it is essential to concentrate on the academic quality of degrees and pay less attention to the quality of qualifycations required in the labour market. Second, this state of affairs also reveals the dynamics of curriculum development in universities. In fields that have a vaguely defined relationship with society the internal development of the discipline concerned influences the curriculum development needs. Humanities provide a good example of this. In practical fields, where co-operation and interaction with society is a natural part of their functioning, it is easier to take into account changes in society and the labour market as a starting point for curriculum design. Sciences provide another example because they have a tradition of being sensitive to both disciplinary traditions and also to changes in society because many of their students will work in industry.

What about the relationship between the Bologna Process, the dynamics of curriculum development and quality assurance systems? It is evident that curriculum development in the spirit of the Bologna Process benefits the fields that have a close connection to the world of work. In these fields it is both easier to define qualifications required by working life and easier to consider them in the curricula. This process is also part of the quality assurance system in higher education institutions. In less practical fields the process of curricula development serves more academic objectives. In these disciplinary fields the standards of quality are predominantly academic, and are influenced by internal development within disciplines. Quality assurance in this context means ensuring the high academic quality of research, whereas in more practical disciplines, it means ensuring both the academic quality and the societal relevance of teaching and research.

5.6 The future of the Bologna Process

Our final theme in the interviews concerned the future of the Bologna Process: what will happen in the basic unit in relation to the Bologna Process?

The general feeling was that not much more would happen. They will continue doing what they have begun already: developing teaching, starting new Master's programmes and reflecting on quality issues. The basic problems will remain the same regardless of the Bologna Process: attracting good students and making them finish their studies in the proper time, achieving high-quality research and improving teaching. This will take place in the context of Finnish higher education policy-making, which rewards productivity and efficiency. In this context, the Bologna Process seems to be more of a challenge in adapting to new degree structures, rather than a challenge in improving the functioning of basic units.

Having analysed what has been said and done in the basic units, we should also reflect on what would have been done without the Bologna Process. Most interviewed groups of academics said that in any case they would have done most of the things that they have done so far for Bologna. The Bologna Process does provide, however, an outsider's perspective to changes in the basic units, as was emphasised in a hard-pure basic unit. For this reason, it also makes the academic staff take the processes of change more seriously. Thus, it seems that the Bologna Process has the potential to influence the functioning of the basic units because it challenges them to reflect on the contents of academic work.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 National policy problems related to the objectives defined in the Bologna Process

The differences in emphasis between the 'selling' of the Bologna Process and the outset of its implementation raises three problematic questions in Finnish higher education policy-making. Firstly, it seems clear that the implementation of the Bologna Process concerns adaptation more than any developmental challenge to the Finnish system of higher education. This argument is supported by the fact that the objectives of the Bologna Process were created outside Finland. This fact is rather important in the Finnish context because there is a general assumption that Finland has a rather well functioning national system of higher education (see e.g. Kankaala et al.

2004). Should Finland try to fix a well-functioning machine? The relationship between labour market and the new two-tier structure of degrees may prove to be problematic. It has been possible to get a Bachelors' degree in Finnish higher education for about 10 years.[4] However, only 2,500 students finished a BA degree, when compared to 11,600 students who finished an MA degree in Finnish universities in 2001 (KOTA database). The interviews indicated that one problem with the two cycles of degrees is the fact that, as one academic put it, "in Britain the BA is a degree, whereas in Finland it is a stage in studies". In addition to these practical and psychological problems, there is the problem of the employability of BA degree holders. In Finland, there is no labour market for Bachelor's degrees. None of the interviewed groups of academics felt that employers would be interested in employing holders of BA degrees. Furthermore, both public and private sectors consider the Master degree as the 'basic degree'. The question remains then, as to whether the production (of Bachelors degrees) will create a demand (for Bachelors degrees) on the labour markets. Normally, the marketplace works the other way around. Therefore, one crucial question in this higher education policy-making experiment is this: will employers begin to favour holders of Bachelors' degrees over those holding a Masters degree?

The third problem is related to the objective of creating a national and European quality assurance system. The poor definition of quality assurance appearing on the website of the Ministry of Education is especially interesting. There is no reference in Finnish to quality or quality assurance. This poor formulation also reflects the fact that it is a sensitive issue because the Finnish idea of evaluation is based on the conviction that evaluation is an instrument for developing higher education. We have never had either a national idea of accreditation or a national agency to take care of accredittation in Finland (see Välimaa 2004).

The interviews strongly suggest that quality assurance is being understood as a way of systematically gathering and utilising student feedback. In the context of basic units, quality assurance is predominantly understood as a way of improving the (good or existing) quality of teaching. Research, administration and services are not included in this definition. As has been noted before (see Huusko and Saarinen 2003) the operationalisation of quality means student feedback at the level of basic units regardless of what the policy goals are at the upper levels of the national system of higher education. On the basis of the focus group interviews, it is also evident that no connection between the institutional and departmental quality assurance system is seen in the basic units. This is not only the result of the lack of such quality assurance systems in Finnish higher education institutions, it also indicates that quality assurance is absent as a topic in the Finnish higher education debate. This fact is supported by the national committee, which seems to aim to do as little harm as possible to the Finnish idea of evaluation based on the conviction that evaluation should be used as a tool for development. A national solution, therefore, is to begin to audit institutional quality assurance systems. The committee (and in this case the Ministry of Education) only states that higher education institutions should develop those systems themselves, it says nothing about how the quality assurance systems should function (OPM 2004).

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[4] In fact, Bachelor's degrees were discontinued in the 1980s as one of the consequences of the Degrees Reform (see Välimaa 2005). In the 1980s, it was argued that the discontinuation of the BA would decrease the number of drop-outs because each student needs to finish a Master's degree before being able to enter the labour market. The argumentation in favour of the Bologna Process approaches the problem from the opposite direction.

6.2 Theoretical discussion

As Bleiklie et al. (2000) have noted the dynamics of higher education policymaking follow the rational of social fields of action rather than the top-down or bottom-up nature of processes. In each of the social fields the players struggle for what they define as important. As to the Bologna Process, quality assurance is one of the topics that is defined differently at various levels of the national higher education system. At the national level, it is essential to create a credible national system of quality assurance that fits well with the European systems of accreditation and quality assurance. The challenge is to meet European political challenges, whereas the basic units face the challenge of harmonising internal (academic) criteria with external challenges.

When explaining the changes caused by the Bologna Process one should also remember that there have not been massive reforms of degrees or curricula contents in Finnish universities for about 15 years. For this domestic reason, the Bologna Process may also be utilised for various purposes to reform both the contents and structures of curricula. A theoretically important notion is the fact that the Bologna Process seems to have an impact on the basic units that are in a suitable stage of their internal development. This refers to basic units that are in need of reform, whether it be a reform of structures or curricula content. The cause for this need seems to be insignificant. It may be the process of merging two or more departments into one (as was the case with two soft-pure basic units and one hard-applied basic unit), or it may be caused by the need to reform their curricula, which has been untouched for many years (as was the case with a soft-applied basic unit). The essential factor seems to be that departments face an internal challenge to change. In this kind of social situation, an external impetus, such as the one caused by the Bologna Process, may have an impact on the basic unit. For the same reason, the departments that are doing well do not need external impetuses for change. These departments may, however, benefit from the Bologna Process because it provides an outsider's perspective to their functioning. As academics in the hard-pure basic unit stated, this outsiders lens may be useful for some basic units.

Theoretically, it is essential that all of the basic units have made their own interpretations and translations of the Bologna Process. This is in line with the theoretical assumptions suggested by Czarniawska and Sevón (1996). The nature of the translation is influenced in the first place by the discipline, as discussed above, because it represents various epistemic traditions, but also because it describes various relationships between a basic unit and society, represented in this case by qualifications of professionals in the labour market. The nature of the translation might also depend on the phase of the basic unit's internal development, as discussed above. Those departments that are in the phase of internal changes seem to be more willing to utilise external impetuses—such as the Bologna Process—to make changes in their curricula contents and structures. We do not suggest that this would be the case in all Finnish universities as an empirical generalisation. We do, however, suggest that this empirical notion should be considered in the context of the theory: is it really true that local conditions together with disciplinary cultures are crucially important in the process of translating reforms?

One should also ask whether the Bologna Process has changed the Finnish gradual reform strategy. The starting point for this question is provided by the fact the changes demanded by and through this process are caused by a "push from the above". In this sense, Finnish higher education is challenged to adapt to the changes, leaving no real room to introduce the reform gradually. However, this argument is not very convincing because it is proposed that the implementation of the quality assurance system take place according to a gradual reform strategy. This provides, in turn, a national-level example of the process of translating the reform from the Bologna Process into Finnish higher education policy-making. What seems to be important with the Bologna Process is the implementation strategy based on national seminars and committees. These two matters indicate that the social field of Finnish higher education policymaking is based on the lack of hierarchical structure. The Ministry of Education attempts to gain as much support from as many actors as possible. It can not dictate the implementation of the Bologna Process; instead it needs to rely on negotiations between different actors.

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APPENDIX 1. THEMES FOR THE GROUP INTERVIEW

- Bologna Process
  - What is your impression of the Bologna Process?
  - What does the Bologna Process mean?
  - What are its central themes?
- Changes due to the Bologna Process
  - Have you made changes because of the Bologna Process? (to study programmes or structures, student selection, etc.)
  - Are you planning to carry out other changes before 1 August 2005?
  - Why these changes in particular?
- Curriculum Revision
  - Has there been a standard curriculum revision process in your subject?
  - What characterises this process?
- Effects of the Bologna Process
  - Have there been other effects regarding the Bologna Process in your department/subject?
  - Has it affected your evaluation practices or quality assurance? How?
- Department Evaluation Practices
  - What kinds of evaluation practices does your department use?
  - Has the Bologna Process changed your evaluation or quality assurance needs?
- Internationalisation
  - Is there a connection between the Bologna Process and the internationalisation of your department?
  - And to the recruitment or mobility of staff?
  - And to student mobility?
- The Future…
  - What do you see in the future regarding the Bologna Process?
- Other?
  - Are there other issues which are relevant to what we've been talking about—anything we didn't cover that we should have?

Chapter 4

SEARCHING FOR THE SUB-PLOT BETWEEN THE LINES OF BOLOGNA

Qualms and Conservatism of the French Academia in the Face of European Competition

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bologna declaration, signed by official representatives of 29 governments, explicitly set out the agenda for the adoption and development of a "European system of higher education" (Declaration 1999) within the enlarged Union of the first decade of the third millennium. The declaration clearly aimed to provide political legitimacy to a process of integration of the "European Higher Education Area" that had been on its way through multilateral agreements and EC regulations for almost two decades. By focusing emphatically on the "adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees" and on measures to overcome "obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement", the signatory ministers paved the political way to a harmonisation of degree tracks along measures aiming at increasing the mobility of the labour force, rather than a standardisation of disparate national systems of teaching and research. They therefore left untouched the national modes of organisation of research, the systems of appointment and promotion of academics, and more broadly the national idiosyncrasies which continue to define "academic communities" and upon which academic achievement remains primarily measured (Kogan 2002).

Alongside this initiative, the European Commission launched the idea of creating a European Research Area in February 2000 with the aim of "making Europe the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world". This materialised in the launching of the sixth framework programme (FP6),

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designed to get European researchers working together for the long term. Again, incentives and measures adopted here have so far had little direct effects on the organization of national research policies and structures.

It is interesting to look at the ways in which a “national academic community”, which sees itself as having a historical role to play in the enlightenment of the European continent, interprets these first steps towards a harmonisation of its profession. The case of France is worth a close examination for at least three other reasons. Firstly, as a pioneer of the European construction, France has always claimed a crucial role in any integrative steps within the EU. Secondly, even though each election or referendum on European issues of the past two decades have shown how thin the margin is in this country between numbers of *europhiles* and of *europhobes*, there has been a wide consensus among political and intellectual elites on the necessity of a greater cultural integration within the EU. Thirdly, French, as most of the languages spoken within the Union, accounts for a tiny proportion of the scientific works published in the world, and appears an ever decreasing medium of academic communication. But contrary to most of her neighbours, France has adopted with *La Francophonie*[1] and its related organisations such as the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF), a proactive strategy to “resist” what is often referred to (among the faculty and across the whole political spectrum) as the Anglo-Saxon imperialism. From the French national perspective, *La Francophonie* unequivocally ties the political destiny of a country to the radius of its cultural and linguistic influence.

French academics’ interpretation of what Bologna means to their identity and their positions, reflects admirably the contradictions of the uneasy position of their country in an enlarged Europe[2], of a language policy borrowing from the resistance rhetoric while seeking to maintain post-colonial hegemonic ties, and of the strong centre-periphery inclination of their internal system of career progression and reward accumulation.

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[1] The International organisation of the Francophonie gathers 55 countries. Its general secretariat is in Paris, where its first conference was held in 1986.

[2] This chapter is being written in the aftermath of the American–led war and occupation of Iraq, which have poisoned the talks about the constitutional future of the EU.

2. APPROACH AND DEFINITIONS

Written from a position of privileged witness[3], the chapter seeks to point at some of the traits which, I believe, signal a specific national – though multipolar – academic field.

Following a rather usual and somehow "Bourdieusian" sociological approach, the French academia is understood here as a multipolar space of social/intellectual positions in which the actors try to activate and strengthen their capital, acquire symbolic power, and where careers are primarily geared by the centre-periphery type of relations governing the field. The French academia constitutes a sub-field of the field of fields that makes up the international higher education landscape, but its oversized private garden (a relatively autonomous field, politically maintained by the Francophonie) gives the French microcosm, more room for manoeuvre than most national academic communities in Europe can claim. As a result, the issue of how cultural and ideological influences are conveyed through language diffusion – which underpins current debates about Bologna – takes in France the dimension of a new resistance, while this battle is seen from other peripheries' perspective as either outdated, or lost in advance and not worth the engagement. The term "provincialism" used in the title of this chapter, wishes to stress the relatively introverted attitude of the French academia, in publication and in mobility terms, and the uniqueness of the capital/Province dichotomy resulting from centralised and centrifugal system and practices of recruitment and career management.

2.1 The issue of identity and the European integration process

The local political stakes surrounding the issue of whether or not a European cultural identity exists, are sufficiently high everywhere within the European Union, for political leaders to regularly call on intellectuals in their search of a justification to europhile or europhobe positions. While seekers of a shared identity resort to a set of values

> with roots in antiquity and in Christianity which over 2000 years evolved into what we recognise today as the foundations of modern democracy, the rule of law and civil society (Havel 1994), the sceptics point at the

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[3] My research interests in the social demand for higher education have so far never focused on France, but I have personally been academically socialised in this higher education system. I studied sociology in France from my first year to my PhD, then taught at various provincial universities and institutes, worked as a contract researcher in a CNRS centre and led a French Institute for Research in Africa before joining the UK Open University.

> lack of European common memories and traditions – the so-called founding myths – which form at the national level the foundation of collective identification (Smith 1992). Others emphasise that the exclusion more than inclusion lies at the heart of the concept of European identity, and defend a concept of pluralized cosmopolitan European identity (Delanty 1995). What is probably more relevant to our subject, is what actually frames the debate on European identity. The three factors commonly called upon – the gobalisation, the immigration, the EU integration – relate respectively, according to Jan Ifversen, to the erosion of existing forms of sovereignty and various ideas of trans-nationality (globalization), to a challenge to the traditional culturalist design of the nation state (immigration), and to the continuous process of political and economic integration within the European Union (Ifversen 2002). Of these three trends, only the latter is seen as a positive move by the bunch of specialists (academics, journalists, politicians and bureaucrats) that are in France passionately dealing with the European issue. This relative consensus among the elites on the benefits of a deeper European integration, refers to the wide consent to state action that makes the French political identity.

That the French intelligentsia wants to be at the avant-garde of the process of political integration is no novelty. This position is an area of rare consensus, shared by the left (Mitterand, Delors, Jospin) and the right (Chirac, Villepin). French political leaders believe they have a joint historic mission with the Germans in this (the so-called “moteur franco-allemand”), a heritage from de Gaulle and Adenauer to preserve. Today though, as if the enlargement process was threatening this state of affairs, the French make a clear distinction between the Grand Europe (an exemplary free trade zone) and the Federation of Nation States (to use Fisher and Delors’ terms) to be started by a small number of avant-garde countries.

Clearly, the European identity and the French national one were perceived as symbiotic until the Maastricht treaty and its unanticipated high unpopularity in the country. The post-Maastricht era, where France realised that the community it had tried to build to her own image – a sort of “super hexagon” mirroring its exemplarity (Arnaud 2000, p. 10) – was taking a much more uncertain shape, with new alliances coming into force, the symbiosis gave way to disbelief and fear among the elites, and to “positive indifference” in the wider population.

The French academic community took its share in the building of a European higher education and research area in the same spirit. The Europeanisation was seen as conveying modernisation as long as the European university was to continue to serve its ” community” in the same way the Humboltian and Napoleonic universities had taken a part in the emergence and the consolidation of the modern nation state (Neave 2002). In other words, as long as the convergent European rhetoric on the desirable orientation of higher education did not question the status of universities as "public goods", which in the French context refers to their key position within the State welfare policy, the French faculty supported any move towards a greater cooperation among institutions. Despite the emergence in the policy sphere from the early 1980s of "new representations arguing for more autonomous universities and less interventionist states" (Musselin 2000, p. 17), the Europeanisation of the higher education area through student exchange programmes or joint research programmes, was perceived in French universities, as capable of reinforcing a French academic and scientific position threatened by the marginalisation of the French language in the world of learning.

This is not to say that French academics and their ruling class are sharing similar views about the path towards integration, or that they form all together a ruling elite, or even that views among academics about Europe are unidirectional. The French academic field is in itself too complex and polarised with its conflicts of class fractions (the so-called 'conflict of faculties' analysed by Bourdieu in *Homo Academicus*) to allow such clear-cut statements. The apparent consensus about Europe has been so far geared by circumstantial interests: being seen at the forefront of the European integration was granting a relative political and intellectual aura within the country (notably through the systematic association Europe/modernisation), and therefore helped strengthening collective and individual positions in both fields.

2.2 Making good use of the cultural exception: Ambiguities in the positions of the French academia on the European integration and the globalisation

As long as Europeanization meant challenging the Americanisation, the French and indeed the European academia welcomed any move towards the integration. The resentment of the United States, which in Europe is much deeper than the common – though sometimes spectacular and dramatic – antipathies anchored elsewhere in dislike of America's actual activities, is said to have really permeated discourse and public opinion since the fall of the soviet union in 1991 and thus the end of the bipolar world of the Cold War that dominated Europe since 1945 (Markovits 2003). The traditional West European-style of anti-Americanism thus migrated from its "traditional home among left-wing intellectuals, academic and café society to the main political mainstream" (Frankel 2003) as an abading sense of fear and loathing of American power, policies and motives. In the process, which occurred at a time when political and economic divisions started to slow the integration process in Europe, the anti-American feelings tent to be blended in the political rhetoric with anti-globalisation opinions and a call for recognition of the of the “cultural exception” in GATT negotiations, seen by some scholars as the first post-cold war cultural confrontation (Frau-Meigs, 2002). The French found themselves at the forefront of this new resistance, which in France turned to be another area of wide political consensus in the late nineties. French anti-American style globalisation activism and opposition to U.S. trade retaliation against European products resonated beyond the national and even the European borders. And so, one of the economies that benefited the most and embraced global integration all the while in the newly opened world market, took the lead of a crusade that brought threatened European identities, collapsing developing economies and all sorts of transnational religious and political groups under a dubious common banner. Political analyst Sophie Meunier summarises in these terms the reasons why, while many countries have qualms about globalisation, France has taken the international lead here:

> Its political and cultural identity combines all the elements threatened by globalisation: a universalistic culture, a language with international aspirations, a ‘superior’ cuisine, a sensitive view of national sovereignty, a need for a world role, a sense of duty towards poorer nations, and a deeply rooted anti-Americanism (Meunier 2000, p. 116)

These attributes may well rather be purposefully perpetuated clichés than actual features of a multi-secular common ethos. They nevertheless help to rally the elites from a wide spectrum when international positions need to be defended. The Francophonie concept is a remarkable illustration of such a strategy and of the ambivalent and uneasy position of the French academic elites *vis-à-vis* the governing elites.

2.3 In search of a common enemy

French academics have in the past - and may show it again in the near future over issues of university autonomy and research funding – fiercely resisted left and right wing political attempts at transforming their working environment, whether in the name of European harmonisation or in the proclaimed objective of enhancing their institutions’ international competitiveness. When the government seeks to introduce some flexibility in the appointment and evaluation of lecturers, it usually does so to “restore the international reputation and visibility of the French academia”. But it is often precisely in a spirit of resistance to dominating Anglo-Saxon paradigms of academic capitalism and managerialism within the world of science that academic unions resist such reforms.

Governments therefore embraced the opportune anti-globalisation rhetoric to justify policies similar in many respects to those of neighbouring countries. Reforming to resist the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy was thought to have better resonance in the universities, and indeed it had, although it did not help reforming!

What is striking is how the language (as a conveyor of cultural values) has been successfully manipulated by those in dominant positions in both fields to build a fortress around their sphere of power, and how in the process, French leading voices within the academia found themselves the objective allies of a policy strategy.

The *Francophonie* as a State policy, is in essence a very Gaullist kind of attempt by the French political elite, notably François Mitterand, to reclaim an international position by formalising the existing 'privileged' relationship between France, her former colonies and other partially Francophone countries, such as Belgium, Switzerland and Canada. A sort of a French commonwealth in many respects. On the impulsion of the French government, the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) as it is now known, evolved from a role of cultural and technical cooperation agency to an inter-state international organisation, gathering 55 countries "sharing French (at least partially) as a language", with its biennial summit of heads of member states and its executive organ. Along with strengthening the political ambitions of the organisation and perpetually reassuring their partners of the absence of any hegemonic project in this enterprise, the French governments of the 1980s popularised the concept of Francophonie domestically and internationally through the establishment of the *Haut Conseil de la Francophonie* in 1984, and the sponsoring of festivals and other cultural events celebrating the diversity and symbolising the new resistance against the globalisation and its linguistic standardization.

French academics, particularly in the left-wing circles, found in La Francophonie a new rallying cause, and thereby gave, intentionally or not, credit to a diplomatic strategy decried by many from the poorest branches of the "Francophone family" as a new step in the neo colonial feud between imperialist powers (Nkot and Paré 2001). And indeed, university exchanges and cooperation programmes soon became one of the strongest pillars of the Francophonie organisation through the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* (formally AUPELF-UREF). Who in Senegal or Benin would turn down such generous funding opportunities in contexts of structural adjustment programmes? Along the financial assistance soon came the pressures to ensure the marginalisation of non-francophone publications in academic reward systems, and other pressures – encapsulated by Ambroise

Kom in the notion of "Francophone malediction" (Kom 2000) – to perpetuate the state of cultural dependency in which intellectuals from ex-French colonies have always been maintained *vis-à-vis* their former metropolis (Beti 1993).

Not that French academics did not notice and occasionally condemn this state of things, but the convergence of interests over the issues of international visibility and anti Anglo-American hegemony created the conditions of an objective alliance between the political and academic fields.

Pierre Bourdieu and Bernard Cassen are probably among the most interesting illustrations of the ambiguity of the French crusade against cultural imperialism because of their influence over the French intellectual field and their notable opposition to the government on domestic issues.

In *On the cunning of Imperialist Reason*, a brilliant essay on the process of universalisation of ideas, Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant (1999) use a few examples of concepts having crossed the Atlantic ocean through the agency of the media or of international organisations such as the OECD, to illustrate what they perceive as a "globalisation of the themes of American social doxa" (Bourdieu, Wacquant 1999, p. 46). The authors believe that scholarly or semi-scholarly production has played a key role in this process, notably through

> the material and symbolic profits that researchers in the dominated countries reap from the more or less assumed or ashamed adherence to the model derived from the USA (Ibid).

The internationalisation of the academic publishing is thus perceived as a key factor in the diffusion of "US thoughts" in the social sciences. The process itself is nothing new and has already been well described by theorists of the centre-periphery relationships in the scientific world, who have shown how in a system where knowledge is disseminated for recognition along unequal communal ties, researchers in the most remote peripheries deploy multiple strategies to strengthen and publicise their ties with the centre to be promoted at home (Schott 1998). In Bourdieu and Wacquant's view of the global circulation of scientific ideas, the "peripheral countries" become "target countries" where the academics, seeking some form of reward through intensified links with the centre (the US), become conscious or unconscious *passeurs* of American cultural products and therefore accomplices of the imperialist enterprise orchestrated by American cultural authorities with the support of philanthropic foundations. The language plays unsurprisingly a key role for the authors who see

> The growing integration of the publishing of English language academic books (nowadays sold, often by the same houses in the USA, in the different countries of the former British Commonwealth, but also in the

> smaller, polyglot, nations of the European Union such as Sweden and the Netherlands, and in the societies most directly exposed to American cultural domination) and the erosion of the boundary between academic and trade publishing [as having] helped encourage the putting into circulation of terms, themes and tropes with strong (real or hoped for) market appeal, in turn, owe their power of attraction simply to the fact of their wide circulation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, *op. cit.* p. 47).

In a top-sided academic and intellectual field such as the French one, the impact of this kind of statement by a most respected contemporary sociologist, Professor at the College de France, chief editor of a leading social science journal[4], and editor of a foremost publisher's social science collection, is enormous. What is left of Bourdieu and Wacquant's essay in the French intellectual field, is less its brilliant evocation of the circulation of concepts such as "underclass", than its anti-American flavour and the reference to the English language weapon.

The conspiracy theory, nurtured and consecrated at the highest level in the academic field reaches a much wider audience with *passeurs* (to use Bourdieu's terminology) in the semi-scholarly circles, such as Bernard Cassen[5], who in the columns of le *Monde Diplomatique* presents in those terms the threat posed by the "Dollar Language":

> On the other side of the Atlantic, it has been realised long ago that the English language solidarity was a powerful cement. Hence, it is not by chance that the Intelligence network "Echelon" of the National Security Agency, employing thousands of people and equipped with the most sophisticated electronic and satellite facilities, has only considered for full partnership, English speaking countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK) for whom the United States are a second country, and who could therefore be considered as 100% reliable. Belonging to this magical circle, which expresses its cohesion in a number of other domains, is out of reach to non-Anglo Saxons, whatever their efforts and genuflexions. Adopting the language of the master appears like a second best, a solution by default[6]. (Cassen 2000)

Cassen establishes a direct link between the English language and the global neo-liberal ideology. In his views, this hegemony calls for a resistance, which the *francophonie* project could bear if the most powerful of its members (France and Quebec) could elaborate a project for the rest of the world around the concepts of Democracy, society, equality, citizenship, cultural identity, social cohesion, partnership, sustainable co-development, etc.

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[4] Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, where the article examined here was originally published in French in 1998.

[5] A founding member and currently honorary president of ATTAC (an alterglobalist organisation militating in favour of the taxation of international financial transactions), director general of the influential left wing *Le Monde Diplomatique,* Professor Emeritus at the Institute of European Studies and owner of a doctorate in English!

[6] The translation is mine.

Dozen of less influential intellectual figures have in France recently published books and articles about the threat of the English language, calling on all countries to rally behind the French flag, offered as new symbol of the global resistance to globalisation. A glance at their authors' CVs reveals however that many of these moving calls for another world order actually emanate form ex-ministers or key officials of the French Ministry of Cooperation[7]. But beyond this, the strategy of dissemination of the francophonie alternative discourse adopted by the French cooperation through its encouragement of such initiatives, or via its financial support to alter-globalist fora or G8 counter-summits – sometimes qualified as "State alterglobalism" (Barto 2003) – makes no mystery of the role it reserves to academics. In September 2002, during the Conference of the *Haut Conseil de la Cooperation Internationale* (HCCI), the necessity to activate the NGO and academic networks was stressed, in order to develop some "concepts" in the "battle of international influence" (Marrot 2002).

Capitalising on the French academics' belief in the necessity to protect and promote alternative cultures, would have obviously been of little impact through "ex-ministers' literature", hence the support provided to "recognised" publications and organisations putting the Francophonie at the forefront of the new crusade. This is where the *passeurs*' role in the dissemination of big names' views and concepts becomes crucial.

A number of publications looking more specifically at threats to the Francophone academic space have also flourished on those grounds. Charles Durand's *La mise en place des monopoles du savoir* (2002) is a good illustration of this literature, which establishes a parallel between the worldwide domination of English as a language and the domination of Anglo-Saxon research organisations. Durand seeks to demonstrate how the spreading of English as a unique medium of communication in the scientific world is sterilising rather than enriching the creativity process because it leads inevitably to a realignment on the Anglo-American research themes. This type of literature offers easy access to Bourdieu's issue of globalisation of the American doxa to a wide academic and scientific audience.

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[7] See for instance S. Arnaud, M. Guillou and A. Salon Les défis de la francophonie. Pour une mondialisation humaniste. The authors have all been ambassadors, heads of units in the former ministry of cooperation (now merged into the foreign affairs as DGCID) or directors of francophonie agencies such as AUPELF.

The pro-active linguistic strategy of the French government, and particularly the re-branding of Francophonie as a possible alternative to the cultural globalisation *a la* McLuhan, seems to have occurred in the mid 1990s. Two events can be said retrospectively to have motivated the shift in strategy from legal attempts to protect the French language from foreign influences to a 'state alterglobalist' type of approach. The first was the mixed reactions at home to the quickly and largely overturned Toubon law

> banning foreign words and expressions (provided a French equivalent existed) from all economic, social and cultural areas of life (Grigg 1997, p. 373).

The government realised that legislating with regard to verbal laxity in economic and administrative life was a lost in advance and unpopular battle.[8] The second event was the fast changing political situation in Europe and the prospect of the enlargement of the European Union, already mentioned, marking in effect a clear and probably irreversible decline of the French in the EU bureaucracy.

The new strategy also revealed to be much more popular in the scientific and academic milieu where the ban on the use of Foreign languages in conferences, lectures, etc was more and more perceived as isolating the French academia from the international research community. Supporting openly or discreetly strong anti-globalisation feelings, while preserving through parsimoniously distributed incentives rather than protectionist measures a francophone academic space, proved to be politically more rewarding. It helped maintaining locally the illusion of an internationally active scientific community, even though research budgets were in effect being cut and channelled towards an ever decreasing number of institutions.

3. A PROVINCIAL RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES

The French faculty can remain introverted, not so much because it is closer to the centre of the global academic system of reward accumulation than its European counterparts, but because the French, and to a certain extent the Francophone space is vast enough to allow individuals to develop an academic career, build networks and acquire symbolic power within a discipline without necessarily confronting one's views and theories to a wider audience. In this respect, the French academia contradicts the centre periphery theory of scientific and academic ties. Or more probably, a similar centre – periphery dependence operates within the structurally centralised French academia.

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[8] The legislation proposed by Jacques Toubon (then minister for culture), which came into force in July 1, 1994 coincided with "an upsurge in cultural nationalism, being only one of several measures taken by the government in response to calls from intellectuals and former diplomats to save the language from the 'devastating ravages' of English (Grigg 1997)

3.1 A top-sided academic field

The French scientific and academic world is a populous one[9] in an heteroclite landscape led by centralised decisional organs, concentrated research poles and increasingly regionalised practices in terms of both student and staff recruitment, and research funding. The 2003 report of the Observatory of Science and Technology indicates that 30% of all French research and academic staff remain based in Ile de France (the greater Paris) while half of the 21 French regions host less than 3.5% of them despite multiple efforts by successive administrations to decentralise the activities of the national research institutes through partnerships with universities and recruitment policies favouring provincial centres (Grance, Ramanana-Rahary 2003, p. 37).

The concentration in Paris is not only quantitative, but also, and most importantly qualitative. In higher education institutions for instance, the age structure of academic staff indicates that Ile de France has the oldest population (48 years on average) which confirms that the geographical mobility of French academics still follows a province/Paris axis, the latter offering the highest reputation reward (and symbolic profits). Bibliometric analyses by regions confirm these demographic tendencies: One in three PhD theses awarded in France in 2000 was defended in Ile de France, while the total student enrolment in the region accounted for about 20% of the national intake. Parisian universities and research institutes also occupy the pole position in terms of scientific production and impact[10]. Other indicators such as the concentration of the leading academic publishing houses reinforce the picture of a highly centrifugal system of reward accumulation and distribution. In other words, and even in disciplines where research remains primarily individual and is less quantifiable in bibliometric terms (Arts and the Social Sciences, or the "soft pure disciplines" to use Tony Becher's categorisation), Paris remains in France the place where academic credentials are converted into recognition and symbolic power, a situation that everybody deplores and entertains at the same time.

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[9] There are currently in France 88,000 academics-researchers in public institutions, including about 50,000 university Professors and lecturers, and 17,031 full-time researchers in the 9 leading national research institutes (Grance, Ramanana-Rahary, 2003).

[10] Using the databases of the Scientific Information (ISI, excluding the social sciences and Arts disciplines), the scientific production is measured by the number of articles published in leading academic journals, while the impact is measured by the number of citations of these articles. Figures reported here are from Filliatreau (2001).

3.2 Emerging contenders and the fragile empire

A number of global and local factors have in the past 15 years converged to threaten this pyramidal shape of the academia. The ICT revolution and the European networking of the scientific and academic fields through EC programmes are probably the most influential of the global factors, while the local ones are best illustrated by the changing status of university/state relationship and their "territorialisation".

On the first point, there is little doubt that European research and mobility programmes have opened up French provincial universities, by offering them the opportunity to receive direct funding from beyond the State, and by creating gradually the conditions of news forms of recognition and of validation of academic and scientific achievements, through wide networking.

However, this would not have threatened the "Parisian empire" and its mandarin practices without structural changes within the French higher education field. From the late 1980s, universities have witnessed profound changes at both governance level (with the enlarged managerial powers of the presidents) and at the level of public intervention (with the growing intervention of the Regions in the funding of research projects and infrastructures). The emergence of regional "higher education poles" and of other types of consortia have further accelerated the process of emancipation of provincial universities from the Parisian authority, by challenging its monopoly over the validation of scientific relevance (now possibly sought locally). Not that the process has leveled the inequalities in any way; on the contrary, disparities in research and teaching facilities have risen with the reduction in State support exposing research and teaching more directly to the good wills of regional assemblies. However, as highlighted by the OST figures already reported, current trends indicate that "Paris et le desert francais" in the academic and research world, is gradually giving way to a new stratification of the higher education field in which poles of excellence are emerging in selected regions owing to political, geographical or economic incentives and demands[11].

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[11] Using OST figures, the French magazine *Le Nouvel Oversrvateur*, reported in the cover story of its 13 March 2003 issue that the picture of the French research dominated by the national research institutes is a vision of the past, for universities are today authoring or co-authoring 70% of the French articles referenced by ISI, and that the Paris/Province gap, still huge in Arts and the social sciences, is being gradually bridged in the hard and

All these structural factors affecting the French higher education landscape are by the same token shaking the academic field, not so much in cognitive terms as in social terms with emerging centripetal tendencies now threatening traditional channels of validation, recognition and power. It is therefore not surprising, particularly in a centralised system, that the resistance of the Parisian mandarins takes the form of a mediatisation and a nationalisation of their specific problems. This is where their interests meet those of the political field.

4. CONCLUSION

Beyond the symbolic foundation act of the Bologna declaration, a number of reforms revolving around

> an increased emphasis on the relevance of higher education and growing utilitarian thrusts in higher education and research policies (Teichler 2003, p. 40),

have taken place in most European countries since the 1980s. These approaches, along with the global rhetoric of the 1990s induced some profound changes in European science and higher education policies. Particularly, "traditional" community policies of mobility and co-operation in higher education gradually gave way to programmes aiming to make European universities more attractive to non-EU students and to "encourage institutions of higher education to strengthen their attractiveness and competitiveness" (ibid. p. 50).

The enlargement perspective added to the managerialist and quality rhetoric of the 1990s, by rendering *de facto* obsolete the Commission's policies based on

> the belief that the differences in the quality of higher education in Europe between countries and between individual institutions were relatively minor (Teichler *ibid.* p. 49).

Many French academics indubitably feel that they have something to lose in a European policy aiming at strengthening vertical differentiations between institutions, as this comes on top of a series of measures adopted at the national level from the mid-1980s to make the universities more entrepreneurial and more competitive. At that time, little resistance was opposed to the "liberalisation" of the sector. A major consequence of this way of thinking in higher education policy analogous to the economic field

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natural sciences where Strasbourg, Grenoble and Toulouse emerge as dynamic as fast developing poles.

(Accardo and Corcuff 2001), i.e. the fragmentation of the academic field along the dominant activities imposed on the lecturers by the positioning of their university, and paradoxically, a sort of resignation on the part of French academics. The development of more vocational programmes, the rhetoric on graduate employability, and the greater autonomy that universities, in France as in most European countries, are enjoying in the context of delegating responsibility from central administration to the regions or to individual universities (Neave 2002, p. 36), have largely masked the increasing gap between a few well-funded research poles and the mass universities where lecturers, invisible in citation indexes, excluded from the most rewarding research networks by their teaching (over)load, have nothing to compensate their social declassification but the meager economic benefits of their hourly-paid overtime (Accardo and Corcuff 2001).

The main beneficiaries of this new division of labour within the academia are on one hand those with more social capital and more power over the field through the control of strategic positions and bodies and on the other, the more extraverted academics of the new poles, more internationally oriented. It is therefore not surprising to find representatives of both groups among the experts advising the government on how to modernise universities in order to make their research and teaching functions more socially and economically relevant[12]. In the long term however, the position of the former group looks uncertain with the expected greater exposure to international competition for students and for research resources likely to weaken the very means by which dominant positions are acquired and maintained in such a centralised system of reward accumulation. Hence the on-going double rhetoric of these high profile personalities of the French academia regarding Europe and the transformation of the higher education arena, and the mixed feelings of an entire community who realises that a page is being turned, but fears the consequences of aperture. Social-liberal and conservative governments of the past decade have been keen to exploit this unsettled climate to impose liberal measures affecting the research capacity of most universities, while protecting temporarily (as I have tried to illustrate with the Francophonie concept) the interests of the "ruling class" of the academic field. French universities are all busy reforming their structures and curriculum and introducing postgraduate programmes in English in order to meet the challenge of the competitive European higher education model. Very few academics have illusions about the "European" nature of the reforms, which in their philosophy reflect too well those adopted throughout the world, and in other spheres of the public sector. This blend of realism and resignation does not bode well for the image of critical thinking that the French academia has rather successfully managed to export over the past century.

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[12] The Attali commission's report, which examined the necessary adaptation of French higher education to the new European context on the request of the socialist government of Lionel Jospin, was composed of renowned scientists and academics such as Alain Touraine, Georges Charpak or Julia Kristeva and of representatives of the business world such as Michel-Edouard Leclerc. As expected, it is in the name of the "preservation of the republican principles" and to prevent a risk of a drift towards an "uncontrolled liberalisation" of the sector that measures – often effectively aiming to reinforce the bipolarisation of the system – are advocated.

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Chapter 5

EMERGENT EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES UNDER SCRUTINY

The Bologna Process from a Central European Perspective

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1. REDEFINING ROLES, MISSIONS, TASKS, AND OBLIGATIONS

The Bologna Process — creating a European Higher Education Area and the gradual, simultaneous emergence of a European Research Area — can be viewed as two sides of the same coin: that of the redefinition of the roles, missions, tasks, and obligations of the institution of the university in rapidly changing and increasingly market-driven and knowledge-based European societies and economies. Both teaching and research are undergoing substantial transformation today, and the institution of the university, until fairly recently the almost exclusive host of the two interrelated activities, in all probability will be unable to avoid the process of substantial, partly planned and partly chaotic, transformation of its functioning.

Whatever view we hold on the two parallel processes, they are already relatively well advanced in some countries and are promoted all over Europe, including in Central and East European accession countries and the Balkans (called here most often the 'transition countries' or 'the region' for the sake of brevity). Whilst the effects of the emergence of the European Research Area are basically restricted to the beneficiaries of research funds available from the EU, the Bologna Process could potentially influence the course of reform in national higher education systems in 40 countries. The Sorbonne Declaration (Declaration 1998) was signed by the Ministers of Education of the four biggest EU countries—France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999), however, was

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signed by ministers from 29 countries, and at the Berlin conference in September 2003 the following newcomers were accepted: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Some may call the process a truly European integration of various higher education systems, regardless of the huge differences between them — official publications usually refer to 'diversity' among the countries and institutions involved — but one thing is certain: the Bologna Process in its present geographical, economic and political composition faces a tremendous challenge in maintaining an even pace for change across all the countries involved. The experience of well over a decade of social and economic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans indicates that this will be the case. If the reform is not going to be a theoretical exercise in numerous countries of the region, it is likely in the years ahead that further developments of the process will require separate tracks to be accompanied by descriptions of the most essential parts of reforms, individual detailing of challenges and, most importantly, separate sets of policy recommendations for clusters of countries implementing reforms at different speeds.

Although there were separate lines of thought about the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), there has been clear convergence between them recently. There are three discernible tracks in recent developments: firstly, the *Magna Charta Universitatum,* signed in Bologna in 1988 by the rectors of European universities, initiated the track for higher education institutions, along with the Salamanca and Graz Conventions in 2001 and 2003; secondly, the Sorbonne, Bologna, Prague and Berlin meetings all concerned the track for national Ministers of Education and governments; thirdly, the EU track that consists of subsequent communiqués of the European Commission and other publications: from the first in 2000, *Towards a European Research Area,* to the two most recent in 2003, *The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* and *Researchers in the European Research Area: One Profession, Multiple Careers*.

Recently, the supranational, intergovernmental and inter-institutional levels have become increasingly mixed. As Pavel Zgaga stresses in his recent report, in the light of EU enlargement the convergence between the Bologna Process and EU educational policy-making will become even more apparent (Zgaga 2003).

The European Commission, European governments and the vast majority of rectors of European higher education institutions seem determined to implement the ideas agreed on during subsequent ministerial summits. The least interest and determination is shown by the academic profession, i.e. those who are most directly involved. The *Trends III* report formulated the issue thus:

> Four years have passed since the Bologna Declaration and it seems that the Bologna Process is now viewed by a majority of higher education representatives in most European countries as a reform agenda which cannot be ignored, but which should be dealt with proactively if universities are not to be overtaken by unwanted interpretations of what Bologna should mean at institutional level. The ongoing challenge faced by participants in the process, be they enthusiasts or sceptics, is to make sense of the Bologna objectives in each institutional context (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 25, [my italics]).

The 'institutional contexts' in question are all the higher education institutions in each of the signatory countries—with their students and faculty. The report states this *expressis verbis*,

> deliberations on the implementation of the Bologna reforms currently involve heads of institutions more than academics. Hence, interpreting Bologna in the light of its goals and the whole context of its objectives at departmental level, i.e. rethinking current teaching structures, units, methods, evaluation and the permeability between disciplines and institutions, is a task that still lies ahead for a majority of academics at European universities (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 9).

Consequently, it seems that the actors most directly involved in the actual implementation of the Bologna ideas in the future are still largely unaware of its consequences or are unwilling to discuss them in more detail. But without clear support from the academic faculty (as complementary to ministers and rectors), both for the general reform agenda and for the details of implementation going down to departmental level, the Bologna Process may fail, particularly in the countries beyond the 15 pre-2004 members of the European Union. The whole process may come to a halt if the academic profession is neither convinced of the new opportunities it provides nor supported by new incentives to implement it. On the other hand, I have to agree with Amaral and Magalhaes's warning signal that

> if the Bologna's convergence process gets out of the control of academics and becomes a feud of European bureaucracy, then one may well see a process of homogenisation, and this represents another factor endangering the traditional role of the European universities [sic!] (Amaral and Magalhaes 2002, p. 9).

There is a danger of the Bologna Process becoming a theoretical exercise in the region. However, the two parallel processes of creating a common European higher education area and a common European research area, the exercises in 'core' European countries, are not theoretical at all: what already occurs is the re-channelling of European research funds, the modification of research and development policies, as well as the recognition of diplomas for educational and professional purposes and for mobility for academic and professional purposes on the increasingly integrated European labour market. The danger is that there may be some who are a part of it (and may be winners) and some who may potentially not be (and may be losers), especially as far as EU funding for research activities (as a consequence of the emergence of the ERA) are concerned. As Neave puts it in his thought-provoking paper on European integration in higher education,

> the 'Bologna Process' has now reached the stage when principles begin to assume institutional form (Neave 2001, p. 2).

What he meant, I believe, was that it was high time to review the Bologna Process before practical decisions are made.

2. AVOIDING PAPER REFORM, A COLOSSAL CHALLENGE

On reading the publications and reports, the Bologna Process in its present form seems relatively closed to global developments in higher education: it may be perceived as largely inward-looking, focused mostly on European regional problems and European regional solutions in the relative absence of references to global changes in higher education and the huge political and economic transformations underlying them (for a broader perspective, see Enders 2002c; Burbules and Torres 2000; Currie and Newson 1998).

There are many issues in which sometimes, until recently, the Bologna Process has been relatively unconcerned, for example, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations and the role of 'borderless' education, the emerging private and for-profit sectors in higher education, the role of powerful market forces in higher education, the clearly diminishing public funds that governments are able and willing to spend on higher education, differences in the challenges faced by the EU-15 and the transition countries, etc. Some recommendations provided by the *Trends III* report seem abstract, especially with respect to the transition countries.

The general feeling one gets when reading the Bologna documentation is that it deals with relatively homogeneous higher education and research structures that have fairly similar problems and that are facing fairly similar challenges in the future. Despite numerous references to the 'diversity' of systems, cultural and linguistic differences, and varying degrees of implemen-tation of the process in various countries so far, it is very difficult to see the Bologna publications as referring to the same degree to Germany or

France on the one hand, and Albania, Macedonia and Russia on the other, to give the most striking examples among the Bologna signatory countries. What level of generality is needed in describing challenges and making recommendations for action in order for them to refer to all the countries in question? What do these contrasted national systems of higher education have in common today from the point at which we leave the most generalised level of analysis? The relevant analysis encompassing both EU-15 and the transition countries is going to be an enormous challenge in the future.

Certainly, it is possible to introduce changes in these second tier countries at an official, and particularly a legislative level. It may be relatively easy, in comparison with other planes of action, to change laws on higher education and the accompanying legal context, especially if the Bologna Process arguments of catching up with the West are used for promotional purposes. Who in the region, at least declaratively, would not like to be integrating with (West) European universities in common higher education and research 'areas'? But certainly changing laws is not the sole means of reaching the objectives of the Bologna Process, although many officials may see it in that way, especially at the governmental level. *Trends III* summarised this attitude,

> before Bologna, everyone knew that national higher education systems were indeed as different and incompatible as they looked. Bologna must avoid the risk of producing seemingly converging and compatible structures that could turn out to be, in spite of common terminology, just as irreconcilable as the old ones (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 73).

Consequently, it is going to be another colossal challenge for Bologna to avoid a 'paper reform', and especially to move beyond national legislation in many transition countries.

3. CHANGING UNIVERSITIES—MOVING THE CEMETERY

The *Magna Charta Universitatum* that preceded the Bologna Process *per se* by a decade and is referred to in both the Bologna Declaration and the Salamanca Convention message, is a publication with a different register to any of the later declarations and communiqués; it is general and humanistic, and from the perspective of current global and European developments in higher education it is very vague indeed.

Being a general declaration, it obviously contains few details on how to proceed; but most of all, it is written in the vocabulary of the pre-knowledge economy and the pre-globalisation era. Consequently, and unsurprisingly, there is no mention of globally competitive knowledge economies and societies, drivers of economic growth, more and better jobs, social cohesion and social exclusion/inclusion, external pressures on higher education, emerging market forces, changing European (or any other) labour market requirements, long-term risks for private investment in public research, etc., all of which are mentioned in later ERA and EHEA publications. Instead, there are some traditional ideas concerning the roles and tasks of universities. It is interesting to note how hard it is today to give a meaning to statements such as “centres of culture, knowledge and research” are “represented by *true* universities”. The idea that the university is an institution that “produces, examines, appraises and hands down *culture* by research and tradition” ([my italics], Magna Charta 1988) would find very few followers among promoters of either the ERA or the EHEA (a counterpoint in the new vocabulary comes to mind from a European Commission Communiqué on the role of universities:

> the knowledge society depends for its growth on the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through information and communication technologies, and on its use through new industrial processes or services (Commission 2003b, p. 2),

or from a World Bank framework policy paper on *Constructing Knowledge Societies*:

> the ability of a society to produce, select, adapt, commercialise, and use knowledge is critical for sustained economic growth and improved living standards (World Bank 2002, p. 7).

From the perspective of developments in a recent decade, the *Magna Charta Universitatum* seems somehow to be a remembrance of things past. In the context of the ERA developments, it is hard to find the continuation of ideas about the university as an institution whose “constant care is to attain universal knowledge” and which is a “trustee of the European humanist tradition” in current discussions about the “Europe of Knowledge”.

It appears that not only can we no longer talk about European integration of higher education and research as exemplified by the Bologna Process and the ERA initiative in the language of the founders of the modern German research university (von Humboldt, Schelling, Fichte, Schleiermacher, and others), but neither is it possible now to solely use the language employed by the rectors of European universities 15 years ago to describe the recent course of events on both global and European planes. The working vocabulary used for debates on the future of the university—the vocabulary of the

ERA, EHEA and global accounts of higher education and research (including those provided by UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank)—has changed substantially since 1988, and the shift in vocabulary underlies the shift in the ways we account for the roles and tasks of our educational institutions in society.

The next publication along the track of declarations and responses by academic institutions was the Graz Declaration of 2003, which was concerned with the role of universities. It was a direct response to the European Commission's communiqué on the subject. Generally, it shows how the emphases of the association of universities moved away from *The Magna Charta Universitatum* and towards both EU (ERA) and governmental (Bologna) lines of thinking. Although the preamble sounds fairly traditional (cultivating European values and culture, European cultural and linguistic diversity, fostering a stronger civic society across Europe, etc.), as we move on through the text the problems discussed are those of Bologna and ERA, and with the same level of practicality. A good example is a new way of thinking about resources for universities:

> universities should be encouraged to develop in different forms and to generate funds from a variety of sources. However, higher education remains first and foremost a public responsibility… (Declaration 2003).

The shift in vocabulary is also significant, to mention just "negotiated contracts of sufficient duration to allow and support innovation" between governments and universities. It is interesting to note how the specificity of EU and governmental publications brings about new concepts and a new level of specificity in university declarations. This in turn yields both good and bad consequences: good, since similar issues are discussed in similar language; bad, because universities begin to view their most sensitive issues from the perspective of their potential funding opportunities. Currently, the balance between long- and short-term perspectives in thinking about universities certainly has been shaken; the moment market vocabulary enters the discourse on the responsibilities of universities towards society any long-term perspective becomes hard to maintain on the part of the universities. Not surprisingly, in the final paragraphs concerning "universities at the centre of reforms", universities declare full support for changes but make it implicitly conditional on acknowledging their current and future role. To quote *in extenso*:

> The Bologna Process was initially politically driven. But it is now gaining momentum because of the active and voluntary participation of all interested partners: higher education institutions, governments, students and other stakeholders. Top down reforms are not sufficient to reach the ambitious goals set for 2010. The main challenge is now to

> ensure that reforms are fully integrated into core institutional functions and development processes, to make them self-sustaining. Universities must have time to transform legislative changes into meaningful academic aims and institutional realities.
>
> Governments and other stakeholders need to acknowledge the extent of institutional innovation and the crucial contribution universities do and must make to the European Research Area and the longer term-development of the European knowledge society as outlined in the Lisbon declaration of the European Union. By united action, European higher education — which now touches the lives of more than half the population of Europe — can improve the entire continent (Declaration 2003).

It is possible to read the declaration in the following way: there will be no reforms without the support of universities (to recall Clark Kerr's oft-quoted comment: "Changing a university is difficult. It is like moving a cemetery; hard work and there is no internal support"); universities need time to introduce changes in each institution; they are eager to do this but the condition is that their role in the ERA and, more generally, in emerging knowledge-based economies, will be fully acknowledged and adequately funded with public national and supra-national resources. Thus power and knowledge (to use the traditional parlance) already seem to speak the same language; the time has come for mutual guarantees for the future (by the way, I am not entirely sure that under present conditions there is any other option possible in the long run, especially in the region in the focus of this chapter). It may be concluded that today, and perhaps especially today, the struggle between the "idea of the university" and the possible cuts in financial support, including public support, is fought on very uneven terms indeed. This is clear to all stakeholders, which is one of the reasons for the changes in tone, vocabulary and emphases in university declarations and communications between *The Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 and today.

4. ACADEMIC CAPITALISM OR PROTECTIONISM—BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

One of my tasks in the present chapter is to analyse how and if the Bologna Process could affect national higher education systems in the region. The Bologna Process occurs on interrelated planes: the official level of ministers of education and governments, conferences of rectors and university associations, and accompanying legislative changes concerning higher education, for-profit activities, educational and other non-profit associations, research funds, etc; the official stratum of particular higher education institutions, i.e. that of senior university management; and finally the practical plane of particular institutions and their faculty. There is a huge gap between good will (and good intents) on the part of ministers of education in the majority of those official Bologna Process member countries in the region Bologna Process and the reality of the functioning of higher education systems in those countries. There is an enormous gap between intentions expressed by officials and the capability for action that they and the institutions themselves can currently offer the integration project (as well as the motivation for joining the Bologna Process often seeming more political than educational, see Tomusk 2002b).

Generally higher education in the region, with a few exceptions, has been in a state of permanent crisis since the fall of Communism (for case studies of success stories, see Marga 1997; UNESCO-CEPES 2000): from the paralysis of substantial research functions, steadily decreasing public funds and the mushrooming of both public and private diploma mills to corruption and the lowering of professional ethos and morale, with the mix of the above depending on the country in question. There has not been enough general reflection on transformations of higher education systems in the region over the recent decade; as Marga remarked sadly in his paper *Reforming the Postcommunist University*,

> politics and law, macroeconomics and finance, civil rights and liberties, the church and the family have all been objects of consideration. But universities – despite the vital roles they play in providing research and expertise and in selecting and forming the leaders of tomorrow – have not (Marga 1997, p. 159).

Reforming higher education in post-communist Europe, with some notable exceptions, has not been sufficiently analysed either locally or by Western scholars.

Paradoxically, in the majority of countries in question the situation of universities—in areas other than academic freedom, institutional autonomy and international mobility of students and faculty—has severely deteriorated in the last decade. Even though it may be quite possible to go on with the Bologna Process in these countries in terms of legislation, it is much more difficult to go on with it in terms of implementing the ideas at an institutional level (leaving aside for the moment the whole idea of to what extent it is beneficial to the countries in question to follow *all* recommendations of the process).

Let us remember once again that the Bologna Process is based on the underlying assumptions (not really formulated in a single place) that both Europe and the world are entering a new era of knowledge-based and market-driven economies competing against each other. Europe as a region has to struggle with its two main competitors in higher education and also research and development: the USA and Japan (Australasia). The knowledge society depends for its growth on the production, transmission, dissemination, and use of new knowledge. The underlying goal behind current transformations of educational systems and research and development, whether expressed directly (in ERA publications) or indirectly (in EHEA documentation accompanied by the 'social dimension'), is more or less to meet the target set out by the European Council in Lisbon (in 2000) that by 2010 Europe must become

> the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Furthermore, the creation of the European Higher Education Area must be completed by 2010 (how benchmarks of success are to be developed and what will happen after the deadline are separate issues). Europe is at the crossroads; it is trying to combine higher competitiveness and social cohesion in an increasingly globalised world, and it is in the process of transition towards a "knowledge society". Thus knowledge becomes the key issue in the years to come.

The Bologna Process seems to be somehow inward-looking: while the impact of globalisation on higher education policies is widely acknowledged all over the world, none of the official publications, from Sorbonne, Bologna, Prague or Berlin, nor the accompanying declarations of Salamanca and Graz uses the word 'globalisation' even once (while the *Trends III* report prepared for the Berlin summit does mention globalisation no less than five times in total, reflecting its descriptive rather than analytical ambitions, it states overtly that ministers and higher education institutions should "ride the tiger of globalisation rather than hope it will disappear" (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 57). In general, however, the underlying assumptions are not developed in more detail in any of its documentation or reports. Nonetheless, globalisation is unquestionably one of the main driving forces behind current transformations in public sector, welfare state model and educational policies world-wide (for strong supporters of the view, see Mishra 1999, Teeple 1995; less so, see Pierson 2001b, Esping-Andersen 2001, United Nations 2001); globalisation is also one of the main reference points in the EU's overall Lisbon Strategy.

Consequently, thus far the Bologna Process seems relatively weak at an analytical level. It may be worrying that the principle and supporting publications of a colossal intellectual and institutional undertaking, which aims to change the way our universities function, does not attempt to present a wholesale analytical approach to current challenges and solutions based on perspectives wider than the European ones. As Berndtson rightly remarks in a paper on the EHEA,

> the goals of the Bologna Declaration (and of the Prague Communiqué) have been presented as solutions to problems that have never been outlined systematically. This may have been one of the reasons for the rapid development of the process, but without systematic analysis of the problems and challenges that the European Higher Education Area faces today, there is a danger that the cosmetic features of the reform will be strengthened (Berndtson 2003, p. 10).

The ambivalence of the Bologna Process concerns the process of globalisation itself: roughly, following Van Damme, there are at least two contrasting (and simplified) global views of Bologna. The first view could present it as being merely an introduction to a much further-reaching integration of national educational systems in the future; that is, a result of competitive pressures from other parts of the world that are in turn a consequence of global liberalisation of operations of higher education institutions world-wide (especially in the two biggest 'exporters' of educational services, North America and Australasia). The second, contrasting view could present Bologna as a large-scale defensive mechanism to avoid the pitfalls of globalisation as seen (and mostly disliked) around the world today, in which Europe can stand together against the global odds. Thus the first view might imply a strong convergence between Bologna and globalisation processes on a regional scale, especially in the future. The second might imply an attempt to make national educational systems stronger to withstand the forces of globalisation and whatever is seen as its excesses in higher education, especially the processes of privatisation, commercialisation, commodification, etc. Due to the ambivalence of the process, I find it difficult to say which of the views would be a more adequate description of it today. The two threads are certainly very much interwoven in the Bologna documentation. One can find both 'protectionist' threads at the European level (especially in references to education as a public "good and responsibility"—which largely means calls for public funding from national states in the future) and 'expansionist' threads (in attracting foreign students and researchers in the global competition for talent). As Van Damme put it convincingly, "Europe is seeking its own way out between the Scylla of academic capitalism and the Charybdis of protectionism” (Van Damme 2003, p. 6).

5. PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE—A DUAL CHALLENGE

Concerns can be raised about ‘cosmetic’ changes to be introduced by the EHEA; but others, including myself, are more concerned about potentially misguided policy decisions that might be taken in some transition countries based on either regionally-irrelevant analyses or recommendations. There may also be concerns about the various senses of ‘harmonisation’ of higher education, some of which might potentially lead to some still unspecified core (European) curricula, as evidenced by such pilot projects as “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe” (now in the second phase). There are strong semantic differences between ‘convergence’, ‘harmonisation’ and finally ‘uniformity’, but at the same time there are concerns that traditional semantic differences might become increasingly blurred as the Bologna Process progresses.

Another issue is the following: are the problems facing most of old EU-15 countries and their higher education systems the same as problems facing the countries in transition? I believe the important aspect of the Bologna Process in its current geographical, economic and social scope is analytical (and consequently practical) negligence of some most pressing problems in transition countries today. The analytical flaw of publications and reports may be the lack of description of old challenges that the transition countries still face, and consequently the lack of clear recommendations on how to proceed in countries that are plagued by two different sets of challenges at the same time, old and new ones.

To put it in a nutshell, while the affluent European countries merely face the new challenges brought about by the emergence of the knowledge-based economy, globalisation pressures on higher education and research activities, life-long learning, etc, almost a dozen transition countries, to varying degrees, face old challenges as well. A recent report by the World Bank rightly says that developing and transition countries are confronted with a ‘dual task’:

> a key concern is whether developing and transition countries can adapt and shape their tertiary education systems to confront successfully this combination of old and new challenges (World Bank 2002, p. 2).

The report states that tertiary education can indeed play a catalytic role in developing and transition countries in rising to the challenges of the knowledge-based economy but

> this is conditional on these countries' ability to overcome the serious problems that have plagued tertiary education systems and have pushed some systems into a situation of severe crisis (World Bank 2002, p. 45).

The Bologna Process seems to focus on new challenges and new problems (i.e. the problems of Western countries); the countries of the region, in contrast, are still embedded in challenges and problems of the old type mostly generated in a recent decade by the process of shifting from elite to mass higher education under severe resource constraints (see Kwiek 2001a, 2001c). Even though the way in which Western Europe has dealt with the passage from elite to mass higher education is well documented, the global environment in which the process took place will not recur since it took place under different political, economic and social constraints. Both higher education and research and development had totally different reference points because the universities were still national treasures lavishly funded by nation-states in a period of consolidation of the expanded welfare state model, politics still mattered more than economy, and national prestige often more than particular decisions about resource allocations.

But those days are gone. It is a real challenge for some European transition countries today to undergo the passage from elite to mass higher education; to have steadily declining public funds almost year on year; to develop higher education systems towards the 'Bologna goals' that have to be met by "knowledge-based economies" all without external funds and with, on average, virtually no government funds. The *Trends III* report makes it clear that it is unrealistic to believe that the Bologna reforms will not entail cost: public funds are expected to come if reforms are to succeed. For the countries of the region, again on average, it is a near certainty that the funds will not arrive from any source. The chronic underfunding of higher education (widely documented by any form of statistical data one might care to choose, taken in any way one might care to take it, as a percentage of GDP devoted to higher education, as a percentage of GDP devoted to research, as funding per student, etc., with reference to the USA, EU-15 or OECD) makes it very difficult to implement the Bologna recommendations in anything but a theoretical way. This makes it difficult to face both old and new challenges. There are no specific recommendations or prescriptions for the transition countries on how to proceed on the basis of experiences that the EU-15 or OECD countries had with the same process of passing from elite to expanded models of higher education two-three decades ago.

The question of how to combine educational reforms pressed from two types of challenges, old and new, traditional and knowledge economy, as well as globalisation-related, is a crucial point in educational policy for the countries in transition. How should their relevance be weighed today? Should transition countries look at past or current experiences of other advanced and affluent countries when thinking about their higher education systems? How can they move forward with basic reforms related to much higher demand and consequent massification of higher education if the material basis for these reforms, the welfare state, is either already dismantled or in the process of decomposition, or never even had a chance to come into existence. Tomusk captures the point:

> with the decline of the welfare state and massification of higher education in the West, the Eastern vision of the resource abundant University has become a mere dream. The simple truth about the current higher education reform is that the only thing we know for sure is that we want our Universities to have considerably more resources; … Looking at the resources available in the particular countries one can easily conclude that this is absolutely impossible. It is an empirical fact different from many unrealistic growth programmes developed to attract foreign matching funds (Tomusk 2000, p. 55).

How are the differences between challenges facing higher education in transition countries and in EU-15 countries viewed in the Berlin communiqué? And how is the issue of new members in the Bologna Process seen? The problem in question is basically neglected, no further analysis or description of the current situation is provided and no recommendations on how to proceed are given. As the problem is pressing, I believe it should be dealt with as soon as possible.

Let us remind ourselves very briefly of some key figures that show the gap between EU candidate countries and the EU-15. Firstly, the percentage of GDP spent on research and development: none of the candidate countries reaches the level of the EU-average of 1.9 per cent, although Slovenia (1.5 per cent) and the Czech Republic (1.2 per cent) have relatively high levels of research and development expenditure in relation to their GDP; Estonia, Poland, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic invest in R&D at the same level as the EU countries with the lowest R&D intensities (such as Greece and Portugal); all the other candidate countries (as well as all remaining Bologna signatory countries) from the region have very low R&D intensity. However, the above figures need to be viewed from the perspective of GDP and the differences are still enormous. While per capita GDP in the European Union in 2001 was 23,200 in PPS (purchasing power standards) at current prices, it was in the 5,000 to 10,000 range in Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Estonia, with the top level reached by two small countries (Cyprus 18,460 and Slovenia 15,970) and the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Slovak Republic in the range of 11,000-13,000 (Commission 2002a: 18). If we look at other Bologna signatory countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia or Russia) the gap becomes dramatically wider (World Bank 1999, p. 60).

The share of research and development activities financed by the business sector is lower than the EU average in almost all candidate countries (and all other Bologna signatory countries from the region) with the exception of Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Romania. The current distribution of researchers (government, business, higher education) is very different in candidate countries compared to the EU—the business sector share is much lower than the EU average of 50 per cent (except for Romania). In terms of patents applied for per million population, the difference is huge, with a range of between 1 and 12 for most candidate countries, 22 for Slovenia, against an EU average of 126 (Commission 2002a, p. 72). Spending on higher education is also generally considerably lower in the region, as are current enrolment rates in higher education (World Bank 2000a).

This data cannot be neglected when thinking about the emergent European Higher Education Area: we are talking about mostly diverse societies and economies, which have generally different standards of living, and substantially variant higher education systems that still face major structural reforms, especially if we go beyond EU and current EU candidate countries. If knowledge economy—the point of reference for both the EHEA and ERA—is emerging from two defining forces, the "rise in knowledge intensity of economic activities" and the "increasing globalisation of economic affairs" (Houghton and Sheehan 2000, p. 2), then the region is far behind indeed, and the chances of converging on current EU countries are very low in at least short and medium term (for more data, see OECD 1999).

6. A LONG AND PRIVATE ROAD

Surprisingly enough, the private sector in higher education has so far been absent from the scope of interest of the Bologna Process (for the need to compare the *privateness* and *publicness* of higher education, see Levy 1986). From the very beginning, the Sorbonne Declaration, through Bologna, Prague and Berlin, as well as in the Salamanca and Graz Declarations of higher education institutions, the private sector has not been discussed. What may have been understandable in the *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988 can hardly be explained well in 2003 if one takes into account both global developments in higher education and the explosion in the private sector in many Central and East European countries participating in the Bologna Process. In the official documentation and accompanying reports the private sector does not exist. While the declarations and communiqués of the Bologna Process do not make a single reference to private higher education, not even once in the past six years, the 150 page long *Trends III* report mentions the term half a dozen times but then only in connection with the GATS negotiations, as if the issue of the emergent private sector both globally and in many signatory countries was somehow insignificant.

I would like to assert the contrary here: the rapid development of the private sector in some countries of the region is of crucial importance, and its omission creates a severe analytical and operational flaw in the Bologna Process when referred to the region. It also goes against global trends in which the role of the private sector in teaching and research is increasingly significant. As Altbach puts it

> "private higher education is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing segments of post-secondary education at the turn of the twenty-first century. A combination on unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the inability or unwillingness of governments to provide the necessary support has brought private higher education to the forefront" (Altbach 1999, p. 1).

Both globally and in the region, private higher education is part of the problem and part of the solution; no matter how we view the problem and the solution, we certainly should not disregard the phenomenon itself.

In 1994 enrolment in private higher education had reached 25 per cent in Portugal (World Bank 2000, p. 30). The share in Central and Eastern Europe is increasing considerably: the number of private higher education providers has been sky-rocketing in recent years. In 2000/2001, in countries such as Poland and Romania, the number of students enrolled in the private sector had reached a level of 30 per cent. In others, such as Estonia or Moldova, it was almost 25 per cent. At the lower end is the Czech Republic with 1.0 per cent, Albania 0.0 per cent, and Slovakia 0.7 per cent, with Russia at mid scale with 10 per cent, Belarus with 13 per cent, Bulgaria with 11.5 per cent and Hungary with 14 per cent. From among these Poland, Romania, and Estonia from the upper end and Russia, Bulgaria and Hungary from the middle are all signatories of the Bologna Process (Kwiek 2003b, 2003c).

Apparently, the issue of the private sector is not problematic for the Bologna Process. But it certainly is a huge problem (problem/solution) for several transition countries. The majority of the international literature in the field of higher education policy and research deals with reforming *public* higher education. The role of the private sector in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe—considering its ability to adapt to the new societal needs and new market conditions, combined with the drastically underfunded and still unreformed public institutions—is bound to grow. East European private universities represent a wide variety of missions, organisational frameworks, legal status and relations to the established institutional order (see Tomusk 2003). There are significant differences between the particular countries of the region, too.

Generally, the triumph of the market economy has contributed to the emergence of the private sector and its huge social (and tacit political) acceptance in many countries of the region. From the perspective of changing societal needs and relative decline in the public support of higher education, as well as rapidly increasing demand for access combined with the institutional and financial paralysis of the public sector generally, there is a growing need for clear policies and thoughtful legislation (especially given that what we are facing in the region is what Johnstone calls "*creeping austerity*" from a global perspective:

> a slow but unrelenting worsening of the financial condition of most universities and other institutions of higher education, particularly as they are dependent on governmental, or tax-generated, revenue (Johnstone 2003, p. 2).

The Bologna Process should, I believe, provide clear guidance on how to proceed with private sector/public sector relations in transition countries.

Emerging market forces in higher education combined with increasing competitiveness in the field and a significant growth in size of the private sector definitely mean increased access, new learning options and improved productivity; but the phenomenon also raises important questions about affordability, quality control, the need for new regulations and accreditation bodies, the social responsibilities of the private sector, as well as about the very fundamental attributes of higher education so far, for example, civic commitment, disinterested research, its dual role as a vehicle of social mobility and a locus of critical thought (Altbach 1999). Concerns are raised about the social role (or rather roles—see Levy 2002) of private higher education in the Region. How can the principles of the European Research Area and requirements of the Bologna Process be accommodated to the local conditions of those EU accession countries where the private sector has recently grown surprisingly strong? Unfortunately, the Bologna Process in general remains indifferent to these developments, even though their appearance may prefigure many future options which the governments of Western European countries may face if the dismantling of the welfare state is to be as radical as some sociologists and political scientists present it (Clayton and Pontusson 1998, Pierson 1996, 2001a).

Not surprisingly, both the *Trends III* report and official publications from the Sorbonne to Berlin generally disregard market forces in higher education; whenever reports use the word ‘market’, it is almost always in ‘labour market’. Not only in its descriptions but also in its projections and recommendations for the future. The GATS negotiations are a different and complicated issue which I am not going to develop here. What I would like to stress, however, is the fact that the exclusive passage in the *Trends III* report in which the possible market orientation of (segments of) higher education and research are mentioned, is a short passage on GATS. Among threats concerning the inclusion of higher education into GATS, it mentions:

> increased competition and commercialisation in order to secure market advantage might undermine the Bologna Process which depends on co-operation and exchange of good practice. … The increased market orientation of higher education may run counter to core academic values, the recognition of students as partners rather than customers and the commitment to widened access as a mechanism for social, political and economic inclusion. … Finally, the increase of private providers and for-profit activities of public higher education institutions would result in further decreases in state funding and state protection (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 56).

I concur with the above criticism, but the fact will not cause the emergence of market forces in higher education to slow down or stop; neither will it annul global trends with respect to the relations between the state and the market, nor stop public sector reforms already undertaken world-wide (see Kwiek 2003a; Weiler 2000).

It is especially interesting to note the omission of market forces in higher education in the context of the reference point for the Bologna Process (as well as for the ERA), the USA, “the prime competitor” where market forces are increasingly important. Evidently, market-driven and market-oriented higher education does not go hand-in-hand with the European social model, but in such an overarching integrating initiative as the EHEA, with the objectives of the ERA behind it and the plain political and economic goal of making the European Union “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy (and society) in the world” (Lisbon Council 2000), it is a mistake to disregard the theme altogether.

The EU-15 form one of the last places on earth that is relatively resistant to market forces in education and research. Again, some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, for a variety of institutional, political and economic reasons, are much more influenced by market forces, and their higher education institutions are already operating in highly competitive, market- and customer-driven environments. At the same time, from a global perspective, there are no doubts about the direction of changes. My guess is that whether or not the Bologna Process requires it, or the Bologna Process documents and analyses mention the phenomenon, the change is taking place everywhere and market forces will come, and in numerous places have already come, to European higher education institutions. It is a fact, whether we like it or not. The world today is too strongly interrelated (globalisation!) to assume that although market forces are affecting higher education globally, the last bastion of resistance will be the signatory countries of the Bologna Process (especially given that market forces have already come as part of a much wider package of institutional changes in the welfare state model, and they will not go away). We may not care about the market; but we have to care about universities increasingly exposed to its forces. An underlying assumption of any large-scale transformation (and the Bologna Process is certainly a huge undertaking with far-reaching goals) is that it should not disregard the world outside; it should not disregard social and economic trends at home and abroad. In the case of a vast restructuring project of national higher education systems in Europe, home is Europe, and abroad is certainly the global dimension of the issue.

It may prove difficult to "ride the tiger of globalisation" in the European higher education of the future, recalling the *Trends III* recommendation (Reichert and Tauch 2003), while forgetting about market forces. I am in agreement with van der Wende when she states that

> the fact that present and future students already live in a global world is simply forgotten, although an important part of their culture, fashion and music, or numerous products they wish to buy, or the ways in which they intend to communicate, are all defined and marketed globally. This should help shape the universities' response to globalisation. Our customers expect their lifestyles to be taken into account and higher education to prepare them adequately for life and work in a global world (van der Wende 1999, p. 64).

And the emergent influence of market forces in all aspects of our social life is what globalisation is about, amongst other things (Kwiek 2000a). Yet another issue is the increasing precedence of economy over politics. I believe the Bologna Process is one of those instances of political actions which, if they are to be successful, will have to be easily translatable into economic terms (as is the case with the ERA). And in these terms, market forces figure prominently. The British higher education system alone is briefly discussed to counterbalance developments in Continental Europe. It is difficult, however, in the long run, to combine the analytical position in which the dominant model is the one in which there is "a sustained emphasis on higher education as a public good and responsibility" and which at the same time clearly acknowledges that "public funding is in the process of undermining it" (Reichert and Tauch 2003, pp. 143-144). Is the model not being undermined by a constellation of factors among which the invasion of market forces in the public sector generally comes to the fore?

To sum up, both the private sector in European (and especially Central and East European) higher education systems and the emergence of powerful market forces in the educational and research landscape in Europe will have to be further analysed, discussed and incorporated into the Bologna Process if it is not to turn into a 'theoretical' exercise—especially but not exclusively—in the region. Knowing the high stakes of both EHEA and ERA initiatives, I am sure this omission will soon be corrected.

7. LOOKING FOR COMMON GROUND

One of the most sceptical views on the Bologna Process was presented in 2001 by Neave (2001a). I, too, am unsure about the end (and ends) of such a new European construction but my attitude towards Bologna is more ambivalent.

It is true that those who shout loudest about a European higher education system come either from the European Commission or from Central and Eastern Europe, as Neave states,

> it may be the shape of things to come. But it is not the way the French, Belgians, Dutch, and, least of all, the British, view matters. Rather, we tend to be abominably sensitive to our differences and sing the praise of our exceptionalism—perhaps never more so when we feel they are under severe pressure (Neave 2002, p. 20-21).

Academics in Central and Eastern Europe, from the countries that are almost all (with a few small exceptions) involved in the Bologna Process, are sensitive to the state of near-collapse of (some of) their national systems of higher education. They are sensitive to differences between them but view them as basically irrelevant in the face of the gravity of the problems—higher education systems in the region have been in a state of permanent crisis for well over a decade now (see Tomusk 2000). It is very difficult to avoid a feeling of nostalgia for the good old days of Western European higher education that were a major point of reference in the region for several decades. We certainly could have compared our systems with those in developing countries—we would have felt much better—but we insisted on using European higher education as our point of reference, despite the huge differences. From our perspective differences remain, even today, largely irrelevant (except perhaps for the major UK/Continent differences). That is one of the reasons the idea of a European higher education area has quite a few (ambivalent) supporters in the region. There is an irreconcilable difference in perspectives between the academic world of affluent Western European democracies and the chronically underfunded, near-collapse of the academic world of (some) post-communist countries in Central and (South-) Eastern Europe. This difference in perspectives translates easily into differences in viewing the Bologna Process, especially in viewing its advantages and sometimes downplaying its potential dangers.

Therefore my concern about Bologna is rather that it is not trying to raise the conceptual levels that would be required to assist higher education systems in the region in integrating with Western European systems within the EHEA. My perspective is that the EHEA might be a good opportunity—a useful policy agenda—to assist in reforming those national higher education systems in the region which need reform most. It might provide clear recommendations on what to do and how, presenting almost a blueprint for reforms, even though their scope would be quite different in different countries. In this respect, however, Bologna does not meet expectations of the academic world in the region; it is still unclear in its visions and recommendations for action with respect to the region. At the same time, which is understandable, there is no way to use it as a lever for external, additional funds for educational reforms. Although the success of the process is conditional on public funding of the project, it is obvious to many that no public funding will follow further steps in the process, as is expressed in the following quote by Reichert and Tauch (2003, p. 29) “the Bologna reforms cannot be realised without additional funding”. The question is, what should be done?

Today, there are crucial differences in thinking about reforms in Western Europe and in transition countries generally. Reforms to be undertaken in Western Europe are much more functional (fine-tuning, slight changes, etc.); reforms to be undertaken in some Central and Eastern European and Balkan countries of, by contrast, should be much more substantial (or structural). There is little common ground between the two sets of reforms except for technical details, and the Bologna Process in its official documentation so far has not drawn a clear distinction between functional and structural reforms, nor the regions of their future implementation. The differences between the conditions of higher education systems in these parts of Europe are very substantial indeed; as should probably be the analyses, descriptions, and policy recommendations. Problems and challenges, and consequently the depth of reforms required, are different in the transition countries. Fine-tuning and small adjustments undertaken within the Bologna Process, perfectly befitting for many Western institutions, unless accompanied by structural transformations in East and Central European institutions may lead to merely theoretical or cosmetic changes, while what is actually needed is the transformation of the underlying structures of higher education systems, at least in some countries of the region.

8. AMBIVALENT BOLOGNA, CO-OPERATION, SOLIDARITY AND COMPETITION

My concerns about Bologna are both general and specific, and they refer to the process as a whole and to its potential impact in the region. They are based on theoretical assumptions (such as the traditional idea of the university and the universal role of the university, see Sadlak 2000) on the one hand and practical knowledge of the functioning of higher education in many countries of the region on the other. Some concerns derive from traditional notions of sovereignty of nation-states and the sovereignty of their educational policies (see Enders 2002a), some from irreconcilable differences between educational systems deriving from different cultures, languages, traditions and inheritances from the past; but other concerns come from a more technical and pragmatic understanding of the global picture of changes in higher education, the role of which is downplayed in Bologna. Still other concerns derive directly from an awareness of the budgetary situation of the public sector in many countries of the region, and trends that have emerged there over the last decade or so (often towards the retrenchment of the welfare state rather than towards the ‘European Social Model’ emphasised in the EU Lisbon Strategy).

Carnoy draws a very useful distinction between the three factors that in practice are crucial to the approach governments take in educational reform; hence in educational responses to globalisation:

> Their objective financial situation, their interpretation of that situation, and their ideological position regarding the role of public sector in education. These three elements are expressed through the way that countries ‘structurally adjust’ their economies to the new globalised environment (Carnoy 1999, p. 47).

Even though, as we have emphasised here, the dimension of globalisation challenges in higher education is certainly severely underestimated in the Bologna documentation, the phenomenon is one of underlying factors behind the wider Lisbon strategy of the European Union: its role is crucial for understanding the whole package of reforms, including those in the education and R&D sectors. It is interesting to refer the above distinction to transition countries involved in Bologna and draw comparisons with the EU-15. All the three parameters are drastically different: the objective financial situation does not require any statistical data, it may be taken for granted in the majority of transition countries; as a consequence of generally objectively disastrous financial situations, the interpretations of the differences in objective financial situations may be even more dramatic; finally, in a number of transition countries escaping the model of command-driven economies, the ideological position regarding the role of the state in the public sector differs considerably from the position taken, with few national exceptions, on a European level: the ideal of the state about to emerge once the chaos of the transition period is over is the American model of cost-effectiveness and self-restraint rather than the European social model of the EU-15—which, by the way, is also attested to by subsequent EU progress reports on accession countries. There are several determinants of this, but certainly a general dissatisfaction with the inefficiency and incompetence of state bureaucratic bodies is one of them, another being the increased role of market mechanisms in public sector reforms already undertaken (ranging from healthcare to pension systems to decentralisation of primary and secondary education) and the role of the private sector in the economy in general. Again, it would be interesting to see how the Bologna Process publications are going to conceptualise these crucial differences.

Using another set of Carnoy's distinctions — between 'competitiveness-driven reforms', 'finance-driven reforms' and 'equity-driven reforms' in higher education (Carnoy 1999, p. 37; see also Carnoy 1995) — it is possible to argue that not only two speeds of reforms are necessary (as some of the required reforms are merely functional, while others are structural), but also the current drivers of reforms are different: while in the EU-15 it is competitiveness (decentralisation, improved standards and management of educational resources, improved teacher recruitment and training), in at least some transition countries, by contrast, it is mostly the wish to change the 'business climate', to make use of structural adjustments and refer to the reduction of public spending on education (which results both from the objective situation, its interpretation, and the ideological stance governments take). These complications in the picture of European higher education systems are not evoked in Bologna publications, and it is my belief that they should be.

Concerns may be raised about the potential bureaucratisation of the process and the potential transfer of power concerning higher education policies to some supranational European body; but at the same time, the Bologna Process provides opportunities for rethinking to come to the region — and hopefully reforming — of inefficient, outmoded, sometimes and in some places corrupt institutions that should really play a central role in the new knowledge economy. Concerns may be raised about the break with traditional tasks and roles of higher education institutions as evidenced by the roles and tasks suggested for them by both Bologna and the ERA. As Enders remarks, universities today are

> rather vulnerable organisations that tend to be loaded with multiple expectations and growing demands about their role and functioning in our knowledge-driven societies. (Enders 2002b, p. 71)

But on the other hand, the traditional rhetoric may cover institutional or professional interests rather than a genuine love for the search for truth, disinterested research and other traditional ideals of the university.

The new vocabulary in which both higher education and research is cast in both EHEA and ERA initiatives may be worrying; but at the same time, especially in connection with the ERA, the vocabulary used, and concepts employed are standard in current global discussions about higher education and research and development, from UNESCO to the OECD to the World Bank. It is hard to use any other vocabulary today *and* be engaged in meaningful contemporary debates on the future of higher education and research. Concerns should be raised about apparently economic accounts of the role of higher education in the ERA discussions. Although the ideals behind the EHEA are cast in a slightly different vocabulary, the message is similar: we need practical results from our institutions; universities will change and the kinds of research, as well as teaching they have to offer will have to be changed, too; the responsibility of universities is no longer the search for truth in research and for moral and civic constitution (the *Bildung* of the traditional German model of the university) of students/citizens in teaching; it is much more, if not exclusively, competitiveness, mobility, and employability of graduates; the responsibility of universities is towards the economic growth of Europe as a whole, supporting a knowledge-based economy, contributing to new skills for the new emerging workforce of the emerging competitive global age. Let us in this context remember once again the three goals of the Bologna Process: enhancing the employability of European higher education graduates, promotion of mobility in higher education, and the attractiveness of the EHEA to the rest of the world (Reichert and Tauch 2003).

From a European perspective, the promotion of mobility in higher education is “clearly the most concrete, easily interpreted and uncontroversial” (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 39). I can agree with that in general but at least one reservation has to be raised: thinking of the Bologna signatory countries (a group consisting of the EU-15 plus 10 new countries plus ‘other’ countries), what is the direction of mobility likely to be in the future? Certainly towards those most affluent, generally Western countries; thus from a national perspective, there are gains and losses of such increasing movement of the best talent available and, for the more 'exporting' (transition) countries the issue is not going to be uncontroversial in the long run. Again, with no reference to the Bologna Process, the World Bank reports rightly argue that the international mobility of skilled human resources will continue to present "long-term risks for tertiary investments in many nations" (World Bank 2002, p. 19). The intra-European mobility issue is uncontroversial in most affluent countries as the level of higher education there is very similar indeed, and the incoming and outgoing mobility between them is relatively balanced when compared with EU accession countries; but in the case of the least advanced higher education systems and the poorest countries in the region, increasing student mobility might become an easy escape route leading to a permanent brain drain. This is not a theoretical issue: the European Union is very much concerned about young researchers and PhD students leaving to the United States and (mostly) never coming back (OECD 2002; Commission 2003c).

This brings us in turn to the critical issue of the bi-polar character of the Bologna Process: it derives from the ideas of co-operation (or solidarity) and competition. The *Trends III* report is very explicit about that; while acknowledging that the initiation of the Bologna Process has to do with

> a sense of threatened competitiveness vis-à-vis prime competitors like the US, rather than from sheer enthusiasm for the increasing intensity of co-operation within European higher education (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 52).

From my perspective, it is equally important to remember about the play of interests *within* the emergent EHEA, and the competition among European higher education institutions. Some countries are already global players in higher education; some are already exporters of higher education to Central and Eastern Europe in various, but mostly highly lucrative disciplines. It is hard to combine the competitive spirit presented to the non-European global competitors and the solidarity spirit presented at the same time to the (Central) European partners. Can we imagine co-operation and solidarity alone as driving motives in contacts with the countries of the region on the part of institutions from the countries with strong market traditions and a good share (e.g. the UK or the Netherlands) in global educational market? My guess is that the motive of co-operation may be stronger in the region while that of competition may be stronger in Western Europe. Finally, within national systems and between national institutions, the competition motive is bound to be on the rise, proportionately to the increasing competition for shrinking national (public) funds.

Commenting briefly on ‘ambivalent Bologna’, *Trends III* notes two potentially conflicting agendas: the ‘competitiveness agenda’ and the ‘social agenda’, and rightly concludes, without much further discussion: “it would be naïve to assume that the EHEA is being built only on the latter agenda” (Reichert and Tauch 2003, p. 149). In the case of the region, it is the co-operation and solidarity motives, as well as the social agenda that count much more than competitiveness today; it would be naïve to assume that institutions of the region are competing with the USA and Japan.

9. THE TRANSITION DIMENSION NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Finally, what I am concerned about is the potential use of the Bologna Process in the region compared with its use in Western Europe. I am very much afraid that while Bologna may be quite successful in promoting its agenda in Western Europe (especially combined with funding and resources already available and additional incentives already included in the implementation of the European Research Area), it might fail in the transition countries. That would mean that the gap between higher education systems in the two would grow even wider. While Western European institutions seem to be much more afraid of losing their autonomy, freedom to teach and to do research in the way their national priorities and funding allocations still lavishly allow them to do. For educational institutions in several transition countries, the Bologna Process might be the last coherent reform agenda were it to be further developed to include this purpose. I wish that the ‘transition’ dimension would be developed in the future in order that the countries of the region could use the Bologna Process for their benefit and the gap in question might, finally, at least stop getting wider.

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Chapter 6

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

An Estonian Perspective

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to analyse what the Bologna Process means to Estonia. Therefore, an effort will be made to understand what the medium and long-term outcomes of the Bologna Process might be for Estonian politics (national identity), economy (labour market), social structure (stratification system) and culture (in the broadest sense of the word).

It could be argued that I am confusing the Bologna Declaration with European Union policies. More particularly, that the signatories of the declaration did not intend to intervene in national cultural fields and spaces, create a common European identity or contribute to the flexible European labour market. However, communications from the Commission, as well as individual statements made by its current and former employees are clear, they have insisted that the policies of European Union be taken into account. Therefore, one should not underestimate the importance and implications of these statements to the Bologna Process.

The EU Commission came to an understanding in the 1970s that in order to establish a true union of people, then mobility of social groups—beyond the casual, low-skilled migratory workers who respond to labour shortages or opportunities—around Europe has to be encouraged (Neave 2003). The introduction of instruments into (higher) education to make moving easier, however, and building a common European identity along the way was not as easy as the creation of common visa space, introducing EU passports and a common currency, or even establishing the television news broadcaster *Euronews*. This is because some member states, like Denmark, had taken the

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position that educational policy lies beyond the powers of the Commission. Undeterred, in the 1990s the Commission came up with a simple and effective plan of how to bypass national governments: it went directly to the institutions of higher learning (that are always short of financial resources) and in return for undertaking co-operation projects and promoting student and faculty exchanges it gave them what they wanted—money.

Co-operation demonstrated to the institutions involved the 'obsoleteness' of their national systems which had been

> …designed with regional or national purposes in mind, to meet the requirements of regional and national labour markets and to maintain and transmit national cultural positions. The graduates were prepared to meet the expectations of regional and national employers and equipped to live active civic and social lives in their communities (European Commission, 1991, p. 14).

It is unclear from this extract whether it was the promise of financial benefit from Europeanisation or a sense of inferiority to American research universities, but, much to the pleasure of the Commission, universities throughout Europe seem to have convinced their national policy-makers that changes in higher education are imperative. For instance, the University of Tartu has, within Estonia, been supplying the rationale as to why the higher education system has to change and become more international. The university's position is that it can only fulfil its mission if it is to be an international university (Aaviksoo 2002, 2003; Drechsler 2002; University of Tartu 2003).

Thus, it was no surprise that European education ministers came together in Bologna to sign a declaration that would most likely have been blocked, had it been put forward by the Commission. That is, ministers committed themselves to reform national systems of higher education, to make them more homogeneous and readily understandable to each other, and without a directive from Brussels. In this context it makes sense that the Commission has welcomed the Bologna initiative and promised to support it actively. For instance, it has been stated in the official communications from the Commission that:

> the Commission supports and helps to foster the Bologna Process, which is designed to create between now and 2010 a European Higher Education Area which is consistent, comparable and competitive, through reforms which converge around certain defining objectives (COM 2003, p. 11);
>
> [t]he Commission supports the Bologna Process, including its extension to doctorate level training... (COM 2003, p. 20);

> the Commission will, in co-operation with the Member States and higher education institutions, actively support the 'Bologna Process' in the field of Higher Education. Experiences form this process will be used as a basis for promoting closer co-operation within other areas, such as vocational education and training (COM 2002, p. 18);
>
> [a]s and when appropriate, existing instruments and processes, such as the ECTS credit transfer system, and the 'Bologna' process, which encourages convergence within tertiary education in Europe, should be utilised and supported (COM 2002, p. 18);
>
> [i]n the framework of the Bologna Process, the development of European study courses on science, technology and their historical, cultural and economic environments will be promoted through the creation of collaboration networks (COM 2001, p. 10);

In short, one should not look at the Bologna Process as an isolated enterprise. The fact that it corresponds with the policy aims of the EU Commission implies that the cumulative effect of the Bologna Process will be much larger, deeper and more fundamental than the Declaration alone would suggest. Therefore, this chapter considers the wider aims and goals of the EU in order to outline and analyse the probable consequences of the Bologna Process for Estonia.

2. THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

If during the Middle Ages universities gave a strong contribution to the development of European cultural identity it is only natural that today they will be asked, once more, to contribute to the building up of the EU either by imparting a European component to the study programmes, or by promoting the teaching of foreign languages, or by making the mutual recognition of diplomas less difficult and by increasing the mobility of students and professors (Amaral 2001, p. 124).

While some of the most vocal members of the Estonian cultural, political and academic elite have argued that European integration does not represent a threat to Estonian identity (see e.g. Ruutsoo 1998, p. 37; Meri 1996, p. 280; Bertricau, Luik, Tiido 2001, p. 281-282), this chapter will nevertheless attempt to analyse the affect the Bologna Process might have on the Estonian nation-state. In doing so, the role of the university in nation-building and enhancement of the state will be highlighted. It will be argued that the Bologna Process will help to bring about changes in local sets of values and the bulk of the knowledge that Estonian higher education system is transmitting.

In determining the possible affect of the Bologna Process on the Estonian nation, only limited help is gained from the contributions of many different sub-fields of social science concerning the functions that institutions of higher learning perform. While these highlight a large number of conflicting political, economic, social and cultural roles that the university performs (see e.g. Kroos 2003; Castells 2001), the impression is generated that the contribution of universities to the build-up and enhancement of the nation-state is multidimensional and many-sided. Although comprehensive, the conclusion that everything depends on everything (universities) is both inadequate and probably incorrect from the social science perspective. To sustain the focus, I should limit the inquiry to the politics of national identity and ask if the nation-state is 'threatened' by the Bologna Process and its supporting initiatives.

Functional theories of education, which see the role of education beyond the training of workforce, are useful for the understanding of national identity as they explain how educational institutions make an important contribution to the socialisation process and development of nationhood by transmitting government-approved knowledge, skills, culture and values. As Apple argues,

> [t]he curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some group's vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organise and disorganise a people. As I argue in Ideology and Curriculum and Official Knowledge, the decision to define some groups' knowledge as the most legitimate, as official knowledge, while other groups' knowledge hardly sees the light of day, says something extremely important about who has power in society (Apple 1993, p. 222).

Again, in a more recent co-authored article he warns the reader by arguing that,

> state formation is the historical trajectory through which the ruling power struggles to build local identity, aimed or pre-empt social fragmentation[sic], and win support from the ruled. These tasks of state building necessitate the transformation of social relations and ideology of the dominated groups. Since schools are widely considered as essential in 'shaping' peoples' minds, almost all ruling regimes have sought to ensure that the school knowledge transmitted by the educational system advances their interests in state formation. However, it is dangerous to

> assume that schools in general and curriculum in particular serve the dominant group in a mechanical and unmediated manner (Wong, Apple 2002, pp. 148-5).

Bourdieu and Passeron's theorising on *symbolic violence*—the imposition of culture upon (groups of) individuals and classes by the educational system and pedagogic authority that work in such a way that they are seen and understood as legitimate—allows us to overcome this deficiency. More particularly, they argue that university examinations are

> …not only the clearest expression of academic values and of the educational system's implicit choices: in imposing as worthy of university sanction a social definition of knowledge and the way to show it, it provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture. As much as or more than through the constraints of curriculum and syllabus, the acquisition of legitimate culture and the legitimate relation to culture is regulated by the customary law which is constituted in the jurisprudence of examinations and which owes its main characteristics to the situation in which it is formulated (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, p. 142).

European history provides a number of examples of how policy–makers have tried to use school systems and state exams for national identity building, all with varying degrees of success. While the French Third Republic stands out as a successful case, others, such as the Soviet attempt to create creatures of double identity in the ethnically non-Russian areas of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), represent a failure (Brubaker 1996). In retrospect, it seems that the cultural biases towards ethnic Russians and their culture in the titular countries like Estonia helped to implement the (un)conscious strategy of the local cultural elite not to abandon the national language. As a result the institutions of higher learning proved to be much more effective at reproducing ethnic culture and local elites than creating the *sovetskii narod* [the Soviet people]. They turned the local institutions of higher learning into establishments that kept the nation alive throughout the Soviet occupation (Kroos 2003).

Although some high-ranking EU officials such as the former EU Commissioner on Enlargement, Günter Verheugen, have expressed astonishment that a comparison should be made—as occurred in Estonia prior to the referendum on EU enlargement—between the EU and the FSU (Verheugen 2003), it is not unreasonable to ask whether the institutions of higher learning will be able to reproduce the local elite and sustain the Estonian language within the European Higher Education Area as they did during the state-socialist era? To put the question in such a way makes more sense in a situation where EU policy-makers and their advisers have demonstrated the desire to use universities to build not only European competitiveness but also European consciousness and identity. During the last Portuguese presidency of the European Union, for instance, one of the most celebrated sociologists of our time, Manuel Castells, was appointed to discuss and elaborate on how a European identity could be built. In his recommendation all the following were highlighted: education and the labour market, as well as language teaching, media, internet, voting rights according to residency, harmonisation of the welfare state and the common policies of naturalisation, international affairs, and defence. Having learned from the above mentioned cases, he states that in order to build a European identity *organically*, we need:

> shared education, primarily through students moving around. We already have something called the Erasmus Programme whereby students can have a year on other campuses. But this should be a super-Erasmus. Sending students around Europe, to the great joy of their parents—imagine one year of vacation from your children, knowing that they are safe, well treated, in some remote village in Europe … Then, integration of programmes at some levels. For instance, in history, most children in the world don't know much about the history of other countries.

And

> … the European labour market. If you work together in other countries and on equal conditions – not as the Spanish and Portuguese immigrants did in Germany or France in the 1970s – then the sharing of work is also a sharing of experience. Now, the geographical mobility in the European Union is possible but it's extremely limited by the problems of housing, social security, transfer of your pension fund, transfer of your degrees, etc. So in other words, the building of identity cannot be separated from the building of a European labour market (Castells 2001, pp. 123 – 124).

Based on the above mentioned theorising, examples from real life and from policy suggestions that have been made, two types of observations about the likely impact of the EU-supported Bologna Process on Estonian national identity are possible. On the one hand, there should be particular alarm about the growing stress on free movement of labour, which might lead to the introduction of official examinations for easier recognition of (professional) qualifications within Europe. On the other hand, Estonian politicians should be concerned about the possible impact of the Bologna Process on the language of instruction and research, as it is very unlikely that Estonian institutions of higher learning (i.e. the cultural and academic elite) will want to preserve national identity or would be forced to act against the cultural imperialism of other (this time Western European) languages, values and traditions.

Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate the importance and role of the official language policy despite the fact that historically other nation-building techniques have been used. For instance, Kymlicka argues that

> all Western states have engaged in this process of 'nation-building'—that is, a process of promoting a common language, and a sense of common membership in, and equal access to, the social institutions based on that language. Decisions regarding official languages, core curriculum in education, and the requirements for acquiring citizenship, have all been made with the express intention of diffusing a particular culture throughout society, and of promoting a particular national identity based on participation in that societal culture (Kymlicka 2000, pp. 32-33).

During the soviet era, the Estonian language, national identity and ethnic elite were preserved because of a cultural bias against Russia and people of Russian ethnic origin, and a nation-wide feeling that Estonians are something unique, as well as the romanticised oral history of the first independent Estonian Republic. The expected benefits from collaboration with the regime did not outweigh the national pride: while moving to Moscow or Leningrad and publishing in Russian would have stimulated the career of Estonian academics, only a limited number of them did it. Instead, one can find an abundance of critical comments on how undesirable the requirement to write and defend advanced academic degrees in Russian was for Estonian academics.

The widespread, post-socialist desire to return to the Western world is so strong that it has changed the attitude of many in Estonia towards their homeland. The possibility of working or studying outside Estonia is no longer frightening or unfashionable. Quite the opposite, restoration of independence, the desire to belong to Europe, and the opening up of borders and (labour) markets have made studying and working both in and together with the West not just attractive, but also a lot more feasible. Although knowledge of foreign languages among Estonian students remains moderate, and while their ability to study and work in developed countries, as well as in Estonia, using foreign languages has limitations, one can see developments that suggest changes may be emerging. Therefore, it will be argued in the following paragraphs that the distinctive Estonian national identity runs the risk of disappearing.

Indeed, the times when Estonians were proud of being the second worst speakers of the 'language of international friendship' — that is Russian — within the former Soviet Union are over. It is not only that the official notion of that language of international friendship has changed from Russian to

English, the general value of being able to speak foreign languages has increased. For instance, students and their parents now regard foreign language skills so highly that entrance to high schools that specialise in a major European language is as competitive as it is for state-commissioned study places at universities, and competition for foreign-language university course places continues to be among the toughest.

Moreover, a recent survey conducted by researchers at the Tallinn Pedagogical University among 1964 high school students from 10th and 12th grades in 45 schools in Estonia, found strong support for the introduction of English language education in Estonia, a willingness to give up Estonian for economic reasons, and great significance being attached to English for the future. More particularly, concerning bilingual education, there was a desire among students to receive their education in English. From the survey taken, an overwhelming majority of 73 per cent shared this attitude. A similar set of questions evaluating the readiness of students to give up Estonian found that 54 per cent of them would be willing to give it up if it was financially more economical to consume products/services in English. But when students were asked how significant they thought the English language would be in the future, researchers found the total figure to be lower (Ehala, Niglas 2004, pp. 9-11). Yet, the relative reluctance—32 per cent of those surveyed—to study for higher education in English if it was available with the same conditions in Estonian, may simply represent the low level of foreign language proficiency that students have today. The fact that they are far more willing to put their children into English language kindergartens and schools, as well as send them abroad for higher education might be an indication of how they aspire for their children to overcome their foreign language deficiency.

The authors of this research conclude that if the intentions of today's secondary school students are realised, the survival of the Estonian language education system is doubtful. Even if one disagrees with this prognosis, one should accept that these findings indicate that the behaviour of Estonian students imitates more and more that of local Russians. In the past five years, Russians have taken into account the demands of the Estonian labour market towards proficiency in the Estonian language, and as a result approximately 10 per cent of them have chosen to attend primary schools where the language of instruction is Estonian (Õppurite register 2003). Although the number is not very large, it is nevertheless significant, taking into account the cultural, political, social and historical context in which it is taking place, as well as the fact that not so long ago the figure was almost zero. These developments allow me to reason that it is just a matter of time before Estonian students and their parents start rationalising about the language of instruction with respect to the European labour market in a manner similar to that of the Russian approach to the Estonian one, and actually begin to demand an education that provides them with better chances of continuing their studies at European universities and equips them better for the EU labour market.

Based on the above, one can predict that the Estonian national identity will come under increasing pressure for the following reasons. First, one can expect the supply of higher education to follow demand as the global trend shows. Estonian institutions of higher learning are expected to start offering increasing numbers of classes or whole programmes in English. With the successful launch of the mixed programme of languages and business at the Estonian Business School, as well as the strategic plans for the Business School and the University of Tartu to increase the number of foreign students, faculty, and programmes taught in foreign languages, that change is already happening. That is, both the demand and the supply side of the higher education market seem to reflect the changing situation in Estonia.

Secondly, there is convergence between the ideas of well-educated Estonians and those of the rest of the developed world as a result of intensified use of foreign textbooks. Although, one could argue that the battle has long been lost as the market in textbook publishing is dominated by American and British companies that are already now determining pretty much what is taking place in the university auditoriums and what students are learning. Yet, there is no doubt that the Bologna Process (the development of a greater proportion of classes being taught in English to increase the attractiveness of the institution for foreign students, and co-operation in the area of accreditation in particular) will accelerate the process even more.

Thirdly, if many more students start going abroad for part of their higher education, a considerable number of them will be lost to Estonian society. One can learn from Estonian history that students who went to St. Petersburg to receive their university education at the beginning of the twentieth century often stayed there and wanted to have very little to do with the periphery they had originated from. Instead of these internationally educated individuals, the task of national awakening and identity building was carried out by locally educated journalists, doctors, and primary school teachers (Karjahärm, Sirk 1997).

Thus, there will be increasing pressure on the ability of Estonian institutions of higher learning to continue to perform their traditional role of socialising the elite and transmitting national culture, values and identity. On the one hand, these roles will be challenged by market forces leading to a demand for education in the English language. This will mean fewer opportunities for the national curriculum to affect students and their identity in the way those in power would like to see. On the other hand, it should not take too long before the supporters of deepening and widening relations will, in the name of free movement of labour, demand the introduction of official examinations for easier recognition of professional qualifications within Europe. As will be argued in the following sections, the number of students who go and stay abroad as they pick up a more global identity is expected to increase.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE BOLOGNA ON ESTONIAN ECONOMY

The Bologna Process will affect the Estonian economy primarily through the higher education industry and the upper end of the labour market. The following section will first discuss how the process will affect Estonian institutions of higher learning and then analyse its impacts on movements of skilled labour.

3.1 Bologna's affect on Estonian institutions of higher learning

Transition from state-socialism to liberal-democratic free-market capitalism has brought about massive structural change in the countries of Central and East Europe, as well as the former Soviet Union (CEE & fSU). Most of the political and socio-economic institutions of the previous regime lost much of their legitimacy making room for the emergence of new ones and creating the need to restructure those in existence. Changes in some countries, like Estonia, have been very quick. For instance, in Estonia the private sector share of GDP in the economy rose to 75 per cent by 2001 (EBRD 2002, p. 144). However, even in the fastest reforming post-communist countries the university sector has managed to protect itself against such profound reforms and has survived without any fundamental change.

While Nelson (1997; 1999) has offered a general explanation as to why existing educational institutions manage without changing, Tomusk (2003) supplied a theory on why new start-ups—one of the most important locomotives for change in transition economies in general—have not been able to affect public higher education in countries of CEE & fSU. In this context it is somewhat surprising to see that institutions that have so successfully avoided change are now backing the Bologna Process, which has been used to facilitate internationalisation in many parts of Europe (see e.g. Haug, Tauch 2001). Is there any rationale behind the behaviour of universities?

Estonian post-communist enterprise restructuring as a reaction to trade liberalisation gives an opportunity to observe what internationalisation might mean. More particularly, analysis of the implementation of the economic development strategy known as 'outward-looking strategy' (sometimes also referred to as 'open economy') provides an opportunity to see how the Bologna Process might affect Estonian higher education institutions. The comparison is possible, since it should not be difficult to see a similarity between economic policy and the Bologna Process. Both sets aim to boost transparency, lower transaction costs and decrease the administrative obstacles to international co-operation.

Governments that believe in an outward-looking economic strategy does not simply rely on free market competition as the best way for allocation of resources. More than market optimisation, they hope that opening up to world markets will bring benefit to domestic consumers, producers and service providers by making local entrepreneurs equally, if not more, innovative and profitable than their foreign competitors. Transferring this logic to the higher education sector one can expect similar developments. That is, consumer choice could be expected to increase and institutions of higher learning to become more creative (entrepreneurial), as well as more efficient if international competition were to be allowed.

We are, however, reminded by social scientists that (higher) education is a very peculiar beast. On the one hand, the classics in the sociology of higher education (Clark 1983, pp. 136-181) say that in addition to state authority and markets, higher education is co-ordinated by an academic oligarchy. Other scholars who subscribe to that kind of analysis also:

> question the rather general assumption that market competition inevitably generates diversification, because institutions can either diversify to capture a specific market niche or they can imitate the activities of their successful competitors; institutions can be compelled to take this latter road to convergence because of strong forces resulting from academic norms and values imposed by 'elite' institutions, or because of the influence of the liberal professions over the accreditation agencies, and even quality assurance can further entrench academic norms and values, particularly when a reward or a punishment are attached to its results (Amaral, 2001, p. 139).

Furthermore, economists remind us that higher education does not function as a 'normal good' but rather as an 'experiential good' from which the positive and negative affects of consumption only become apparent after a considerable time. In this sense, it bears similarities to the health-care sector in which patients are unable to evaluate the true value of the service (medical treatment or the quality of the doctor's decision) because of asymmetric information. As consumers are only able to observe the environment in which the services in health care and education are provided, their market power does not necessarily produce optimal outcomes.

Hence, greater institutional creativity could actually result in consumers being taken advantage of. For instance, introduction of market forces into the US health care market has lead to a situation in which hospitals resemble five star hotels. This kind of medical 'arms race' could well find its way into higher education in Europe as well as in Estonia. In fact, it is already clear that Estonian institutions of higher learning in general, and the University of Tartu, in particular, 'invest' disproportionately in building and renovating. As with the hospitals that look like five star hotels, these improvements to university buildings affect the quality of education very little if at all.

Asymmetric information is also a reason why universities in the market-dominated systems of higher education like the American one, spend quite large amounts of money on sports. It makes sense for schools to invest in brand name development because so much of the outcome of education depends on the input and given that the most important achievement indicator seems to be the socio-economic background of a student. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that if the Bologna Process increases competition among universities within Europe, larger amounts of money will be spent on sports and other activities that aim at increasing market recognition. The top Estonian men's basketball league is already dominated by teams that bear the names of universities. In fact, all the large Estonian public and private universities such as the University of Tartu, Tallinn Technical University, Audentes University and the Estonian Business School have a team that represents them in the league. With the exception of the Audentes team, the fact that hardly any sportsmen actually attend the universities that they represent does not prevent the schools from supporting the teams financially in exchange for the use of their names.

One can learn other lessons from the American higher education market, which has many of the characteristics that supporters of internationalisation would like to see Europe develop. Rothschild and White explain that even in this market of 'dreams' price competition among universities hardly approaches the textbook model of the perfect competition among wheat farmers. Individual universities have perceived quality differences and 'brand name' reputations that surely influence student choice. Also, local differences among universities imply transportation cost differences (as well as psychic 'away from home' differences, which can be a plus or a minus for a university's attraction) for many students. In sum, a form of oligopolistic or Chamberlinian competition seems to be the appropriate characterisation:

> Competition among universities appears to have both geographic-space and product-space dimensions. High prestige schools probably compete in a nation-wide market; e.g., in the market for freshman applicants Harvard and Stanford probably compete for roughly the same pool of students (and probably also compete for a common pool of applicants to their medical, business, and law schools and to most of their graduate programmes in arts and sciences). Schools with lesser prestige are likely to compete among themselves on a regional basis; the lure of a specific national 'brand name' is likely to be less important for students in this market segment, and the costs associated with regional location are likely to loom relatively larger. Finally, universities are likely to compete most intensively with universities in their same quality segment; e.g., Yale and Harvard are likely to consider each other as competitors, while neither is likely to think of the University Bridgeport as a competitor (Rothschild, White 1991, pp. 20-1).

Estonian institutions of higher learning should pay close attention to these arguments. They indicate how limited their set of competitors really is—despite the University of Tartu managing to become a member of the Coimbra group and appearing to wish to compete across Europe, the sad reality is that, at best, it competes for medical students with the Medical School in Budapest—for the most part, competition for Estonian institutions of higher learning does not at the moment exceed Estonian boundaries. In the future the strongest competitive forces that could affect Estonian institutions of higher learning are those in its neighbouring countries of Finland, Sweden, Russia and perhaps also Latvia.

The orientation of the market segment in which Estonian institutions of higher learning compete explains why the Bologna Process has been supported by the sector leaders of Estonian institutions of higher learning. It allows them to pursue their own peripheral goals. For instance, the University of Tartu sees this as its chance to get state funding for most of the students for five, instead of four years, and to collect the most promising Estonian graduate students. Tallinn Technical University has the opportunity of establishing a practice in which engineers receive an education of a similar length to medical doctors, whose training takes at least five years.[1] Finally, establishments such as the Estonian Business School will be able to profit from more masters' students (who get their three year degree at other institutions of higher learning, enter the job market and take evening classes at EBS towards their MBA).

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[1] Currently, it seems that it has only managed to reserve such special treatment for civic engineers.

3.2 Bologna's effect on the Estonian labour market

From a theoretical point of view skills migration has several effects in the source country. First, given the higher wages in the receiving countries it normally increases the incomes of migrants. Second, it raises the incomes of those skilled personnel left behind. Third, assuming that the skilled labour receives its marginal product, large-scale skill migration lowers the average incomes of the non-migrant population in the sending society. Finally, in the absence of any rise in average incomes, the redistribution of income in favour of the highly skilled leads to an absolute decline in the incomes of the low skilled. 'Brain drain' may thus not only lead to reduced national output but also to a deterioration of income distribution (Ghosh 1996, pp. 92-3).

At the same time, Ghosh states in the following paragraph that "the realities surrounding skill migration . . . are far too complex to permit such rigid and clear-cut conclusions as suggested in theory" (Ghosh 1996, p. 93). Likewise, some Estonian social scientists argue that existing statistical information is insufficient to determine the effect of the brain-drain (Nõmman et al. 2002, p. 48) or that the impact of EU accession on the Estonian labour market is quite unpredictable (Eamets 1999, p. 71).

Yet, it must be said that not everybody shares this pessimistic view. For instance, technocrats working in the EU Commission claim to understand labour economics much better. One can detect from a number of communications from the Commission that EU bureaucrats are not afraid of immigration. They see that

> [m]igration offers potential benefits under a variety of profiles, ranging from the fiscal side, to creating a demand stimulus, increasing availability of goods and possible stimulating the spread of knowledge developing new competitive advantages. As an increase in the labour supply, and a relief to shortages in particular sectors, its impact is particularly visible in the labour market (Bisopoulos 2003, p. 140).
>
> Additional migratory flows, particularly by high skilled individuals with critical competencies, could play a crucial role in removing bottlenecks. Member States are already recurring to this type of migrants and these flows should be encouraged. The possibility of offering an extension of their stay to students from third countries should be particularly considered (ibid. p. 146).

In other words, managing migratory flows effectively offers the EU one opportunity to even out the imbalances that the ageing of the European working population and a reduction in the growth potential of the economy cause. But what about the labour markets of new EU member countries such as Estonia? Will the Bologna Process increase the migration of skilled labour from there to the EU?

Human capital theory indicates that individuals and their families take on the costs of schooling in order to earn more in the future. In other words, humans are a kind of *homini economicae* who invest money and are willing to take the 'pain' of schooling as well as forgo earnings because they know (or believe they know) that educational institutions are adding qualifications such as knowledge and skills to their human capital which, in turn, allow them to be more productive and/or innovative in the future. In the long-term, the direct as well as indirect costs that students and their families encounter make sense if the total costs are lower than the discounted benefits. But it must be stressed that according to human capital theory, training is not the only way to increase one's benefits. Additionally returns can be increased by migrating and/or engaging in a job search.

One can make a number of observations based on this theory. On the face of it, introduction of short degrees promises to lower the cost and time required to become a university graduate in countries where a bachelor degree or its equivalent has traditionally meant a minimum of four years of higher education. Theoretically this should save resources since it allows students with limited academic aspirations to enter the labour market sooner. Yet, this may turn out to be an empty promise in countries such as Estonia because the actual labour market has not indicated that it will *de facto* recognise the three-year university degree. Quite the opposite: individuals who occupy managerial positions today have a minimum four but often five years of (*soviet*) university education. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that they will continue to hire graduates with equally long educational backgrounds for jobs that require a university degree. Since this situation is likely to continue into the future, one can, with reasonable confidence, suggest that most Estonian students are going to study for five years due to the Bologna Process. A three-year university degree will simply not allow university graduates to find many attractive or even satisfying options to enter the labour market.

Furthermore, recent developments indicate that the labour market might also *de jure* introduce entrance barriers for graduates with three year university education. For instance, the Estonian Bar Association changed its internal regulations at the General Assembly on March 4, 2004. According to the new regulation, only individuals with a master's degree in law can become members. Furthermore, they recommended that the Estonian Ministry of Justice introduce changes to the State Legal Protection Act that is currently being discussed at the Parliament, in order to restrict the legal right to represent a client at court to individuals with a master's degree in law.

Actually, it matters little whether one has to study for five years because of legal or other labour market entrance barriers. What matters is the fact that introduction of 3 + 2 system extends the study period and increases the total cost of education. That is, if the number of state-commissioned study places does not increase, while the labour market continues to demand graduates who have five years of university education, many students will need to (continue to) pay for their education. The alternative is a poor one—to become unemployed or accept a job that is well below personal and social expectations.

In order to earn back the substantial amounts of resources invested or to simply increase the returns, graduates might be tempted to start actively looking for employment abroad—according to the human capital theory. The decision about whether an individual migrates or not is, according to the empirical studies of labour economists, influenced by age, family circumstances, distance, unemployment, educational attainment, as well as foreign labour market entrance barriers such as language, visa, and required licences. Generally speaking, young, unemployed, well-educated, single, individuals who are not narrowly specialised and do not have school-age children are most likely to migrate. What's more, "[t]he higher one's educational attainment, all else being equal, the more likely it is that one will migrate" (McConnell et al. 2003, p. 281)!

How can this be explained? Migration brings to the migrant additional monetary and non-monetary costs such as transportation, forgone earnings during the move and psychological costs of leaving one's family, friends and country. The tendency of the well-educated to be more likely to migrate suggest that

> people who have college degrees may attach fewer psychic costs ... to leaving their home-towns. Many college students initially migrate to new areas to attend school in the first place, and this experience may make it easier for them to move again when new economic opportunities are present. Or perhaps the fact that these people moved geographically to attend college indicates that they have lower innate psychic costs of or stronger preferences for migration than those who did not make that same choice initially. For whatever reasons, studies show that people who move once are more inclined to migrate again (McConnell et al. 2003, p. 282).

Although these points are rather telling, one can gain further understanding of why the Bologna Process could lead to a brain-drain. To reiterate, the process aims to increase the mobility of students and the transparency of degrees within Europe. Should it succeed, many more students would start going abroad for education, leading to a situation where employers would need to start making judgements about the value of foreign degrees. Kwok and Leiland argue that

> employers in the country training the students have a more accurate (but not necessarily more optimistic) judgement of the true productivity of students than have employers in the students' native country (Kwok and Leiland 1982, p. 91).

Therefore, graduates remaining abroad receive a wage equal to their true productivity because host country employers have learned with time the value of university degrees earned in their own host country. Graduates returning home, on the other hand, would receive (only) a wage equal to the average productivity of all returning graduates. This happens because employers of the indigenous country are unable to evaluate the value of a specific degree earned abroad. This logic allows Kwok and Leiland to conclude that the only ones to lose from returning are the students who graduated from foreign elite institutions, that is, 'the brains'.

Furthermore, graduates who remain abroad with the initial aim of staying only temporarily (in order to legitimate their degree by working in organisations, experience that will hopefully be more comprehensible to employers in the indigenous country), will with the passage of time become more comfortable with living there and integrating into the society because

> [h]ighly skilled workers generally have more opportunities to acquire additional skills and knowledge than the less skilled ones. They have easier social acceptance in the receiving country and more easily overcome the difficulties of social and cultural integration. They are thus likely to be more successful and productive in the host country and have less compelling reasons to return (Ghosh 1996, p. 104).

The explanatory framework put forward by Bourdieu offers a further possibility of understanding the forces that are at work here. While human capital theory argues that resources invested in education increase the productivity of the individuals receiving it, Bourdieu also suggests that under certain conditions social capital can be converted to economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) and that the conversion of cultural capital to academic capital is "little less than automatic" (Bourdieu 1996, p. 171); social capital being defined as the

> aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1986, p. 47).

That is, investment of time, energy and resources in schooling not only helps in achieving higher productivity and earnings, but also provides membership of a group that offers the possibility of benefiting from network connections.

It is a familiar adage that friendships formed during student days often last a lifetime and that university graduates often rely on their personal connections to get a job, as well as in hiring new personnel. For instance, in the early 1970s Granovetter observed that people have a higher chance of learning about job openings through individuals whom they know, but who are not a part of their intimate circle, people like university classmates—a weak tie—rather than via close friends—a strong tie (Granovetter 1973; 1974). But if this is more or less common knowledge, would it not be rational for students to select their institutions of higher learning according to the school or programme's potential to establish a valuable network for job-seeking?

Although academic literature on university selection criteria does not confirm these expectations (Carter 2002), the potential cannot be denied. Indeed, the theory of 'job shopping' (Johnson 1978) together with trends on international student movement show how young people tackle the labour markets' imperfect information and entrance barriers, both of which reduce job mobility (not to be confused with migration) by offering people the possibility of overcoming the problem of imperfect information about their own abilities, as well as about the job (environment). That is, just as a first job allows an individual to learn about their abilities and preferences, so does education. Therefore, it is not surprising that young people often first undertake studies in their preferred location for living and employment. From a theoretical, neo-classical economics perspective this undertaking allows individuals to simultaneously invest in their human capital in more than one way. First, they invest resources (time and money) by attending school in the chosen field, which should increase their knowledge and productivity. Second, they invest resources in 'labour market research', by locating potential employers and applying for jobs.

To sum up the argument of this section, it can be stated that the Bologna Process will increase market completion among universities and therefore start to produce sub-optimal outcomes for students to a greater degree. This is likely to lead to increased inefficiency in spending and a growth in opportunism on the part of Estonian universities. With regard to the labour market, the Bologna Process will force most students to go through five years of university education because the Estonian labour market does not accept a three-year university degree. Furthermore, as a result of a prolonged study period and increased costs, it seems reasonable to suggest that

Estonian students will start looking more actively for study and employment opportunities abroad.

4. CULTURE

There is a widespread belief that education, science and health care were areas of state-socialism where considerable progress was achieved. Therefore, many individuals (especially in the *East*) expected higher education to be the strong *Gerschenkron*-ian medicine that would allow the region to catch up with the rest of the developed world. While some people reasoned that a regime change would finally allow individuals to cash in from investment, there were many who feared that a major brain-drain from East to West would begin. The post-communist transition experience has shown that neither of these speculations have materialised. First, the region has been unable to benefit from what was widely believed to be the most positive part of the socialist legacy (EBRD 2000, p. 123; Buiter 2000, p. 616). Second, Eastern Europe is, by and large, supplying cheap and not very well educated (illegal) labour rather than brains to the West (Brüker et al. 2000, p. 58).

These developments can be explained in a number of ways. On the one hand, the reluctance of foreign direct investors to invest in areas other than labour intensive production might suggest that the quality of (higher) education and research were not that high in the Eastern block, after all. Over the last decade there seems to be growing evidence that the high quality and coverage of East European education was a myth. Although these suggestions are based on different sets of data (World Bank 1996 uses the Second International Assessment of Education Progress and Koralyova's analysis of it; whereas Boeri and Brücker et al. use the Third International Math and Science Survey, and the Second Adult Literacy Survey), the conclusions are very similar: educational systems in the former soviet block laid emphasis on memorising data and suppressed analytical and independent creative thinking.

On the other hand, it is possible that at least part of the reason why migrants from Eastern Europe 'position' themselves in sectors of low-skilled labour could be explained by cultural prejudices. That is, the tendency of migrants from Central and East European countries going to Western Europe to take similar jobs to other migrant workers in the labour-intensive service sectors, construction and manufacturing industries, despite the fact that they are highly skilled (Brüker 2000), may also suggest an entirely different factor: the presence of a cultural bias that the West still has concerning the East.

This is a politically sensitive area, however, it will now be argued that some form of cultural bias exists that hinders skilled Eastern Europeans from finding employment in Western Europe. Subscribing to the 'screening theory', according to which education offers nothing more than a filtering service and a means of cultural selection, we will gain an additional insight into why Estonian students are so eager to study abroad.

More particularly, research that clarifies why the academic progress of students is highly correlated with their social class background asserts that

> schools have relatively little effect on learning, except insofar as they mould those disciplined cultural styles already prominent among the higher social classes; grades simply reward and certify displays of middle-class self-discipline (Collins 1979, p. 21).

In other words:

> [c]ultural exchanges are the empirical means by which all organised forms of stratification are enacted and by which the class struggle over work and material goods is carried out. Culture produces both horizontal and vertical relations. Persons with common cultural resources tend to form egalitarian ties as friends or co-members of a group. Such groups … are major actors within the struggles to control organisations, whether over work pace, gate-keeping criteria, the definition of positional duties and perquisites, assessment of merit, or personal advancement (Collins 1979, p. 59).

This being the case, it is understandable that young Estonians should see education as a coping strategy against cultural biases, and why it is also reasonable to expect the offspring of the upper social classes of Estonia would higher social classes to be very likely to try to socialise themselves and legitimate their educational credentials in West European institutions of higher learning. This would allow them to pick up foreign languages, values, norms, traditions, trends and the means to communicate these cultural attributes. This, in turn, would increase their chances of being accepted (and employed) among Westerners.

5. CONCLUSION

It should be mentioned that this chapter is not intended to make normative statements about what is good or bad or what is desirable or undesirable. More than anything, it was written to break the trend, set by local policy-makers and academic elites alike, of not questioning or trying to understand what may be behind the Bologna Process. Anything that brings

Estonia closer to Europe should not go unquestioned. Academics, who can and should be the critical voices of any society, are, in Estonia, either ignorant of the issue or disillusioned about the money that they or their institution receives from the EU. Just as it was in soviet times when the regime occasionally looked for support in return for material benefits, some Estonian academics are now being compensated rather generously for their collaboration; except now their support is sought for the EU legitimisation process. While a naïve attitude towards Bologna and the policy initiatives that its supporters unconsciously help to implement is more understandable among the 'well-financed' natural scientists, it is alarming that even some of the most critical representatives of the Estonian academic body, for instance Ruutsoo, seem to be infatuated. For instance, his view that becoming a member of the EU and participating in programmes such as Socrates and Erasmus makes Estonian culture much more visible in Europe (Ruutsoo 2003, p. 145) lacks profundity; however, it does demonstrate the power and effectiveness of the European Commission in designing and finding support for its polices.

Having said this, is it still reasonable to contemplate what a reasonable government should or could do? It seems that in the situation described, the Estonian government and institutions of higher learning should use other policy tools to bring about changes into higher education. As argued above, imitating the outward-looking economic development strategy in higher education will produce sub-optimal outcomes both for the state and for the students. The government should, therefore, be preoccupied with developing and implementing polices that directly influence the quality of higher education provided, rather than reforming the qualification structure for the third time since the restoration of independence. Ultimately, there seems to be no other option than to place the university teacher at the centre of higher education reform and stop pretending that the aim is to rapidly return to the Western world.

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Chapter 7

WHAT THE BOLOGNA PROCESS SAYS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

Some Experience from Macedonia

Dave Carter
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Process is itself a complex mix of diverse processes occurring within overlapping spheres, at different levels, and in diverse geo-socio-political contexts. Indeed the very term 'Bologna Process' is subject to differing interpretations, whether largely referring to the internal national processes occurring within participating states (Hackl 2001), or more commonly to the 'formal' process of biennial ministerial meetings and their surrounding documents, meetings and undertakings, initiated with the agreement of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999. For the purposes of the present chapter, an even wider definition of the term will be employed. As will be argued, the Process itself cannot be restricted merely to the official documents, meetings and undertakings. Rather, it must also include other areas, including *inter alia*: national processes; university-level agreements — including the input of Rectors Conferences; the input of the various student organisations; and crucially the underlying purposes of the agreements and the trends in higher education that led to the various agreements and now inform their implementation.

The first justification of this broad use of the term is the inherent complexity of the founding-point, or rather, arguably, founding-points of the

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Process. Whilst the nomenclature implies that the Process began in Bologna with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999), at least four other earlier events might lay strong claims to representing the actual founding point of it:

- ERASMUS—On 1 July 1987, the first real higher education programme of the then European Economic Community commenced, aimed at achieving university student and teacher mobility within the Community. It also marked the initial piloting and then introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS—Hackl 2001, p. 10-15).
- The Magna Charta Universitatum (Charta 1988)—On 18 September 1988, at Bologna University, the rectors of over 300 European Universities signed a document that set out their vision of the "part that universities [would] be called upon to play" in the changing Europe and wider international context.
- The Lisbon Convention (Convention 1997)—Agreed on 11 April 1997 at a conference held jointly under the auspices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, the Convention represented a major step in the inter-state process of providing adequate mutual-recognition of higher education qualifications.
- The Sorbonne Declaration (Declaration 1998)—On 25 May 1998, the "ministers in charge of higher education" from Germany, France, Italy and the UK signed a largely political-declarative document that set out the goal of an open area of European higher education and the harmonisation of the frameworks of degrees and cycles.

Whether or not any meaningful determination can be made as to the 'true' founding-point of the Process, each of these five events plays its part in the overall scheme. This multi-layered character extends beyond the undoubted turning point of 19 June 1999, on at least three levels. First, the Bologna Declaration itself can be regarded as something more than an international agreement, indeed it has been characterised as "an act of common commitment by national governments to the principle of 'Europeanisation' of higher education", and as an important 'pillar' of educational development at the European level (EAIE 1999). Second, the formal Process itself expands to cover a range of different fora for discussion, agreement and implementation—for example, the Official Bologna Follow-up Seminars and through the involvement of non-state actors, primarily the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB). But there remains a third level, which necessitates looking beyond these elements of the Process in order to be able to interpret and understand its implications for those most intimately involved in its real implementation, teachers and students in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the participating countries. This final element entails the need to refer to the wider context, to the apparently external or peripheral statements and references, and to the holistic intentions behind the Process, including the contexts in which they were conceived. It is the necessary process of interpretation for implementation in practice, because this is the reflection of the broad-based role of universities in contributing to the initiation and continuation of the Process.

Whilst all of these three levels are essential references for anyone seeking to adopt and implement reforms in the light of the Process, it is arguable that the third level becomes all the more pressing as the sphere of implementation moves ever further from the original context of the Process' conception. Put another way, as the Bologna Process expands to encompass countries whose situation, context and history differ significantly from those of the originating states—be they the Bologna 29, the EU 15, the Sorbonne 4, or whichever other count is taken—then the interpretation of it for practical implementation must entail a wide reading of the key documents, as well as taking references from beyond these key texts. It is just such a situation that will form the subject of this short contribution, which will recall and consider attempts made to address one key aspect of Bologna implementation, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), in one new signatory state—Macedonia.[1]

2. WHAT BOLOGNA SAYS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Bologna Process, even with a broad reading, says perhaps surprising little about the actual process of teaching and learning in University. The focus is instead on the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) through the structuring of degrees, their compatibility and comparability to support mobility including recognition and a credit transfer system, and quality assurance, as well as the "necessary European dimensions in higher education". As the Process has expanded within the formal structures, further areas of focus have emerged within these broad aims, such as joint degrees, details of the three levels of degree (Bachelor, Master and

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[1] Officially referring to itself as the Republic of Macedonia, the state under consideration remains largely known to the wider international community by the label 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', or more simply FYROM. The name Macedonia will be used throughout this chapter so as to acknowledge both positions in this long-standing and unfortunate international disagreement. The international law aspects of this issue are well covered by Craven (1995) and Janev (1999).

Doctorate) within the two main cycles (undergraduate and graduate), and the social dimensions of the Process. This apparent omission of direct reference to the teaching and learning process lends itself relatively easily to justification in at least three directions, either:

- A perception that such matters did not require specific attention within the Process, presumably due to the already relatively advanced progress within the participating states;
- An acceptance of the inherent difficulty in addressing such issues, perhaps due to the considerable national diversity of teaching and learning traditions; or
- A determination that the matter was simply not an integral part of the core Process of creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Each of these possible justifications needs to be considered. Even a cursory survey of teaching and learning practices across the original Bologna countries—or even of just the Sorbonne states—will quickly reveal a considerable diversity of practice and a significant lack of focus and attention on the teaching and learning process. The so-called 'massification' of higher education that has been occurring across Europe has placed strains and demands on systems that were ill-adapted to making the necessary reforms. In the UK, for example, this process essentially began in the final years of the Conservative government, at the end of the 1980s. Between 1989-1994 student numbers rose by 50 percent. However, at the same time, the introduction of the Research and Assessment Exercise (RAE), which linked funding to research output, placed significant pressure on academics to focus more on their research than on their teaching (Shattock 2000). Subsequently some focus was placed on the teaching process following the government's 1997 Dearing Report, including the creation of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN)[2] and the creation of Teaching and Learning units in most institutions, which now offer training in teaching for new staff at least. But this process was very much at its beginning as the Sorbonne and the Bologna Declarations were being drawn up. Elsewhere in Europe, the same lack of focus on teaching was evident, for example in many systems, including Germany and France, the process of *habilitation* for academics was, and remains, an exclusively research focussed process, with no corollary in the teaching profession. This paucity of focus on the teaching process is all the more evident in contrast to the attention that has been paid to it in, perhaps most notably, Australia and the United States over the last three decades at least, and more recently in the UK (see e.g. Biggs 2003; Leamnson 1999; Light 2001; Cowan 1998). Nevertheless, as has been indicated, there was at the time of the agreements a growing awareness of the issues of teaching and learning in at least some of the participating states.

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[2] See <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/>

Perhaps the most plausible of the three directions of the justification is the inherent difficulty in addressing the teaching process, both nationally and internationally. Nationally, in Europe, there exists considerable resistance amongst many academics to the process of considering teaching and learning. Beyond the inherent conservatism of the profession, there remains a sometimes caricatured scepticism along the twin lines that teaching is not in itself a science worthy of especial attention and that the process of lecture-plus-tutorial has been used effectively since the time of Plato's Academy! In addition, there remains a strong presumption amongst many academics that experience as a teacher necessarily means expertise or, more familiarly for anyone engaged in 'training' faculty members, that such methodology of teaching is only for those new to the profession. For example, in the introduction to a standard handbook on the subject in the UK, the authors offer the following typical caveat:

> This book is intended primarily for new lecturers in higher education. Established lecturers interested in exploring recent developments in teaching, learning and assessment will find the book valuable (Fry 1999, p. 1).

With this formulation they address the full audience, whilst offering the deference perceived to be necessary to more experienced academics.

To this then is added the perceptions of difference as between the national models of higher education. The three most dominant being characterised as the 'professional training model' (France), the 'Humboldtian research model' (Germany) and the 'personal development model' (UK—Hackl 2001, p. 19-20). Whilst it is clear that there was, and indeed still is, considerable diversity between these models of higher education, the fact remains that they are more related to the structure and framework of the degree than to the practicalities of the teaching and learning process. The foundation of broad 'information transfer' sessions (lectures), coupled with some lesser amount of close(r) supervision (tutorials or seminars), remains common between the three. Indeed, the strongest divergence was in the mechanism of assessment — as between written or oral testing. But even here the difference was more of form than substance, as the nature of what was tested evidenced broad commonality. Whatever divergence there is in approaches to teaching and learning, the extent of divergence between degree frameworks seems to have been greater, and within which there exist more strongly held beliefs and even dogmas, and yet this forms the express central focus of the Bologna Process. Meaning that a focus on teaching and learning should, if anything, have been easier to achieve convergence upon.

Finally, there is the justification that the teaching and learning process is separable from the core of matters considered under the Process. In one sense the separation has an air of plausibility—as the separation of research and 'degrees' has been made through the separate project of the creation of the European Research Area (ERA), so can the separation between the teaching and learning process and degree frameworks be made. However, this comparable distinction is itself a slightly false one, as has been seen in the recent process around the Berlin ministerial meeting where the importance of the links between the ERA and the EHEA were stressed. This was most evident in the emphasis on the doctoral and post-doctoral levels within the EHEA. Prior to the meeting, the EUA had gone further, within the Graz Declaration (Declaration 2003), emphasising the importance of "research-led teaching and learning". Likewise, the perception that the teaching and learning process is separable from the creation of the EHEA is also a false one. Rather, as will be argued, it is implicit within that very Process. As such, the fact that it was not made explicit perhaps evidences that it was taken to follow logically from key elements within the Process, or/and that the perceived diversity within the participating states meant that any explicit statements of the requirements would have become overly cumbersome and likely to hinder the ultimate adoption of the key elements. As with so much of the Bologna Process, much was left implicit, and was left for universities and those working within them to agree and develop themselves.

Whatever the reasons for the lack of reference or attention to teaching and learning within the Process, it will be argued that it remains an inherent element of the process, and in the context of this chapter, that the practical implementation of Bologna within faculties and departments requires a focus on core issues of teaching and learning as a basis for any meaningful progress. The starting point of the justification for this view are the core aims of the Process—the comparability of degrees; the convergence of the systems within two main cycles; and the facilitation of mobility through the use of the ECTS. The further element of quality assurance is a continuation of this same idea. To summarise the argument, these core elements taken together are, in themselves, largely superficial unless they have a basis within the teaching and learning process. The cornerstone of the entire EHEA project is that of comparability as between diverse educational experiences, in different institutions, in different disciplines and in different countries. And the central mechanism for the achievement of the comparability is that of ECTS. This is the system that originated in the EEC ERASMUS scheme as a means through which periods of study abroad at another HEI could be credited within the home institution. This original system has changed significantly under Bologna, due to the complexity and scope of the whole project, to become a key tool in describing the entirety of a student's study—it has become a credit accumulation, as well as a transfer system:

> Initially designed to facilitate European mobility, ECTS has primarily been used so far on a small scale as a credit transfer system, with its impact limited to a relatively small number of students. The further development of ECTS into a credit accumulation system at national level, speeded up by the Bologna Process, effectively means mainstreaming ECTS as a generalised credit system for the emerging European Higher Education Area. It thus becomes of key importance to Europe's higher education institutions and students (EUA/Swiss Confederation 2002).

This mechanism of description facilitates both the envisaged vertical and horizontal comparability, and therefore mobility. Vertical, as between Bachelor, Master, and Doctor degrees, and within those degrees. Horizontal, as between programmes (within or between institutions and countries). It also allows the necessary comparability and multi-directional mobility between HEIs and the workplace, both in terms of 'employability' of graduates, and in support of 'lifelong learning'. For the ECTS to be able to support this extensive process of mobility, it needs to embody a number of key elements. Transfer relies on trust, which can only be secured on a wide scale when supported both by transparency and quality assurance. ECTS

> is based on the principle of mutual trust and confidence in the academic judgements made by staff at other institutions (Bradley 2001, p. 5).

All of these elements require some level of harmonisation of the internal processes of educational activity. However, it is within the inherent function of structuring study programmes that the real heart of the matter is revealed. The centre point of any credit system is the definition of the 'credit', the basis upon which it is calculated. Traditional methods of calculating credits include: student-teacher contact time (essentially just classes); student workload (including out-of-class study); learning outcomes (emphasising the output of the process, rather than the input). The method of calculation adopted under the Bologna-ECTS is essentially a hybrid. The system is:

> [A] student-centred system based on the *student workload* required to achieve the objectives of a programme. These objectives are preferably specified in terms of learning outcomes (EUA/Swiss Confederation 2002, para. IV).

It is precisely in the allocation of such credits to courses within a study programme that the core of the Bologna Process is revealed. The allocation actually entails two equally important, complementary approaches, which need to be employed simultaneously. The first approach allocates credits to courses on a top-down basis, taking the full programme as a reference point. Credits allocated to individual programme-components "reflect the quantity of work each component requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year's study" (ibid.). As such, they are merely numerical indicators of the student workload that each course requires. On their own, credits do not describe the quality, complexity, level, or importance of courses.

The second, bottom-up approach draws on the idea that study programmes and courses must first be examined in view of their Learning Outcomes:

> Besides credits, learning outcomes and competences are the other crucial elements. By defining learning outcomes, standards can be set with regard to the required level of discipline-related skills and general academic or transferable skills. ECTS credits are required as the building bricks for underpinning the learning outcomes (González and Wagenaar 2003, p. 44).

That is, in face of statements such as

> what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (SEEC 2001, p. 3).

The meaningful allocation of credits requires the explanation of what a learner is expected to be able to do after the successful completion of the course. And further, that the learning outcomes for a course are directly linked to the learning outcomes of the entire study programme. As such, courses have credits allocated to them in terms of how they are aligned within a coherently designed and quality-driven study programme, which can meet the needs and demands of students and, in a wider context, of employers and society, and ultimately "A Europe of Knowledge".

Once specified, these learning outcomes provide the basis for accurate credit allocation based upon a realistic estimate of the relative workload necessary to achieve those outcomes. This is most effectively, but not necessarily, done via the concept of notional learning time, "the number of hours which it is expected a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes of that level" (SEEC 2001, p. 4).

Taking both approaches together requires a meaningful re-examination of the entire study programme and process — including specification of components such as learning outcomes, generic and discipline-specific competencies, assessment criteria and credit levels in course and curriculum design. It also provides a mechanism to evaluate whether there are needs for course or curricula redesign in view of the objectives of the full study programme. Ultimately, this parallel, integrated approach is essential to prepare the ground for the accurate and meaningful allocation of credits, and for coherent, learner-focused, quality-based, transparent study programmes, better able to address both the needs of individual learners and society as a whole (Román and Carter 2003, pp. 1-4)

This then is the argument from 'theory', that practical Bologna implementation requires a focus on teaching and learning. And that this is all the more so in systems further removed from the 'western European mainstream', precisely because the requirement derives from an underlying awareness of it in many of those systems in which the Process originates, and which have contributed so much to the wider and deeper development of it. It now remains to present this view in practice, drawing on the author's experience within Macedonia. But before that experience is detailed, some time will be taken to offer a general characterisation of higher education in Macedonia.

3. MACEDONIA—A CASE IN POINT

Macedonia emerged as an independent state as a result of the break-up of Yugoslavia at the start of the 1990s. On 17 November 1991, the Parliament of Macedonia passed The Constitution, marking its independence. However, the early existence of the state was dominated by two strong pressures—one internal and one external. Internally, the issue was of potential ethnic tensions largely concerning the status of the roughly 25 percent Albanian population within the state—which problem could not be isolated from the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Kosovo. This issue has remained the main domestic political issue in Macedonia throughout its independent existence, not least as tension became conflict in 2001. And it is as evident in the context of higher education as it is in all other aspects of the state. Externally, the key issue was recognition of statehood. Under the EC Arbitration process for dealing with the former Yugoslavia, Macedonia was initially denied recognition, essentially due to objections from Greece, based upon the use of the historic name for the Republic and of the Hellenic Vergina star as its national emblem, particularly on the national flag. These two aspects were regarded in Greece as symbolic of inherent claims over Greek territory also known by the name Macedonia. This issue led to a protracted period of negotiations that was only partially resolved in April 1993 when the UN admitted Macedonia as a member-state

> being provisionally referred to for all purposes within the United Nations as 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State (UN 1993).

Although most states recognised Macedonia following the UN's lead, the issue of the name remains unresolved.

This extremely brief background then sets the scene for a short overview of the higher education system in Macedonia. The system comprises three accredited universities—two state and one private. The oldest and largest is SS. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje (UCM), which was founded in 1949, and now comprises 24 faculties, with an approximate enrolment of 35,000 students. Founded in 1979, the second state institution is St. Kliment Ohridski University (UKO), which has its main locations in Bitola, Prilep and Ohrid, all in the south of the country. It comprises 5 faculties, and has an approximate enrolment of 9,000 students. The combined state University enrolment of 44,710 students in 2002 represented a 64 percent increase since 1994 (Uzelac 2003; Morgan 2004). The South-East European University, in Tetovo (SEEU), was founded in 2001 with strong international backing. It represents both a dynamic, multi-lingual University in Macedonia, but also has a special commitment to supporting the Albanian language and culture. It has an approximate enrolment of 5,000 students, studying across five majors. All three institutions exist in a context of additional pressures—from the attempted or projected emergence of smaller, independent private universities; from the general debate current in the country as to the desirability or otherwise of a third state university; and, from the ongoing, complex issues surrounding the existence and status of the so-called 'old ethnic Albanian Tetovo University'. Whilst none of these issues should be dismissed out of hand, they need not unduly influence the present discussion.

For most of its existence, the Macedonian higher education system was part of the wider system in Yugoslavia, and UCM was the dominant player with UKO occupying a largely supporting role. Within this context, and typical of it, the faculties themselves were highly autonomous, such that they received funding direct from government. The central university structures, including the *rectorate*, which are traditionally weak in comparison to Western models, are especially so in Macedonia. And this is widely recognised as hindering the effective implementation of the Bologna objectives (Uzelac 2003; UNESCO-CEPES/EUA 2003).[3] Whilst this problem is common in the former Yugoslav states, the solutions to it have varied. Croatia and Slovenia have been relatively successful in their reforms, and some changes have been achieved in Bosnia & Herzegovina, while in Serbia & Montenegro and Macedonia they have not. At least one contributory factor for this in Macedonia has been the previously mentioned instability within the state. Coalition governments have remained relatively weak, and there has been a high turnover of Education Ministers. Added to this, as with most transition economies, there is pressure coming from the IMF and World Bank to reduce the relatively high proportion of GDP in the public sector, which then squeezes the finances available for universities, just as they face ever-expanding enrolment demands (Morgan 2004; Zgaga 2003, p. 3-5). Finally, since independence, the fact of Macedonia's 'micro-system' of higher education has arguably served to further hinder any attempts at reform, even at the faculty, or sub-faculty level. There is, in many cases, only one 'entity' involved in teaching a particular discipline, the synergies of co-operation and competition are absent. The prevailing practices of the former era remain in structure and organisation, and also in terms of the teaching and learning methods used, as well as in the structuring of curricula.

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[3] However, the Ministry of Education and Science has recently acknowledged this issue as problematic and the "necessity" of reform (Acevski 2003, p. 9)

In addition to this broad characterisation of the position of higher education in Macedonia, some more pragmatic remarks can be made. As an academic from Western Europe it is easy to forget the importance of basic aspects of the working process. Certainly, the authors of the various Bologna documents were not faced with salaries as relatively low as those of academics in Macedonia, which are comparable with those in almost any country in South-East Europe. Nor did they operate from offices such as, for example, those in the now crumbling socialist-concrete campus of the Faculty of Philosophy of UCM, on the north side of the Vardar River in Skopje. Offices in which fresh, clean daylight is in relatively short supply; where the furniture has almost certainly encountered many more students than the academic temporarily occupying it; and where computers are very much an item of status, available to the few rather than the many. Similarly, reflections on the teaching and learning process in Macedonia—again as in so much of South-East Europe—need always to have a view of the teaching rooms available, or indeed not available, and of the limited library resources at the disposal of staff and students alike. But these remain merely personal, pragmatic observations, and it now remains to consider the specifics of Macedonia's moves into the Bologna Process before turning finally to recall and consider attempts made to aid the implementation of ECTS in Macedonia.

4. MACEDONIA'S MOVES TOWARDS BOLOGNA

On 25 July 2000, the Parliament of Macedonia adopted a new Higher Education Law (Law 2000). This law had essentially taken 9 years to produce, not least because of the ongoing political vicissitudes in the country that have already been mentioned. A lesser additional factor in the delay, but not an insignificant one in the law's construction and perhaps confusion, was the developments in higher education thinking and practice across Europe that have become the Bologna Process, and which were taking place during this extended period. In the law's latter stages of drafting, the Lisbon Convention (Convention 1997), Sorbonne Declaration (Declaration 1998) and finally the Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999) itself were all agreed. This made for a complex and fast-moving international reference point for the drafters of the law, all the more so because they realised the importance of Macedonian higher education falling into line with this wider European process. This realisation is immediately obvious whenever one speaks to anyone even remotely involved in the drafting or implementation of the law—references to Lisbon and Bologna abound! Nevertheless, the law itself has a number of shortcomings. Indeed, the new government announced their intentions to change this law less than 18 months after its adoption under the previous government. And this process of reviewing the needed changes forms a significant backdrop to current developments in Macedonian higher education. On 16 July 2003 the Parliament adopted the *Changes and Ammendments to the on Higher Education Law,* which entered into force on 3 August, as the first stage of the revision of the legal context of higher education in Macedonia (Acevski 2003). Whilst the revisions clearly indicate the Ministry of Education and Science's strong intention to make genuine progress in the moves towards Bologna compliance, a number of key problems remain untackled (Morgan 2004, p. 24).

Just two key areas of difficulty with the law will be highlighted here—the status of the institutions and the organisation of study programmes—since both serve to illustrate the problems faced with reform efforts in the universities so far, and were key issues in the implementation of the project that forms the focus of the next section. But before these shortcomings are examined, it needs to be noted that both of these areas have been identified by the Ministry as key areas for attention and future amendment in the context of the Bologna Process (Acevski 2003, para. 2.1).

As has already been acknowledged, the extent of faculty autonomy in Macedonia is especially pronounced and as such is a likely impediment to reform efforts. This situation is frequently acknowledged, and indeed has been further confirmed by the accreditation in April 2003 of a private Faculty of Social Sciences in Skopje. Nevertheless, the Higher Education

Law did absolutely nothing to change this situation—it simply served to reinforce the existing relationship. Although this has been acknowledged and subsequent Ministry statements have again referred to it as an important area for immediate attention, the fact remains that until such attention is paid, and reforms instigated, this high degree of autonomy will hinder coherent reforms, not least in the promotion of horizontal mobility and of inter-disciplinary areas of study (Acevski 2003; Ančevski 2003, p. 7; Hadzisce in Uzelac 2003; Uzelac 2003, p. 5-7).

As regards the organisation of study programmes, the law specifies the official duration required for the various qualifications at respective levels. For undergraduate studies, this is specified as 4-6 years, with taught graduate programmes lasting 3-4 semesters, and doctoral studies a minimum of 2 years (Law 2000; Acevski 2003; Uzelac 2003). Whilst this framework is set to be altered in accordance with the Bologna Process by the year 2005 (Acevski 2003, para. 2.1), it remains an impediment to current reform efforts. This is all the more so because the law also specifies the *minima* and *maxima* of classes per week for undergraduate study—"at least 20 and at most 30 classes of weekly lectures, seminars, exercises/training and other forms of education providing" (Art. 106). Whilst there is a slight degree of softening of this in the subsequent paragraphs, it represents one of the most fundamental restrictions on the effective implementation of Bologna reforms, most especially the ECTS and the two-cycle restructuring. This is so because such a relatively heavy class schedule leaves little room for students to engage in active learning—itself part of the philosophy of a more socially relevant education process. It also implies a large number of courses, potentially complicating the process of coherently organising the curriculum (Miclea 2003, p. 7-8; Zgaga 2003, p. 7). A little mentioned point in this regard is that reducing excessive student class time could do something to offset the problems of ever increasing student numbers, with the concomitant increases in class sizes, which is itself often stated as an obstacle to reforming teaching and learning methods (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2003, p. 37). And this issue has not been mentioned specifically as being in need of attention within any of the Ministry's various documents, nor in those of the University's. Whilst it is to be hoped that the broader commitments to Bologna-compliance will encompass this issue of student-workload, this is unlikely until one of the underlying causes of this situation is itself addressed—the fact that salaries are often linked directly to number of hours taught (Zgaga 2003, p. 7).

The final element in this characterisation of the organisation of study programmes is arguably both a consequence of the same logic that has failed to deal with the issues of duration and class-time overload, and is also a feature typical of South-East European Universities—the dominant role of the university teacher. This is represented in the twin issues of the lack of optional or free elective courses, and the traditional teaching methods. For the former, there have of course been the general statements in support of the need to increase the availability of elective courses (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2003, p. 43; Ančevski 2003, pp. 7, 9-11).

However, in Ančevski (2003), which was prepared in the name of the Rector of UCM, for the UNESCO-CEPES/EUA conference *The External Dimension of the Bologna Process*, Bucharest, 8 March 2003, the reality seems to belie the stated claim, that curricula should developed so as to

> surpass […] the existing model of curricula… and constructing a structure of curricula comprising obligatory, elective and facultative teaching disciplines.

The case-study presents the

> new study programmes of the Faculty of Pharmacy in Skopje as one of the first faculties that has contemporary study programmes according to the credit transfer system of studying.

The 5-year Master degree—which includes no element of shorter Bachelor degree—presented as illustrative comprises a total of 41 units of which just 3 are optional. In addition, every module is assessed by written or oral exam, despite the later assertion in the document that something which the University has already done is the "modernization of the way of realization of the teaching and exams with persistent respect of the regulation for continuous evaluation" (ibid. p. 22). This same case-study is presented in the University's 'Self-Evaluation Report' (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2003, Appendix 12).

Indeed, the 'Rulebooks' adopted by the two state universities regarding ECTS implementation expressly require programmes of study to be subdivided into compulsory and optional subjects—the latter generally also being further sub-divided. For example Art 13 states:

> Elective and optional subjects carry credits under the same criteria as those applicable for mandatory subjects.
>
> The ratio between the mandatory and elective (specific to a profession/direction) and elective optional subjects and subject of choice may stand as follows:
>
> - Credits for mandatory subjects — between 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the total number of credits;

- Profession/ direction specific elective subjects — between 20 per cent to 40 per cent of the total number of subjects;
- Credits for elective optional subjects — between 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the total number (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2001).

However, the moves made so far have shown little sign of changing the basic framework. Again, it is arguable that this is simply a reflection of issues already raised—faculty autonomy, study programme duration and student workload—but it is equally plausibly a reflection of the strong inertia within the system. Support to the latter aspect is lent in various elements of the higher education law, for example:

> length of the studies is determined according to the *number of hours of teaching* per week (Law 2000, Art 111, emphasis added).

Whatever the systemic justifications for the lack of optional courses within study programmes, the real point of individual flexibility is in the methods used for instruction. But again the picture is much the same. The most recent Ministry publication on higher education makes the case most clearly, when commenting on the 'considerable' student dropout rate from state universities, in asserting that the

> low interest of the students for the study programmes [is] mostly caused by obsolete study programmes, use of traditional teaching and examination methodologies, [and] insufficient use of modern technologies (Acevski 2003, p. 5).

And this problem remains all but unaddressed, even in the numerous largely aspirational documents produced. For example, in UCM's 'Self Evaluation Report' (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2003), the section entitled "The student—the central subject in the educational process", over 4 pages, refers only once, towards the end, to the University's intention to modernise the "methods of teaching and examining, with consistent respect for the regulations on continuous assessment" (ibid. pp. 41-44). This of course is essentially justified by the higher education law—for example, with regard to the area of assessment, it states

> The *checking of the knowledge* of the student is done continuously throughout the whole school year or throughout a semester and by means of exam taking [Sic!] (Law 2000, Art 107—emphasis added).

As such, the basic philosophy of the teaching and learning process is encapsulated in the idea of knowledge transmission, to be assessed by means of *Proverkata na znaenjeto* that carries a connotation of ‘knowledge recitation’. This is, of course, in part a consequence of the linguistic inertia inherent in the system, but again it reflects a lack of any clear indication of change. And this view is reinforced by the definition of ECTS offered in the law, which refers simply to workload – total yearly study load being divided into ECTS credits (Law 2000, Art 2 (19)), rather than any mention of the idea of learning outcomes, with this same formulation being repeated in the bylaws enacted by the two state universities. Again, there remains the obvious comment that at the time the law was written and adopted by the two universities, this was one of the accepted definitions—the adoption of the now standard version referring to learning outcomes was not agreed until the Zürich Conference in October 2002. It must be noted optimistically that the most recent Ministry publication on higher education, with reference to the structuring of degrees, states that:

> By the year 2005, the country will elaborate a framework for comparable and compatible qualifications. This means that the qualifications will be described in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competencies and profile (Acevski 2003, p. 7).

Yet, even with this statement, and recalling the earlier observation that this same document specifically raised the issue that “traditional teaching and examination methodologies” contributed to the low interest of students in the study programmes, the Ministry document makes no clear reference to any change in the teaching and learning approaches to be used anywhere in the higher education sector.

Before concluding these remarks about the progress towards Bologna in Macedonia, mention needs be made of the SEEU. Whilst this relatively new university remains subject to the same laws and regulations as the two state institutions, it is arguably in a somewhat different position. The University’s study programmes were originally created on the basis of ECTS, albeit with something of a US style about them, presumably in part the result of the role played by Indiana University as academic underwriter. Also, as a creation largely of international agencies, and with a significant level of international staff, considerable external experience and expertise was applied at an early stage. Whilst the management of SEEU are the first to admit that the system is by no means perfect, it is fair to say that the base-line is significantly higher than that in the two state institutions in terms of the coherence of curricula, teaching and learning approaches and methods of assessment. However, any positive effect that this situation in SEEU might exert over the wider system is largely neutralised by its treatment as alien outsider by most of the rest of the academic community in Macedonia.

The situation of SEEU notwithstanding, the foregoing remarks taken as a whole tend to create a picture of the practical realities being a long way from the expressions of intent and the practice of the universities, and to a lesser extent the Ministry of Education and Science, with regard to Bologna compliance, and specifically of restructuring curricula in the context of the ECTS.

What was, and in some cases remains, of perhaps greater concern is the fact that in many instances these differences between statements and practice were either obscured by superficial activities, or even in a sense actively denied through overstatement of progress and achievement. Specifically, in a number of official documents and statements, the successes and progress made are emphasised in a manner that renders them largely implausible in relation to the wider context already recounted. The clearest example of this is in relation to the process of ECTS introduction within UCM. Within the Rulebook adopted in November 2001 regarding the introduction of a credit system in line with the Higher Education Law, there is stated an "ultimate deadline for adjustment" of "the academic year 2004/2005" (SS. Cyril and Methodius University 2001, Art. 30). However, during the course of the academic year 2002-03, a number of faculties were pressured to complete compliance by the beginning of the academic year 2003-04. In addition, an official report from the University, included within a Ministry document published in May 2003, refers to the introduction of ECTS in 2001, "by organizing 3 workshops with local and experts from abroad". The report continues that it was initially applied in 2 faculties and "currently is implemented at 10 faculties" (Cenevska and Uzelac 2003, p. 12).

Later in the same report, there is a reference to ECTS being introduced at 12 faculties. In addition to the issue of quantity, it will be recalled that the question of quality has been raised regarding programmes that have been (re)designed "according to" ECTS. It should also be noted that these same seminars are also mentioned within the contribution of UKO to this same Ministry publication (Panovska in Uzelac 2003, p. 23). Recalling that there are 24 faculties within UCM, having introduced ECTS in twelve of them would represent truly remarkable progress, not least given the already noted autonomy of those same faculties. Overall then, these statements tend to prompt at least initial doubts as to their veracity. There is little value, however, in making too much of this particular example, or indeed of other similar ones. The point being made is merely one of an impression gained within the system of an approach that is to some degree superficial, and contains an element of 'box-ticking'.

These points having been made, it remains to note that Macedonia took two significant steps towards Bologna compliance during 2003. In March it ratified the Lisbon Convention that had previously been signed. Then, in

September, along with six other countries (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, and Serbia and Montenegro), it was admitted to membership of the Bologna Process at the Berlin Ministerial meeting (Communiqué 2003).

5. IMPLEMENTING ECTS IN MACEDONIA—EXPERIENCES FROM 2001-04

Since its independence and especially following the flaring of ethnic tensions in 2001, Macedonia has experienced considerable interest and involvement from the international community. This is as true in education as it is elsewhere. Significant players have included TEMPUS programme as a co-ordinator of many other actors; the Soros-funded organisations—primarily via the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM); the World Bank; the European Commission; the Council of Europe; UNESCO-CEPES; OSCE; as well as a number of national governments. In the main, the various efforts of these organisations have not been co-ordinated with each other. As such, there has been a failure to maximise impact, and in some instances there has been overlap or even contradiction of efforts. This state of affairs was recognised by the Ministry of Education and Science, which, as a result, organised a conference in June 2003 to evaluate the various efforts in all sectors of education, and to offer a chance for greater co-ordination of them.[4] Despite the relative lack of actual co-ordination as a result of this conference, one significant factor was the clarification from the Ministry of the establishment of the 'Bologna Follow-up Group', one of the functions of which will be to oversee co-ordination of such efforts in future.

Within this broad sweep of international involvement in Macedonian education, and specifically Bologna reforms, the specific focus of this chapter is on the aspects of curricular reform within ECTS implementation. This is not to denigrate the absolute importance of the more administrative elements of ECTS—both in its accumulation and transfer aspects—which will not however be addressed directly here.[5] The present focus, in line with comments made earlier, is on the curricular reforms and teaching and learning implications for meaningful ECTS implementation within study programmes, and as a necessary foundation for genuine mobility, flexibility, coherence and the introduction of the two main cycles of degrees. In this narrowed context, the main reform initiatives can be grouped into three areas, each one represented by a single main project:

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[4] *Where are we now—Where are we going?* (Skopje, 10 June 2003), organised through FOSIM.

[5] One example of a significant effort in this regard—which also illustrates the need to integrate both administrative and 'pedagogic' elements of ECTS implementation—is the TEMPUS supported university management project in biotechnologies involving both state universities (Hadzisce in Uzelac 2003, p. 30)

- General Level—Creation of a local expertise and training capacity for work across all faculties, including administration, in Macedonia
- Middle Level—Provision of generalised training in broad aspects of ECTS for discipline-based groups, and support for their own curricular reform
- Departmental Level—Dedicated work directly within a department for the full implementation of ECTS, both curricular and administrative aspects

The classification of the projects into these three broad areas of approach was not, to the knowledge of the author, consciously conceived before any of the projects was implemented. In addition, each of the projects operated essentially in isolation—there was no effective collaboration, and at times not even effective communication between them, despite the clear potential.

The main project in the General Level Initiative commenced in the academic year 2001-2002. It was a project organised by the Higher Education section of FOSIM, conducted via the Institute of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Philosophy of UCM, and was supported by the Special and Extensions Programme (SEP) of the Central European University.[6] The Project had two main strands: organisation of four 3-day workshops for training different groups of university staff from both state universities in areas of ECTS; and, establishing and training a Local Expert Team (LET) to facilitate training of faculty representatives who would in future be responsible for ECTS implementation. The strongly mentioned 'international' dimension of the project was found in the participation of just one 'expert' from SEP, and only at one of the workshops, and in the contiguous initial training event for the LET. In addition, the LET made one visit to an institution in Budapest. The projected continuation of the project involved the LET, supported by SEP, conducting the further training envisaged in its creation. No evidence was available as to the successful continuation along these lines, although at least one additional half-day seminar, with further international participation, was organised in 2003.

The Departmental Level reform program consists of a number of smaller initiatives, organised under the umbrella of the TEMPUS office in Skopje.

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[6] See: <http://www.soros.org.mk/>.

The most frequently cited example of a success is that of the Department of Traffic and Transportation within the Faculty of Technical Sciences at UKO, which underwent a Joint Education Project aimed at university management for the implementation of ECTS. This initiative was intended as a pilot, and part of the project involved the production of a Guide and a Handbook on the matters of ECTS implementation (Panovska and Hadzisce in Uzelac 2003, pp. 23, 30). Although primarily having an 'administrative' focus, the project detail went beyond this to the curriculum. Nevertheless, the wider curri-cular impacts were not evident in the work of academic staff from other faculties from UKO, nor were the two aforementioned publications. Another example from this same source was the first pilot ECTS at the Faculty of Philosophy of UCM, within the context of the restructuring of the training and retraining system for teachers and trainers in the reformed Vocational Educational Training System (Hadzisce in Uzelac 2003). Again, little evidence of any impact was apparent even elsewhere within the Institute of Pedagogy, within the Faculty of Philosophy of UCM.

No comprehensive analysis has been made available of either of these projects or their impacts. In addition, the author's awareness of them is restricted to indirect experience only, so no attempt will be made to conduct such an analysis here. Instead, within the discussion of the project that has been characterised as the Middle Level approach, some remarks will be made about experiences which may be imputed indirectly to the first two projects described, and which will be returned to in the concluding section.

Before proceeding to describe the main project under consideration, and to consider its impact and effectiveness, some remarks need to be made about the author's role in it. At the time of the initial project implementation, the author was employed by the organising institution—the Civic Education Project (CEP)—as a Senior Programme Manager, with specific responsibility for teaching and learning projects. As such, once the original project had been conceived and funding secured, the author first became involved in the project when he was asked to further develop the project plan and to be one of a small team responsible for its implementation. The project was intended to run for two academic years, 2002-03 and 2003-04. Early in year two of the project the author ceased to be involved in the project for reasons unrelated to its content. As such, the consideration offered here cannot claim to be wholly objective, but will strive to be, on the understanding that these comments should allow the reader to make an informed assessment about the veracity or not of what is offered.

CEP was approached in 2002 by the US Embassy in Skopje to submit a proposal to the Educational and Cultural Affairs Section of the US Department of State (ECA) to address the issue of ECTS implementation in Macedonia. The proposal was constructed by CEP staff, without reference to the prior ECTS projects in Macedonia, as mentioned above. However, the project, as originally conceived, did envisage later collaboration with those efforts. When the project funding was awarded in June 2002, the process of refining the project began. Essentially the project — 'Higher Education Support for Social Sciences in Macedonia' (HESSS) — had 5 phases, which were also linked to wider CEP activities in the region:

- Establishing a CEP institutional presence in Macedonia, including setting up an office and employing a local project co-ordinator, which had already been planned for 2002-03, since CEP's work in Macedonia was relatively new and under-developed.
- Within the terms of reference of the project, to conduct research as to the level of ECTS awareness and compliance within faculties, and to both raise awareness of the project and ascertain levels of interest/commitment from institutions.
- Using an international team, to conduct a series of workshops and follow-up work, working with the teaching staff of faculties, where possible grouped together by discipline, as well as students from those same faculties.
- To establish a comprehensive set of support resources available to all academics and institutions in Macedonia.
- To conduct a full evaluation of the project, both to assess its impacts and scope for future work in Macedonia, and to consider its viability as a model for replication elsewhere in south-east Europe, and potentially further afield.

The first phase was completed in October-November 2002, which then marked the shift to the second phase. The process of contacting potential partner institutions took considerable time. The potential list was limited only by discipline—CEP's mission covers only social sciences in higher education. As this process proceeded, a number of elements of the Macedonian context, which have already been outlined above, began to emerge. For example, during a general presentation to senior members of faculties (mainly vice-rectors, deans and vice-deans) in January 2003, there was a strong indication that people understood the need for ECTS compliance, but lacked the tools to undertake this themselves and any real understanding of what would be required. Specifically, the need to involve academic staff, redesign courses as well as study programmes, and to address teaching and learning issues was little perceived—ECTS was regarded largely as an administrative/management issue. There was also a sense of frustration, and to some extent confusion, as to the context both of the law and of the universities' positions regarding it. Finally, the participation of SEEU at this presentation, as in the project itself, was considerably more informed and familiar with the issues, and as a consequence evidenced a clearer understanding of the needs, particularly of their teaching staff.

The core implementation phase was divided across the two years. During March-June 2003, the first two 3-day workshops were conducted for a total of five 'discipline groups': Economics, Historical Studies, Public Administration, Sociology and Social Work, Global Studies. The process was designed to be cumulative—the first focussing on the projected aims of the project, and laying the foundations of Bologna, Macedonian law and context, and the specific requirements of ECTS, including introducing the core concept of learning outcomes within the context of coherent curriculum planning. The initial session also involved the main project team for each group—in addition to one international trainer, plus a representative from the legal department of the Ministry and the Chief Academic Planning Officer of SEEU, each group had participation from a Discipline Leader (a senior US-based academic from the discipline, with curriculum reform experience) and a Resource Fellow (mid-level academic from Central Europe, again with relevant experience). The Discipline Leader and Resource Fellow were included to provide a duality of international reference points, and as a coordinating element of the workshops series, which would include a range of different trainers as the topics dictated, and to direct the ongoing process as between the workshops.

The second workshop was conducted in larger groups (two or three discipline groups merged), and focussed specifically on teaching and learning methodologies, conducted by two Macedonian and one American trainers from the Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking project (RWCT). The logic of this starting point was to begin at the most manageable level within the faculties—having teaching staff participate with the express consent of the Dean (or equivalent), in groups, and introducing them to the broad context of ECTS as a structure for curriculum reform, and therefore of approaches to teaching and learning. This latter element allowed participants to focus on the smallest and most manageable element in the process. That is, the approach taken was to provide tools that could be implemented 'in the classroom' immediately after the workshop, but within a framework that would later support more sophisticated changes. As well as later focus on teaching and learning, this greater sophistication expressly included what was to be the next workshop topic—course/module (re)design.

During the summer period, the project team sought to focus down the working groups to address those departments/institutes/faculties that could best accommodate a comprehensive process of curriculum reform during the second year of the project. These groups would then work on course (re)design, leading to coherent curriculum construction, and culminating in the application of ECTS to that construction. The second year was also to address a number of wider aspects:

- General awareness-raising amongst faculty and students of the full implications of ECTS, since there was a strong awareness from the first year of the project that there was a considerable degree of misunderstanding of exactly what ECTS meant, and the extent of the changes it required.
- Specific support of the faculties aiming at fuller curricular reform through addressing their students and involving them in the process.
- Ongoing development of the Website supporting the process, within the fourth phase of the project, including translation of key documents and materials, not least because some of the existing Macedonian translations in general use were found to contain fundamental inaccuracies, largely due to translation based upon language only, rather than being supported by a conceptual understanding of the language.

These plans largely remain unfulfilled due to the departure of key personnel from the project, including the author. Some plans, however exist for the new staff involved to revive at least some parts of this process. Nevertheless, our intention here is not to examine the success or failures of this particular project, but is rather to attempt to draw some conclusions from it, and the other two main projects in Macedonia, concerning the process of ECTS implementation.

6. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE APPROACHES USED BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION

Our central thesis has been that any meaningful strategy to implement ECTS within faculties, institutes or departments requires the top-down restructuring to be complemented by a bottom-up process of coherently integrated teaching and learning methods and course (re)design through the clear identification of learning outcomes for the educational process.

Introduction of a credit system brings forward a fundamental change in teaching philosophy. It requires a “student-centred” approach, that is, a transition from mere “lecturing” to encouraging independent study and research on the part of students, a scandal from the point of view of traditional teaching philosophy! Credit points are not given simply for listening to lectures (Zgaga 2003, pp. 6-7). Only in this way can sufficient coherence, transparency and quality be achieved to adequately support effective mobility. And such changes are themselves an indivisible part of the process of adapting to the Bologna two-cycles of degrees.

> If a Bachelor's Degree is to be relevant to the labour market, then an active learner is needed, an active citizen, who is familiar with the requirements of critical thinking. But, such a learner can only be prepared by interactive, problem-focused methods of teaching… Reforming the teaching style is, therefore, an important prerequisite for the successful introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate levels (…)… Retaining the traditional teaching style and introducing at the same time, the two degree levels… are mutually incompatible (Miclea 2003, pp. 7-8).

The experiences from Macedonia support this thesis in a number of specific ways. The general tenor of the projects outlined in both the general and departmental level approaches was a focus on the administrative and technical elements of ECTS. They lacked the emphasis on teaching and learning, course design, and curricular reform based on learning outcomes. The results were a lack of any real change within the courses or study programmes offered to students, and the models of learning employed within them. This was further evidenced in the experience of the Middle Level project, where the perceptions of the requirements for ECTS implementation remained at the technical-administrative level. Arguably, this finding was all the more so because of the wider context and history of the Macedonian higher education system, which had not of its own accord achieved the necessary awareness of the wider teaching and learning needs, as had been the case in a number of the other education systems that were originally behind the conception of the Bologna Process. Time needed to be taken in these projects to address these issues, and to focus attention on them.

Within the Middle Level project, the first two workshops this time attempted to centre the process around definition of learning outcomes, and teaching and learning methods, but in a number of cases the participants showed resistance to this. Suggested reasons for this include the pressures from within the largely autonomous faculties to evidence compliance within an unrealistic timescale—the 'box-ticking' mentality—which was naturally a major influence on the teaching staff who were involved. When this was raised at higher levels in the institutions, or when the matters were addressed in wider fora, the tendency was to portray matters in an overly favourable, and implausible, light, which nevertheless served to hinder further moves forward.

It remains a moot point as to whether the Middle Level project would have overcome these issues and achieved effective ECTS implementation through curricular reform, although these general conclusions suggest that it is unlikely that it would have. Certainly, the scale of the issue was underestimated at the outset, such that considerably more efforts in this direction would have been required than were originally conceived. Also, there was a sense that the teaching and learning strategies element (the second workshop), whilst well regarded in its own right, failed to sufficiently link the issue to the broader ECTS goal. Another key question was the extent and relevance of the international involvement. Experience of the general level project suggests there was insufficient externality, which allowed the prevailing simplification of the process to dominate unchallenged, which arguably has resulted in the failure of the LET to make significant progress, at least thus far. While the international involvement in the Middle Level project was sufficient to over-come this initially, the profile of those involved arguably lacked the credibility or genuine experience necessary to provide the support needed. This was made clear in one meeting with the Dean and Vice-deans of one faculty when the request was made to provide an expert, from Western Europe, from the discipline, who had been involved in curricular revision to implement ECTS, to provide on-going consultancy for the process, which was envisaged within the context of wider involvement of teaching staff in the full curricular revision. Nevertheless, it makes the point that has been made throughout.

Ultimately ECTS curricular reform requires institutions to make the changes themselves, involving staff at all levels. But this is most effectively done when the experience of others further along the process can be shared. Whilst it has been argued that the extent of what needs to be shared may vary depending on the education system undertaking the reforms, the lesson is one familiar from all Bologna countries, old and new. Just as the other reality for all higher education institutions in all Bologna countries is the same — that the process of change is a long and complex one that requires careful planning and a cumulative, integrated approach, which can and must be neither over-simplified nor rushed. Proof of this is arguably evident in all of the various, and uncoordinated Bologna-related projects that have been attempted in Macedonia, including the legislative reform.

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Chapter 8

RESTRUCTURING BULGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Bulgarian Strategy Towards The Bologna Declaration

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1. INTRODUCTION

The push towards membership in the European Union has been a major force in the development of Eastern and Central European countries. Bulgaria, like most post-communist societies, redirected its efforts towards entering the European Union immediately after the fall of the totalitarian regime. The country was granted associate membership in 1993. Negotiations for full membership began in January 2000. Amongst the first chapters to be signed by the Bulgarian government and the European Commission were those on "Education and Professional Qualification" and "Science and Research". The completion of these two chapters signalled that the educational legislative framework in Bulgaria possessed the requisite conditions for accession to the European Union.

The EU objective of creating a "European area of higher education" is designed to promote free mobility of students, faculty and researchers in an integrated educational market. This network of higher education is to be created through voluntary co-operation among the different member states. Until the seventies, national governments were the dominant actors within the European Community and inter-governmental co-operation was the rule. In the eighties, the European Community became a key player in the implementation of higher education policies. Several action programmes and a declaration signed in Maastricht in 1992 stated that national governments should continue to have primary responsibility for higher education (Beverwijk 1999). Nevertheless, EU legislation and action programmes have

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had a strong influence on national governments and universities. TEMPUS, ERASMUS and ECTS have stimulated student mobility and the introduction of new institutional structures. Three more declarations, the Lisbon Declaration of 1997, the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, and the Bologna Declaration of 1999, as well as the results of the European Ministers of Higher Education Prague Summit in 2001, have all supported the drive towards the harmonisation of the architecture of the European Higher Education System.

Bulgaria has taken an active part in the different European initiatives on higher education. The Bologna Declaration has been an important factor influencing the direction of the on-going structural reform of Bulgarian higher education. As a signatory to the Bologna Declaration, Bulgaria became one of the twenty-nine countries voluntarily agreeing to co-ordinate their policies in higher education for the creation of a European Area of Higher Education and a common European market of higher education and research services. The Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999) set six major goals, all of which attempt to promote institutional comparability. These six goals include:

1. *Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees*, as well as the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote the employability of European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
2. *Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate*. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to master and/or doctorate degrees as it does in many European countries.
3. *Establishment of a system of credits—such as the ECTS*—as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by the receiving universities concerned.
4. *Promotion of mobility* by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement (of all members of the academic community).
5. *Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance* with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

6. *Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education*, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

Bulgaria has made significant strides towards adopting the requisite legislative framework for the achievement of the Bologna objectives. Several amendments and additions to the Higher Education Law have been passed providing for the establishment of the two-cycle structure of easily readable and comparable degrees, the facilitation of mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications, assistance in free mobility for the academic community and the addressing of problems concerning the compromised quality of education. All of these legal measures foresee the restructuring of the overall higher education system as a necessary condition for their realisation. However, in many instances the response of institutions of higher education has remained passive. This has hindered the effective implementation of these legislative measures at the institutional level. One reason for this development can be found in the very nature of legislation on Bulgarian higher education, which has been inconsistent and prescriptive. Since 1989, every shift in the political leadership has led to different, often drastic changes in the normative base of higher education. In many cases, legislature has followed the dynamics of events in the sector in a reactive way and has often resorted to restrictive and bureaucratic measures.

Another reason can be also found in the unstable financial situation of institutions of higher education. Meagre funding has characterised the overall, considerable reform process of the last fourteen years. The reduction of state support for higher education has been accompanied by outdated forms of institutional resource management. Newly introduced student fees and NGO financing have not been sufficient to deal with low teaching salaries. Still further reasons can be found in obsolete equipment and facilities, in the complex and overlapping academic structure and, last but not least, in the persisting mentality and inertia inherited from the past.

This chapter analyses the reorganisation of Bulgaria's system of higher education since 1989 that is consistent with the goals of the Bologna Declaration. In many cases, legislative efforts to integrate the overall higher education system within European higher education structures predates the signing of the Bologna Declaration and anticipate many of its recommendations. Thus the chapter provides a review of the major developments in the sector in the last fourteen years. Then, it discusses three specific areas that are at the core of the system's restructuring and that have a direct impact on the six goals of the Bologna Declaration: the two-cycle structure of easily readable and comparable degrees, the European Credit Transfer System and the nature of the evaluation and accreditation procedures.

2. HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1990 AND 2003

The reform of the Bulgarian system of higher education started immediately after the fall of the totalitarian regime. The *1990 Law on Academic Autonomy* legally restored academic autonomy. As a catalyst for significant changes in higher education this new legislative framework provided institutions with a long-denied freedom to define their organisational structure (including the freedom to establish new faculties), the specialities they offered and student programmes. The institutions were also given the opportunity to look for additional funds outside of the state budget, including the admission of fee-paying students on top of the state-subsidised admissions quota.

As a result, the system of higher education quickly expanded. The rapid growth of the sector was expressed in the large influx of students, as well as in diversity among programmes and institutions. Private education appeared and the numbers of fee-paying students at state universities rose sharply (by 1997, almost half of all students in Bulgarian state institutions paid tuition fees for their education). Universities opened different institutional units throughout the country. New forms of education were developed. The student body also became more diverse: students of different social groups and ages appeared.

However, the process of expansion was not accompanied by an increase in state subsidies, nor was there any development of internal mechanisms for the regulation of educational quality. As might be expected, the dramatic rise in student numbers, mainly in fields such as economics, business and law, without the necessary funding or proportional rise in faculty numbers has had negative consequences for academic standards. Concerns about the deteriorating quality of education, especially at newly-founded institutions and branches, in new forms of study and specialisation, also included the prevalence of part-time professors employed by a parent institution but travelling to teach courses at the new establishments (Todorov 1999).

In response to the rather chaotic growth of the sector, the 1995 *Higher Education Law* (Law 1995) called for a systematic reform. It represented a counter-reaction to the developments of the preceding period. This act (together with its numerous amendments and additions of 1999, 2000 and 2002, and the 2003 draft) still guides higher education restructuring. It increased governmental responsibility for directing higher education. It introduced unified state requirements for course content and a State Register for university specialities (both to be approved by the Council of Ministers). In addition, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency was created as a special organ to monitor the level of compliance with the requirements and the Register. With respect to finances, the state was also authorised to determine budget allocations, including the number of students to be enrolled on either state-supported or a student-paid basis.

In 1999, a new political government reworked the Higher Education Law. This act, the *1999 Amendments and Additions to the 1995 Higher Education Law*, further refined the mechanisms of control of the state over academic activity. It introduced mandatory across-the-board tuition fees for all students. To further address the issue of the diminishing quality of education, the legislative framework demanded the creation of internal structures for quality management at every institution. In general, this law linked institutional autonomy with increased responsibility and accountability.

In the year 2000, an important legal initiative facilitating the unification of criteria for the recognition of higher education diplomas issued abroad was the adoption of the Law on the *Ratification of the 1997 Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region*. The National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC/NARIC—Bulgaria) was intended to support the activities on recognition of higher education (Law 2000). Furthermore, consequent amendments to the *1995 Higher Education Law* took into consideration the goals of the Bologna Declaration. The *2002 Amendments and Additions to the 1995 Higher Education Law* transformed the Unified State Requirements into State Requirements and the State Register of Specialities into a classifier of academic fields in response to the growing concerns over the restrictive character of those two documents. The amendments also provided institutions with more freedom to determine the number of students enrolled for each specialisation (despite the continuing requirement for central approval of total student enrolments for all institutions, including private ones) and enhanced their capacity to offer masters' and doctoral programmes when granted the highest accreditation marks, as well the right of appeal to the courts in the event of dissatisfaction with their accreditation grades.

A draft of amendments and additions is currently under discussion in Parliament. This draft is expected to bring the system even further in its efforts to achieve the goals of the Bologna Declaration.

The 2003 *Draft Amendments and Additions to the 1995 Higher Education Law:*

1. Introduce a European Diploma Supplement.
2. Repeal the previously established *Unified State Requirements* for regulated professions and establish *State Requirements* for all specialisations.
3. Authorise the Council of Ministers to determine the number of students to be accepted to state institutions only.
4. Demand that no less than 2/3 of the habilitated staff at universities and specialised institutes, and no less than 1/3 at colleges and branches have permanent contracts.
5. Establish an Economic Council as a new organ for financial management of the institutions.
6. Introduce more flexibility with regard to non-traditional university structures such as the department and the institute.
7. Introduce alternative student choice of faculty members when more than one faculty teaches any course.
8. Establish a system for the accumulation and transfer of credits.
9. Include student opinion as one of the criteria in faculty evaluation.
10. Go into further detail with respect to the internal system for quality maintenance and improvement that needs to be created.
11. Insert corrections regarding the functioning of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and the scope of institutional and programme accreditation.

3. ADDRESSING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION IN BULGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1 Restructuring Bulgarian higher education—the two-cycle structure of easily readable and comparable degrees

Bulgaria traditionally has had a binary system of higher education involving universities and professional institutes in which higher education consisted of one long cycle. Thus, instituting the two-cycle structure *of easily readable and comparable degrees*, as recommended in the first two goals of the Bologna Declaration, demanded in-depth reform of the overall higher education sector. This process passed through several stages, which began even before the Bologna Declaration and faced numerous problems. The degree structure of bachelor-master's-doctorate was abruptly introduced with the *1995 Higher Education Law* as a replacement for the traditional pattern. In this way, the degrees were established before the respective programmes were actually developed. The 1995 law dealt only with two practical aspects of the new degrees: firstly, the length of study—four years for a bachelor's degree, plus one year a master's, and at least three years following a master's to obtain a doctorate; specialists were required to study for at least three years—and secondly, which degrees the different types of institutions could offer. In addition, the two documents created with this law, namely, the Uniform State Requirements and the State Register of Specialities, had an enormous impact on the new degree system. In effect, the Uniform State Requirements presented lists of required courses setting the minimum course load, usually from three-quarters to half of the courses, for the different degree levels of every speciality. They also defined in detail almost all aspects of the educational process. The Register of Narrow Specialisation's listed the different specialities, together with the degrees they could be offered in that would be recognised by the state, and from which institutions of higher education could choose. Finally, the accrediting procedures, due to the overall character of the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation, placed emphasis only on verifying compliance of institutions and programmes with the rigid Unified State Requirements and the Higher Education Law rather than on stimulating development, innovation and restructuring.

The Unified State Requirements were intended as basis for future curricula. However, it was only after the law was passed that these requirements were actually developed in specific detail, some as late as the year 2000. Moreover, there were other factors that further compromised the successful implementation of the new degrees at the university level. On the one hand, the rather prescriptive and limiting character of the legislative framework left universities with little initiative in adjustment. On the other hand, there was no effort to clarify the new degree structure (and above all the bachelor degree as a basic, broad-based undergraduate level of higher education that could provide students with greater flexibility in choice for graduate education or professional qualification often dependent on a rapidly changing labour market) to institutions of higher education or to publicly discuss it, neither before nor immediately after the introduction of this structure.

As a result, instituting the new degree system at the university level has been rather ineffective. In reality, apart from following the State Requirements in implementing the new policy and the Unified State Requirements in adjusting their programmes, the response of the university community to the prescriptive normative base has remained passive. The implications have been felt mostly at the bachelor's level, which was, in fact, the novel element in the degree structure. New bachelor programmes were created in a way that did not transform the qualitative nature of the educational process or the specific contents of study; instead, what was affected was merely the quantitative aspects of the degrees, such as the years of study, the course hours, and the institutions which could offer them. In short, old study plans and programmes were re-ordered within the new degrees. Moreover, in an attempt to preserve as many required courses in the programmes as possible (attempts supported above all by the desire of professors to keep their jobs by maintaining existing course loads), institutions of higher education offered programmes that actually prolonged the period of study. The fixed character of curricula was preserved with few optional or elective courses. There was no clear connection between the different educational degree levels, and few possibilities were created for student transfer amongst different specialisations or faculties. What is most important, however, is that the new degree structure, contrary to the initial intention, actually resulted in the preservation of narrow specialisation at the bachelor level. The bachelor degree was thus seen only as a preparatory stage for the master's degree. To make matters worse, master's programmes were designed in haste (based upon the specialisation courses of the last couple of years of the old form of studies), and students could only enrol on a master's programme from the same specialisation of their bachelor degree. In the end, even popular belief came to identify future bachelors with half-educated master's; their prestige was doubtful.

These negative developments were recognised and legislative measures were taken to address them. The *1999 Amendments and Additions to the 1995 Higher Education Law*, passed immediately before the Bologna Declaration was signed, "changed and simplified the degree structure and redefined bachelors more in line with the Bologna Declaration" (Haug and Tauch 2001). First, the initial three-cycle structure of bachelor-master-doctor, introduced in 1995, was replaced with a two-cycle educational structure of undergraduate and graduate (Table 8-1). Next, the bachelor level was said to offer the basic broad-profiled preparation for specialisation; and the master's, to assure "in-depth fundamental preparation combined with profiling in a defined speciality"; and the doctoral level to "follow scientific directions", which must be from the scientific branch in which the student holds a bachelor degree qualification. The requirements no longer restrict students to enter master programmes in the field other than that of their bachelor studies; conditions were created for the development of master programmes with an interdisciplinary and international character. In addition, legal requirements stipulated that institutions of higher education should facilitate programme flexibility and offer students opportunities to combine courses from different programmes on the same degree level. Finally, a "bridge" between the different sub-systems of the binary higher education system was also created—opportunities were introduced for “specialist” degree level college graduates to continue their studies towards a bachelor degree.

Table 8-1. The Two-Cycle Structure of Easily Readable and Comparable Degrees of Bulgarian Higher Education

UNIVERSITY DEGREES	Undergraduate	***First degree:*** ‘Bachelor’, a minimum of 4 years of study. Provides a broad basic preparation in a professional field or specialisation.
	Graduate	***Second degree:*** ‘Master’, either a minimum of 5 years of study or one year after the Bachelor degree. Assures an in-depth fundamental preparation combined with profiling in a given speciality. ***Third degree:*** ‘Doctorate’, either a minimum of 3 years after the Bachelor degree or 4 years after the Master degree. Provides education in different scientific fields.
NON-UNIVERSITY DEGREES		‘Specialist’, a professional degree awarded by colleges after minimum 3 years of study. Specialists can continue their studies at the Bachelor level or enter the labour market.

After considerable public discussion, the *2002 Amendments and Additions to the 1995 Higher Education Law* transformed the Unified State Requirements into State Requirements for the different degrees of specialist, bachelor and master (with the exception of the regulated professions of Law, Medicine and Architecture where the Unified State Requirements continued to be in force). These State Requirements now present a broad framework, which no longer details educational and administrative requirements and allows for more flexibility in programme development, as well as in the organisation of the educational process. The State Register of Specialities was also transformed into a classifier of higher education fields and professional qualifications. The loosened framework allows for more institutional freedom to develop educational programmes and offer short master programmes geared to market demands. Further support of these developments is to be found also in the 2003 Draft Amendments.

It is still too early to adequately assess how this more flexible framework has impacted on the new degree structure at the institutional level. Currently, at the legislative level, there are more possibilities for individualised curricula and greater opportunities for those of high academic achievement. One point of concern here, however, is the fact that even in the *2002 Amendments and Additions*, the specialist and bachelor degrees are still legally defined in the manner academic qualifications where understood under the previous political regime, stressing narrow specialisation. Institutions of higher education still have a long way to go in their attempts to revise their undergraduate programmes, the fixed character of which persists, and develop graduate programmes. Finally, traditional university structures still remain a huge obstacle to student (and faculty) mobility, both internally and between institutions.

3.2 Restructuring Bulgarian Higher Education—the European Credit Transfer System

Private universities such as the American University in Bulgaria and the New Bulgarian University (both schools with structures different from the traditional ones) were the first to introduce effective systems for the accumulation and transfer of credits into Bulgarian higher education in the period before the Bologna Declaration. In its third goal, the Bologna Declaration stimulated institutional experimentation with transfer credit systems, recommending the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) as a common denominator.

In response to this objective of the Bologna Declaration, the general call to institute credits at Bulgarian institutions of higher education was reiterated at the consequent annual International Rectors' Summits. However, Bulgarian universities still use ECTS primarily to facilitate student mobility through EU programmes such as TEMPUS or, more recently, ERASMUS. The number of Bulgarian students participating in mobility programs remains limited, for example in the 2002/03 academic year 982 students, 144 of them from the University of Sofia. And even these are usually administered through the universities' international relations departments. Thus ECTS is considered mostly as a system for facilitating student and faculty mobility and less as a tool for assessment. And such is the situation with recognising exams and marks acquired in other institutions, including foreign ones, where students are dealt with on a more individual basis. In other words, ECTS has a difficult time making its way into Bulgarian higher education.

Or, as Totomanova (2000) states, in many circumstances, experimentation with ECTS has left no traces at the institutional level.

In reality, the effective application of ECTS has been hindered, predominantly by the fact that it has not been related to the existing systems of the organisation of the educational process and for the monitoring of student achievements. In Bulgarian higher education, the educational process has been traditionally organised in a study plan for every speciality. The study plan defines the name, the number and distribution of disciplines in years and semesters, the total number of hours for each discipline, the forms of teaching and monitoring of the learning process, and the ways in which students graduate and receive professional qualifications. The main characteristic of the study plan is that it is obligatory for all students of a given speciality. Thus students become a collective mass, a regiment that is guided by the plan. This current rigid programme framework has included a small number of elective courses. In comparison, while credit systems allow for different options in course combination, adjusted to the individual, mature character of each student, study plans provide for very little flexibility, with limited opportunities for additional educational initiative on the part of the student.

Furthermore, there is no effective information system for monitoring student achievement in Bulgaria. It is encouraging that many institutions have already rejected the outdated measure of taking attendance as means of monitoring student achievement. Unfortunately, apart from student examination (usually conducted at the end of each semester), no alternative means have been developed. Credits in combination with grades—because credits measure the quantity of student work while grades measure its quality (Totomanova 2000)—could fill this gap since they allow students to be more flexible and resourceful during their studies.

Finally, the outdated *'Katedra-Fakultet'* structure of traditional institutions, which reflects the overly specialised nature of education, is a hindrance to student mobility. Student transfer from one faculty to another, or even from one speciality to another within one and the same faculty is very difficult. The normative framework also adds to this difficulty by binding such transfers to entrance exams. The principle of adding experience from outside one's speciality, even from another faculty, is also very hard to realise.

The development of a workable credit system, either internal to the given institution or ECTS itself, will be the real challenge in the coming years. Such a system should cover different types of post-secondary learning experience, including professional and continuing studies. The introduction of credits will facilitate and regulate student opportunities to transfer credit mid-stream directly from specialist to respective bachelor and master programmes. At this point, although legislature allows for such transfers, universities have a very clumsy procedure in place for *specialists*, which extends the study period to around 7 years (Totomanova 2000). The introduction of an internal system of credit accumulation will depend on the voluntary decision of the teaching faculty of each specialisation to re-work the study plan for each specialisation. The *2002 Amendments and Additions* allowed for more flexibility and freedom in constructing study plans. Of course, the integration of this principle will eventually lead to change of the internal institutional structures. What is important is that the *2003 Draft Amendments and Additions*

> foresee the adoption of the ECTS system by all higher education institutions, thus meeting one of the major objectives of the Bologna Process in terms of increasing the transparency and the comparability of higher education qualifications (Ministry 2003).

3.3 Restructuring Bulgarian Higher Education: Quality and Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

In Bulgaria, concerns about decreasing academic standards have accompanied the development of the higher education system throughout the decade of reforms. The focus on quality assurance received a fresh boost from the Bologna Declaration which foresees the creation of a “European dimension in quality assurance” as a “vital aspect of any system of easily readable and comparable degrees” which will “ease recognition procedures, facilitate mobility, increase confidence and avoid any lowering of standards” (Haug and Tauch 2001). The decision of the Bulgarian government to establish a National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) in 1995 was prompted by the initial chaotic growth of the higher education system (see e.g. Ministry 1996). The establishment of the NEAA followed the same pattern, as did the introduction of the new degree structure: no preceding public or institutional discussion, experimentation or clarification were involved. As a result, the Agency experienced a number of significant—painful and costly—transformations both of its structure and of its functions.

The major weakness of the accreditation approach has been in the fact that it provided an external form of evaluation, which only verified compliance with state requirements. As a result, institutional accreditation has served as a licensing procedure where the focus has shifted to accountability rather than to institutional development and assistance in maintaining and improving the quality of the educational process. It is no surprise that accreditation has been publicly viewed as a punitive means for the state to close unneeded universities and reduce specialisations. This view has been further strengthened by the lack of any public disclosure of evaluation reports, as well as the sanctioning character of negative accreditation. And since emphasis in the process has been placed on mere compliance with state regulations rather than on self-evaluation, self-regulation and improvement, the official accrediting license has been the major goal both for the universities and for the accrediting bodies.

The experience has revealed that the missing link in the accrediting process has been the lack of internal institutional mechanisms for maintaining and improving quality. Expecting the Bologna Declaration, the *1999 Amendments and Additions* compelled universities and colleges to develop such mechanisms or units of quality assurance. They also required that institutional accreditation precede programme accreditation and created the possibility of optimising programme accreditation so that it would be done not programme by programme, but by professional fields (which would also make the process cheaper).

Currently, accreditation in the Bulgarian context means recognition by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency that the activity and the quality of education at a given institution of higher education corresponds with the higher education law and the state requirements. Accreditation requirements are the same for all institutions, both public and private. Failure to comply with accreditation requirements results in termination of both state subsidies for state institutions and of student admission numbers (defined centrally for all institutions). There are two hierarchical levels of accreditation:

1. Institutional accreditation—where the overall organisation, structure and activity of the institution should correspond to the requirements of the law; and
2. Programme accreditation—the quality of education at a given institution is judged by individual specialisations at the different programme levels of specialist, bachelor, master and doctor.

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency also evaluates projects for the opening and re-forming of higher education institutions, their units or independent colleges, as well as the introduction of new specialisations/programmes.

The development of internal quality management mechanisms is still a major challenge facing most Bulgarian institutions of higher education. Often, the necessity for such institutional systems is not even understood amongst the academic community. Lack of clarity as to what such mechanicsms or units might look like or what their activities might be is rather common. At the same time, some steps have been undertaken to address issues such as collecting student feedback on the quality of teaching and education, development and approval of new programmes, and faculty evaluation.

The *2003 Draft Amendments and Additions* address some of the concerns expressed above, and again re-writes the overall chapter on accreditation in an attempt to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Declaration. In sum, the amendments:

- Define accreditation as the recognition of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency of the competency of institutions of higher education to award higher education degrees through evaluating the quality of the activities stipulated in the law
- Bind institutional accreditation with the institutional mission and goals, the development of the overall internal mechanisms for maintaining and improving the quality of education, the institutional procedures for monitoring study plans and programmes, and activities related to post-accreditation recommendations
- Bind programme accreditation with evaluation of education both by professional fields as well as degree levels
- Stipulate that, together with the period of validity and recommendations for improvement, accrediting decisions should also expound on the capacity/abilities of the institutions or the specialisations/professional qualifications
- Establish a process of post-accreditation monitoring and control through the Council on Post-Accreditation Monitoring at the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency.

Thus, in an attempt to avoid the formal approach of the external evaluation and accreditation process, the amendments direct this process to focus on evaluating the capacity of the institution to strategically plan its development and to improve the efficiency of its quality management systems—which is consistent with Bologna recommendations for a common structure of national guarantees to assure the quality of qualifications (QAAHE 2000). There is hope that such a measure will redirect the efforts of the institutions towards establishing internal mechanisms for on-going evaluation, approval and validation of the content of education. If such mechanisms are introduced, reforms might become more manageable and it might be easier to more effectively adapt curricula and programmes to the new higher education structure.

4. CONCLUSION

The “basic triangle of reforms: new degrees (for readability and efficiency) + credits (for flexibility and curricula renovation) + accreditation (for certification of programme quality)” (Haug and Tauch 2001) has been part of a broader process of restructuring of the overall higher education system. This process started with attempts to shed the legacy of socialist higher education and to integrate Bulgarian higher education into the European Area of Higher Education. The Bologna Declaration is a statement of intent, and it seems that more good will is required on part of the major actors in the higher education arena in order to truly embrace the challenges of the document that have been legally adopted. Considerable resistance to structural reform is still present. This paper has attempted to highlight the continuing discrepancy between the legislative framework and actual institutional reform. In the end, the success of the Bologna Declaration in Bulgaria depends on the academic community as a whole, on individual institutions and on all the participants in the reform process (Velinova 2001).

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Chapter 9

TURKISH ACADEMICS IN EUROPE

An Autumn Tale[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

When I was invited to contribute a chapter to this book on the situation of Turkish higher education, I found myself humming "An Englishman in New York": the writer of the song set out as a poor teacher himself, and probably had to go through much hardship before he ended up as a star in the 'Big Apple'. Turkish academics, although belonging geographically to the European area, often find themselves viewed and feeling like aliens in the European academic world. In this chapter, I shall try to illustrate the contextual reality in which Turkish academics exist as their country moves along the road towards membership of the European Union. A brief historical overview will help us to schematise a general picture aided by a few facts and figures about Turkey. The chapter will go on to provide further details concerning the present situation and the ongoing debate between the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), which is rooted in Islamic politics, and the Higher Education Council (YÖK). I will also discuss the new regulations concerning YÖK and higher education in Turkey. Later, I shall concentrate on the reflections of Turkish academics on higher education in Turkey and on YÖK, which, I believe, will cast some light on the title, "Turkish Academics in Europe: Nomads Chasing a European Dream"

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2. TURKEY: SOME BASIC FACTS

Turkey is large in comparison to many European states: 769,604,000 km^2. Average estimates in 2002 were that the population had reached 69 million and that the proportion of young people is growing. The average annual growth rate was 1.5 per cent by 1999-2000. The adult illiteracy rate for people aged over 14 was estimated to be 15 per cent in 1999. In 2002 unemployment reached 10.4 per cent.

The population is concentrated in the western and the central parts of the country because of internal migration that began in the 1950s, and also due to growing urbanisation. The economic gap between the eastern and the western sides of the country is considerable. There are 81 cities and seven large geographical regions of which Marmara, Ege and Iç Anadolu are the most developed and densely populated. The mountainous eastern regions suffer from low levels of development and a scarcity of both natural and economic resources. The developmental gap between the eastern and western parts of Turkey also manifests itself in the number of universities to be found in these regions. Of the 76 universities in Turkey, nearly half are located in three big cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, which are to be found in the Marmara, Iç Anadolu and Ege regions (see Table 1).

Table 9-1. The number of universities in the three big cities

City	Number of universities
Istanbul	21
Ankara	9
Izmir	4

The problems of quality and development in higher education are inseparable from the issues of finance, attitudes towards education in general and the national political climate. Turkey occupies a geopolitical borderline: struggling to become a part of Europe and maintain good relations with the US whilst balancing its own internal dynamics.

3. EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GENERAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

Following the inception of the Turkish Republic in 1923, a series of reforms was undertaken that included the regulation and centralisation of educational institutions in Turkey. Five-years of primary education became compulsory for boys and girls, but in 1997 the duration of compulsory education was increased to eight years. Successive governments have proposed increasing it to twelve years by 2005. Following their compulsory education, students can choose to attend a high school that offers general education, or they can choose a vocational school. However, there is a problem here, as rightly observed and expressed in *2003 Regular Report of the European Commission*:

> Overall, two main problems remain in the field of secondary education. Firstly, the demand for secondary education is much higher than anticipated. Secondly, a smaller number of students can be channelled to vocational and technical schools than planned. This is due to insufficiencies on the supply side. University entry exams discriminate in favour of graduates from general high schools (Commission 2003).

By the academic year of 1999-2000, there were 1,387,000 students enrolled in general high schools while 916,000 were enrolled in vocational and technical high schools (ibid.). The demand on general high schools also increases the demand for university education. Each year, an average of 1.5 million students take the university entrance exam. Here, as elsewhere, questions concerning the nature of universities arise, and the very concept of the 'university' is a point of debate. What are universities for? Should universities concentrate on research or on offering vocational, technical education? How should the relations between labour market and university education be established? These are a few of the questions that face Turkey with regarding to higher education.

4. TURKISH UNIVERSITIES: A BRIEF HISTORY

In comparison with Europe and the USA, Turkey was late in establishing universities. Generally speaking, the university system was modelled on the Humboldtian system, reforms in 1915 and 1933 underlined this fact, and the University Law of 1946 was geared toward establishing a typical Humboldtian university (Tekeli 1997, p. 138). The roots of the Turkish higher education system, however, were in the old *Darülfunun*, which became the University of Istanbul in 1933, and the first university of the Republic of Turkey. Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, an élitist education at university level, generally based on religious thought and teaching, was offered in the *medrese*. Another higher education track could be found in the concept of the *Enderun*, which means 'profound education'. The *Medrese*, however, were closely affiliated with the Ottoman Empire at the state level, and promising students were educated to become future leaders occupying higher positions in the Empire (*sadrazam* and the like). *Enderun* can be viewed as prototypes for the faculties of business administration or political science. Another higher education institution of the Ottoman Empire, the Imperial Civil Service School, was established in Istanbul in 1858, but moved to Ankara in 1935 under the new title of *Mülkiye*. It was incorporated into the body of the University of Ankara as the Faculty of Political Science in 1950 (Öncü 1993, p. 153). In 1944, the Technical University of Istanbul emerged from the former School of Engineering. This university offered education in engineering, including architecture, through a total of 12 semesters of coursework, 4 semesters longer than other universities.

Since its outset, the heart of higher education in Turkey has obviously been Istanbul, the magnificent former capital city of the Ottoman Empire once known as Constantinople. After the foundation of the republic in 1923, the centre of the new state moved from Istanbul to Ankara, a central Anatolian city far from the European shore of Istanbul. In 1946, the first university in the republic's new capital city, the University of Ankara, was established. From 1923 to 1950 the Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, held power under the leadership of Ismet Inönü, who helped the country to survive economically during the Second World War. The bitter years of that conflict opened the way for the new Democratic Party (DP) in the 1950's. The populist politics of the DP contributed to the establishment of four new universities in 1950, one of which was in a provincial city.

In the 30s, university education in Turkey followed the 'German Model'; then during World War II prominent Jewish professors left Germany for Istanbul University and further shaped Turkish universities along those lines. Later, in the 1950's, the 'American Model' came to dominate in certain universities as a result of the Marshall Plan. A radical military intervention that toppled the DP from power in 1960 was a milestone in the short history of the Turkish Republic. The multiparty system and the process of democratisation was damaged, along with the ideal of westernisation—the principal motive for Atatürk's reforms. From the 1960's, political dominance in the country swung back and forth like a pendulum between civilian politicians and the military. As an institution the military defined itself as the symbol and protector of the secular state, on one hand against hostile ideologies, and on the other against corrupt political parties. This period caused considerable damage to the integration of the population into the 'western' world. In 1971, the country went through another military intervention. Between 1971 and 1980, ten new universities were established outside the metropolitan centres. However, these institutions had few faculties and limited student numbers. In fact, they were a part of a political strategy, similar to the approach in the 1950s, of expanding higher education at the periphery (Öncü 1993, p. 161). Before my graduation in 1981, I personally experienced the third military intervention of 12 September 1980, and on 4 November that year I began to work as an assistant at Anadolu University, Faculty of Communication. That same year the Higher Education Council was established, making 1981 a turning point in the history of higher education in Turkey.

5. THE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL: AN INSTITUTION AT THE CENTRE OF DEBATE

The student uprisings of 1968 triggered many strikes and much turbulence in universities; YÖK offered the solution of centralisation and, therefore, better control over the administrative and academic staff and students at the universities. A number of academics opposed the establishment of YÖK and as a result some gave up their academic positions. Ayse Öncü describes the eighties as “a period of receding powers and status, as well as economic decline for Turkish academics as a whole” (1993, p. 170).

Since its inception, YÖK has changed the university system profoundly: rectors are appointed for long enough periods to complete projects; similarly, other administrative academic staff in the new system are appointed, as opposed to being elected; a new departmental system replaced the chair system; and graduate programmes are run by institutes. Furthermore, the new position of assistant professor paved the way for young academics to teach at universities, and the title ‘assistant’ was replaced by ‘research assistantship’ to moderate internal growth at universities. The application process for associated professorship was also changed so that the thesis requirement was replaced by a candidate being expected to reach a minimum level in international and national publication and research activity. In the promotion process applications are first evaluated on the accomplishment criteria by a panel assigned by YÖK before candidates are invited for interview.

In 1982, eight new universities were established under YÖK’s direction. The head of YÖK, Prof. İhsan Doğramacı—professor of medicine and founder of Hacettepe University—established Turkey’s first private university (Bilkent University) in Ankara in 1984. In 1992, 24 new universities were established (most of them in provincial cities in Anatolia). Yet, the establishment of new universities was not able to satisfy the demand for higher education. Moreover, the university entrance exam that follows high school has become a nightmare for students and their families. The focus on these exams during the final years of high school has led to diminishing interest in sports and the arts, which in turn has left a gap in general education. There is an incredible demand for university education, but the supply is limited and the quality of the various universities varies greatly. Many students who are unable to study in their preferred fields end up working in other fields after graduation, with most of them expressing the concern that they will not be able to get well-paid jobs.

In 1996-1997, the establishment of foundation universities was permitted, and 13 foundation universities were added to the existing number of state universities. Nevertheless, the overall increase in the number of state universities did not represent any improvement in the financial situation of academics or of low pay at universities which, combined with the declining prestige of academic status, has resulted in the employment of under-qualified staff. One major cause for the loss in prestige can be seen in the appointment and promotion procedures based on the principle of equal opportunity.

Foundation universities with representatives from business and industry on their Board of Trustees had brought the promise of better-funded university education. However, unfortunate experiences with private universities in the late 60s and 70's resulted in their integration into the state university system; thus the re-inception of foundation universities was initially greeted with scepticism. By the late 1990s, however, the rise of foundation universities was welcomed as part of a change in attitudes towards private ownership of universities. A willingness to integrate industry and universities was followed by the establishment of these new universities, most of which are located in Istanbul, a world city and business centre, thus making it once again the fulcrum of higher education in Turkey. It is defined in Turkish geography books as "the city that connects two continents" with its Asian and European sides divided by the Marmara Sea and connected by the Bosphorus Bridge. Istanbul is also home to different perspectives depending on whether or not one looks at things from Anatolia towards the European side—where the unfulfilled wish to become a western country is apparent. Looking at the Anatolian side from the European side, the old, exhausted city of many civilisations from the Byzantine to the Ottoman Empire, unfolds—although Istanbul is only few hours away from an EU country, Greece. The universities share a similar fate to that of Istanbul: 'in-betweenness'; the lack of new space or the search for a third space where the traditional, the modern, the post-modern, the western ideal, the American dream and the Anatolian past can all come together in a 'melting pot'. In fact, this melting pot for often conflicting ideals is common to all aspects of life in Turkey.

6. UNIVERSITIES IN TURKEY TODAY

Turkey now has a total of 76 universities: 53 state, 23 foundation, four private universities in Northern Cyprus; two state universities with special status, and two High Technology Institutes (Table 2). These figures illuminate the fact that in the 8 years (1996-2004) since permission to establish foundation universities was given, their number has reached nearly half that of the state universities. The special status of state universities is the outcome of a policy initiative in the 1990s to promote Turkish national and cultural identity across the entire country. The universities in Northern Cyprus also operate under the regulatory umbrella of the Turkish Higher Education Council. The accreditation of these universities, however, was realised only in the recent past, and student transfers from universities in Northern Cyprus to universities in Turkey were only accepted recently.

Table 9-2. Breakdown of the universities by type

Type	Number
State universities	53
Private universities	23
Universities in Northern Cyprus	4
Special status state universities	2
High Technology Institutes	2

In 80 years (1923-2003), the number of universities has increased from 1 to 76. The number of students enrolled has increased from 2,914 in 1923 to 1,677,936 in 2003. The number of university graduates per year has increased from 321 to 248,310 while the number of university staff has increased from 307 to 71,290 (YÖK 2003). Currently, 10,032 professors, 5219 associate professors and 12,356 assistant professors are employed in state universities. Foundation universities, on the other hand, employ 615 professors, 262 associate professors and 711 assistant professors (ibid.).

The ratio of professors to assistant professors in both state and foundation universities is similar because of the promotion and appointment policies of these institutions. Assistant professorship is an appointed position as opposed to associate professorship which goes through a panel. The procedure leading to full professorship is easier than that of associate professorship. Another reason for the higher ratio of assistant professors in the teaching-focussed foundation universities is the employment strategy they employ. The migration of state university professors to foundation universities increased after 1997. Foundation universities promote well-known professors as part of their marketing policy, the aim being to improve the standards of teaching. Meanwhile, the foundation universities prefer young academics — most of them with PhD’s from abroad — and these are very rapidly promoted to assistant professor in order to fulfil the minimum number of departmental staff required by YÖK.

Debates on the difference between the university as an ideal and the multiversity as an institution of late capitalism and post-modern society are also on the agenda of Turkish academics. The disparity has increased between the universities in the centre (in the big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir) and on the periphery (in small Anatolian cities), especially in terms of quality. For Turkey, the relation between modernisation and education is of primary importance (Aktay 2003).

In a symposium held in 1998 on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, Burhan Şenatalar compared statistics from the past ten years. These give an idea of the pace of development and the spread of universities in Turkey alongside the accompanying challenges:

> If we compare the numbers in 1987-88 and 1997-98 we observe that there is a tremendous increase both in the number of students and of university staff. At the faculty level, the number of students increased by 108%. In Schools of Applied Disciplines (4-years), there is a 126% increase in the number of students. For 2-year Schools of Applied Disciplines, the increase in student enrolment reaches up to 228%. In distance learning, the figure is 273%. In this situation, it is obvious that there will be a shortage in university staff. For the same period, we observe a quantitative increases in the number of university staff. Within ten years, the number of research assistants in universities increased by 112%. The number of assistant professors increased by 117%; the number of associate professors increased by 21% and the number of professors increased by 278%. … There is also a tremendous increase in the number of graduate students. In these ten years, the number of PhD students increased by 159% and the number of master students increased by 191% (Şenatalar 2000, p. 5).

In the face of a tremendous quantitative development, we suffer from an insufficiency of resources and from declining quality. Political intervention in higher education is common, with certain students being offered academic reprieves. Such populist interventions have led to a loss in credibility for the university system. The level of productivity and quality constitutes a major problem for our universities (ibid.). Ilhan Tekeli has stated that despite the possibilities afforded by the Internet and other information technologies, universities in Turkey are not integrated into international scientific networks, nor sufficiently linked with the global academic community (Tekeli 2003, p. 141). Mehmet Şahin points out another problem area when he notes that, “For politicians, universities stand as entities within which they could exercise power and this approach turned the universities into a huge State Economic Enterprise." He views Turkish universities as resource-consuming, as opposed to resource-creating institutions (Şahin 2003).

7. THE AKP GOVERNMENT—YÖK REFORM AND TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

In the public eye YÖK has gained the image of being heavy-handed and, centralising. Nevertheless, it has passed through three evolutionary phases in its development. In the first phase, it functioned as an 'homogenising' institution under the pressure of the military government. In its second phase, YÖK tolerated the organisation of religious communities and radical political groups, particularly in newly-founded universities. Its third phase has been characterised by its stance against the employment of anti-secular faculty and objective criteria in making academic appointments and promotion (Tekeli 2003, p. 138).

This third phase coincided with the rise to power of the AKP government whose *Weltanschauung* does not coincide with YÖK's secularist ideology, creating a fundamental source of friction. The recent reform draft for higher education forwarded to YÖK by the AKP government was one of the main issues of debate in 2003 and has aroused condemnation from YÖK and several universities. A summary of the most recent developments that have taken place under the AKP government is useful in understanding the clash between these institutions, and the notion of the 'in-betweenness' of universities in Turkey.

The first AKP government, headed by Prime Minister Abdullah Gül, wanted to initiate a reform movement to reorganise the relationships between the universities, YÖK and the government. Since this initiative required amendments to the constitution the problem quickly became a systemic problem, creating a clash between the AKP government, which has an Islamist background, and the Council of Higher Education, which opposes the government.

The draft legislation prepared by the AKP government sought to minimise the authority of YÖK and increase the power of the government over universities. Following the tension, the Committee of Universities (*Üniversiteler Arası Kurul*) suggested the preparation of a new draft, a move that alleviated the tension for a few months. The government granted a period of time to the Committee to prepare a draft around which common ground could be established. Meanwhile, the head of the Council of Higher Education completed his tenure. The new chair, Professor Erdoğan Teziç, prepared his own draft, which clashed with that of the Committee. The draft submitted by the chair suggested minor changes rather than ongoing reform within the system, reinforcing central power over universities and even curbing the power of the Committee of Universities. Thus, a new conflict emerged between the Council of Higher Education and the universities themselves. While these developments were taking place, the government amended the draft of the legislation to take account of the criticism and waited for a proposal from the Committee of Universities.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the relationship between the universities and YÖK has always been an unsettled, a consequence of YÖK being established immediately following the 1980 military coup with the aim of bringing the universities under central control: YÖK represented the ideology of the state. For almost 20 years debates have ranged across the relationship between YÖK and the universities, its advantages and disadvantages for higher education; its contribution to freedom of thought and democracy, all without any significant move towards any kind of reorganisation or renovation of the higher education system. For some intellectuals the events surrounding the preparation of rival drafts represented a failure on the part of the universities: a golden historical opportunity placed in jeopardy by their inability to reform themselves, which will culminate in the universities forfeiting their power (Berkan 2004).

Murat Yetkin discusses the last draft referring to the comment made by Tunç Erem, the Rector of Marmara University:

> The amendments in higher education [that] the previous governments brought about were only minor revisions in the system. None of the previous governments had undertaken such an initiative to change the system in a radical way. I think the problem lies right here. Personally, I believe that the higher education system needs radical changes instead of minor revisions. But the government has to realise that the changes it needs to undertake irritate wide segments in society (Yetkin 2003).

Abbas Güçlü, a journalist who writes a column on education, believes that the ”highly centralised YÖK model for universities is now a thing of the past”. According to the draft of the new legislation:

- Each university should have its own system of rules and regulations and the Higher Education Council should function only as a co-ordinating institution also responsible for supervision
- A major part of the authority and the responsibilities of the Higher Education Council and the rectors shall be transferred to the University High Committees
- Universities should be restructured according to different specialisation areas. Differentiated entry exams for vocational and general high schools may be developed

- The new legislation, instead of imposing a centralised, uniform model with meticulous detail, should offer a general framework for universities (Güçlü 2003).

Murat Belge, an academic and journalist who has written extensively on the clash between East and West and Turkish identity, discusses the relation between YÖK and the government, referring to the autonomy of universities in his column:

> What do we understand from education and what do we expect from it? We should also be able to talk about that. But we don't.
>
> I'm trying to remember the days before YÖK. If the present government is criticised for violating the autonomy of the university, YÖK itself represents the highest violation of such autonomy for the universities (Belge 2003c).

His criticism of YÖK can also be seen in a subsequent article. Here, he opens up a new discussion about the "rest of the children" in Turkey who must be content with their Turkish identity and forget anything else:

> The university originated from the guild system. The basic mechanism of the guild system, apprenticeship, also exists in universities and that is the way it should be. If something wrong happens in the guild system, clients correct it. During the 1980s, the martial law generals were the only people that the heads of the universities had to please. Who understands and what do they expect from higher education in this country? No definition, no expectation. Actually, there was some expectation from the business world. And the business world responded to the new system of higher education that YÖK 'improved': it began to open its own universities.
>
> Big businessmen can solve their problems by recruiting their own graduates or graduates of foreign universities. There is no need for thousands of university graduates.
>
> The rest of the children in the county, equipped with the right ideas for the nation, are blocked from thinking in the name of preventing them from thinking in a wrong way; young people must substitute the emptiness of their minds with the noble blood in their veins (Belge 2003b).

Belge criticises the de-politicisation of the young by employing a phrase used by Atatürk — "the noble blood in their veins" in addressing Turkish youth, the future of the nation, and emphasising his confidence in them and their will to protect the freedom and independence of the country. Belge plays sarcastically with the notions of *intellect* and *blood*, one being the core of thinking faculties, the other of pure national identity, by saying ".....young people must substitute the emptiness of their minds with the noble blood in their veins."

I would like to let Murat Belge's words draw this collection of ideas to a close:

> It is impossible to erase the damage caused by YÖK with draft legislation. But another problem is that the political subjects of Turkey do not have a clear idea about real autonomous function in any area (Belge 2003a).

The clash between the universities and the government is one aspect of a broader phenomenon. An anti-reform stance, a reluctance to merge and reconstruct ideas for the benefit of universities, a short-sighted approach to problem-solving, and difficulty in taking steps towards creating an ideal living environment are all part of this phenomenon. We have the same problem within the spheres of politics and in international relations: our love-hate relationship with the Northern Cyprus question and the endless saga of possible EU membership can be viewed in the same light as the dilemma facing universities in Turkey.

Since 2003, discussions regarding these issues have found their way into the headlines of newspapers. The media, academics, journalists, and politicians have engaged in debates over them. The ideas presented in the media can help to shed light upon the situation of Turkish universities in general, and upon the notion of the 'in-betweenness' of Turkish academia. In their essay in the daily newspaper *Radikal,* academics Reşit Canbeyli, Gürol Irzık and Betül Tanbay discuss higher education reform:

> This [higher education reform] is an historical chance for our universities. From the universities to the government and NGO's, all sides agree that a renewal of higher education legislation is needed. …The new law should be based on two premises: first, universities should be autonomous and flexible as much as possible; second, transparency and universal norms should be applied for the assessment of the performance of the universities. We believe that these two criteria—autonomy and assessment—balance each other and will raise the quality of university education.
>
> The new law should protect the rights that were given to universities from the 11th century onwards. Beginning from the 11th century in Bologna, these rights overlap with the concrete principles mentioned in

> the 'Magna Charta Universitatum', signed by rectors from various European Universities, again in Bologna, in 1988 (Canbeyli *et al.* 2004).

The authors list the main principles that they feel the law on universities should follow:

> The law should describe the main framework, rather than the details. It should give room for the development of internal dynamics in universities; and the differences between universities should be preserved
>
> The law should provide the necessary foundation for universities to develop their own academic programmes in line with the Bologna Process and the Community Programmes
>
> The academic autonomy of the universities should be guaranteed
>
> Universities should be able to develop interdisciplinary programmes at graduate and undergraduate levels. The difficulties facing academics working in new fields should be eradicated
>
> Universities must be financially autonomous
>
> The faculty and department heads should be elected, not appointed, by the members of the faculty or department (ibid.).

In short, Canbeyli, Irzık and Tanbay see reform as an historical chance for autonomy, flexibility, transparency and performance evaluation. They stress that the new law should accommodate differences between universities, in large part because Turkey has a number of universities of differing backgrounds and regional needs. Compliance with both the Bologna Process and Community Programmes are desired, and the election of faculty and department heads, as opposed to their appointment, is seen as a fundamental component of any universal, dynamic and democratic university.

8. TURKISH UNIVERSITIES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

On the long journey towards EU membership, there are still problems which need to be resolved. Some of these seem similar to problems in other EU countries, such as debates on the governmental approach to higher education; the relationship between universities, industry and society;

enrolment policies; employment of university graduates; the volume of research, etc.

In Turkey, the quantity of international publications has been increasing, although capability in preparing research project proposals is still underdeveloped. The selection procedures of research funding institutions appear to be less than scientific, with evaluations not being made according to objective criteria. Scarce research funds are used primarily for departmental equipment supply. In 1980 Turkey ranked 41st in publication volume in internationally indexed journals with only 390 publications, a figure that remained fairly static for almost a decade. However, by 2002, Turkey's publication volume had increased to 9,664 (SCI/SSCI/AHCI), placing it currently at 22nd place for the overall number of publications, although its position in terms of refereed publications is less favourable (YÖK 2003).

> There is a great difference between the publication numbers in different areas, for example, the publication volume in social sciences constitutes five per cent of overall publication rates in Turkey. The world average for publication in social sciences is 12 per cent; the average in English-speaking countries is 18 per cent and in other countries eight per cent (ibid.).

The breakdown of the 9,303 articles published by Turkish academics in SCI in 2002 by sector is as follows: state universities 91 per cent; foundation universities 6.2 per cent; public institutions and private sector 2.8 per cent (YÖK 2003). State universities are far ahead of foundation universities and other institutions in publication volume. There are a number of reasons for this: most significantly, foundation universities are young institutions with insufficient scholarly resources, which leads to an inadequate volume of research and publication output. After all, foundation universities have only existed since 1997. The employment policy of these universities is based primarily on teaching credentials. The foundation universities are largely established in Istanbul, employing local academic staff on a full- and part-time basis. Many of the academics hold both full- and part-time positions, with their publications being credited to their full-time institutions, which happen to be state universities. Another factor is that most of these prominent professors—qualified researchers—develop ties with industry and publish widely in daily newspapers or even work as moderators on television programmes.

According to the YÖK 2003 Report, in comparison with EU member states Turkey comes after Poland in publication volume but has a higher publication volume than Denmark, Austria, Finland, Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Luxembourg. Although these countries have relatively small populations, the comparison offers an interesting insight: Turkey has a correspondingly limited state allocation for education and research, and joint project opportunities with EU universities are less promising for Turkey than for these countries. Between 1999-2002, Turkey's increase in publication volume was higher than countries such as Israel, Belgium, Taiwan and Poland, although these countries all have a wider publication volume overall (YÖK 2003). The report presents a prosperous image of the research capacity of universities in Turkey, indeed, the facts and figures in the YÖK 2003 Report are evaluated very positively.

Clearly, comparisons of publication volume between Turkey, EU countries and the U.S.A. yield unsatisfying results in the YÖK reports; however, there are several reasons for the declining rates in more qualified research: first, professors in metropolitan areas have moved into industry or business circles; second, research has also become more individualistic because the system of promotions dissuades collaborative work; third, the connection between universities and Turkish society has been lost. Anatolian universities still contribute to urban and community life, but in Istanbul in particular, universities do not have much interaction with the city. This might have something to do, in part, with the increasing number of foundation universities in Istanbul, which are mainly teaching universities. Another factor is that quite a few of these private institutions are backed by industry and business, which results in more market-oriented research and activity in the metropolis. In Anatolian cities, universities are more organically linked to the city. In Istanbul, this relationship has been weakened by the complex structure of daily life. Istanbul has a very modern, world-city image with a role in the global business environment. Yet, this image exists in stark contrast with that of the suburbs, surrounded as they are with '*gecekondu*'[2] areas. For academics living in Istanbul, interest in research diminishes as the allocation for research activities at state universities diminishes; foundation universities are focussed on getting more students and sooner invest in public relations and advertisements. Prominent professors at foundation universities most frequently continue their research activities in collaboration with business and industry sectors in Istanbul, or with international bodies rather than at the universities where their main function is 'professional teaching'.

Prof. Tosun Terzioğlu (Rector of Sabancı University, Istanbul) sees the isolation of academics from the outside world in developed countries as a consequence of academic autonomy (Terzioglu 2002-2003, p. 4). He further points out that academics undertake research for the sole purpose of gaining a higher academic title.

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[2] A type of building that is constructed without official permission on state-owned land, mostly over one night, forming shanty towns.

In 2001, the research allocation for higher education institutes in Turkey was USD 31.6 million. In 2002, 0.64 per cent of GDP was allocated for research and development (R&D). Turkey's per capita R&D expenditure is USD 39.2, against USD 460.9 across EU countries and USD 106.6 in Greece. Public sector contributions to R&D activities amount to 14.5 per cent, with 23.3 per cent for industry, and the biggest portion of funding coming from universities themselves at 62.2 per cent. Thus, despite the decrease in both the budgets and the number of qualified researchers, universities remain the leading R&D institutions in Turkey. Eight Turkish state universities have technology development and techno-park units, a combination of practical solutions to bureaucratic burdens and institutional incentives could enhance the ties between the private sector and universities through these R&D units, as well as helping to increase the financial resources available for R&D activities (YÖK 2003).

In 2002, universities in Turkey undertook 1,188 investment projects in the areas of education, health, sports, and technology. Yet, these universities experience difficulties in conducting and finalising projects since the available budget is well below the budgetary requirement. Project income for state universities in 2002 was around USD 3.3 million; of this, 58 per cent comes from the university budget, and 37 per cent from the various economic enterprises of the universities themselves. Student fees comprise only 5 per cent of total income. Financial problems at universities are not only due to insufficient funding by the state, but also to inflexibility in investment in university financial resources, as well as inefficient use of university research infrastructure (YÖK 2003).

According to the Science and Research Section of the European Commission's 2003 Regular Report, Turkey needs to increase its efforts in scientific research, and EU relations are seen as a crucial part of achieving this aim:

> The available figures continue to indicate that the level of gross domestic expenditure in R&D as a percentage of GDP is still very low. The number of researchers in Turkey has not increased since the last report; it is still only one tenth of the EU average.
>
> Turkey should continue to focus further efforts on increasing expenditure on R&D and strengthening the role of the private sector and SMEs in research and technology activities. Participation in the Sixth Framework should contribute to these improvements.
>
> Overall, Turkey needs to increase its level of investment in science and research to lay the foundation for the future competitiveness of its economy and to contribute rapidly to job creation (Commission 2003).

One important point evident from this report is that the number of researchers in Turkey has not changed since the last report. It is still 1/10, which is less than ideal. Keeping in mind that in several EU reports the problem of researchers moving to the U.S. is highlighted as a major issue, Turkey's situation seems even more drastic. In the 2003 Report, Turkish universities need to make great efforts to attain the EU research averages. The regular report of the Commission summarises the developments in Turkish universities in relation to the Bologna process:

> Following the establishment, within the State Planning Organisation, of a department responsible for Turkish participation in relevant Community programmes in January 2002, 32 new staff members have been appointed and seconded from different ministries. This department acts as the future National Agency in charge of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes and it established work plans in co-operation with the Commission as well as launching the implementation of a whole range of preparatory measures. An amendment to the Law on the establishment and mission of the State Planning Organisation (providing for the department's legal status and financial and administrative autonomy) to act as the Turkish National Agency was approved by the Parliament in July 2003 (ibid.).

The general and technical education section of the 2003 Progress Report draws attention to the central position of YÖK, which is seen as the powerful, autonomous institution whose authority exceeds that of the government's. The unemployment rate among university graduates is also seen as an outcome of this structure, and the report makes it clear that a more 'labour market demand-driven' system is preferred by the EU.

The Turkish education and university system based on the Law on Higher Education is marked by a high degree of centralisation. There is a lack of academic, administrative and financial autonomy in the higher education system due to the strength of YÖK, which is responsible for controlling the compatibility of the education programmes with the fundamental principles of the Law on Higher Education, enjoying broad disciplinary powers over rectors and faculty. However, the Turkish Parliament, which determines the Higher Education Council budget every year, does not have the authority to inspect its expenditures. The Minister of National Education represents the higher education system in Parliament and can chair the meeting of the Higher education Council, but has no voting rights. Furthermore, neither the decisions of YÖK, nor those taken by the universities are subject to approval by the ministry. The National Security Council is also represented on the Board of the Council. This structure prevents universities from being more labour-market oriented. The high rate of unemployment among university graduates supports this view. It is necessary to reform the system of education to move universities away from a supply-driven structure to a labour market demand-driven structure.

Another major problem is pointed at in the same report: the 'allergy' of secondary school pupils to vocational schools:

> Whilst the 8th Five-year Development Plan was successful in increasing the schooling rate in secondary education, it did not succeed in reducing the proportion of pupils attending general high school in favour of vocational technical schools.
>
> Turkey has pursued plans to favour vocational and technical education in secondary education since the 1970s. Although many legal measures have been taken to strengthen secondary vocational and technical education, including, the right to enter post-secondary vocational schools without any exams, these measures have not reversed the trend toward general education (ibid.).

The report supports Turkey's efforts in continuing and completing its preparations for participation in the three Community Programmes. Another issue is the monitoring of implementation measures in the provinces with regard to the education of the children of migrant workers. In conclusion, YÖK's role is questioned in the report and the problems of higher education are seen as rooted in the secondary education system.

> With a view to making universities more labour-market oriented, the co-ordination role of the Higher Education Council should be re-examined. Turkey should take the necessary measures for the early recognition of children with special educational needs and show the necessary care in providing pre-school education opportunities to those children. Turkey is encouraged to review its planned targets and strategies related to secondary education and alleviate the pressure created by secondary education on higher education (ibid.).

9. PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

With regard to participation in Community Programmes, 15 universities were selected as pilot institutions for the Erasmus Programme. Of these, the European University Association (EUA) statements on Boğaziçi, Yıldız Teknik and Uludağ Universities are seen as paying homage to the Bologna ideal of quality culture.

Although one third of the universities in Turkey are foundation universities, they could not be chosen to participate in the pilot project since they lack the necessary infrastructure and are concentrated in Istanbul with a limited number of students.

Participation in the pilot project involved selection, taking into view rational regional targets: more universities were picked from the more densely populated regions such as Marmara and Iç Anadolu, which have higher student numbers. Some of the applicant universities were better prepared, had more experience and a higher level of infrastructure. Nevertheless, the European Commission also spared room for less well-grounded universities with the aim of bringing them up to the level of the better ones, as well as motivating them to take part in the Erasmus and ECTS/DS processes (Socrates 2003).

Only two foundation universities were included among the 15 pilot institutions, the rest being state universities from Istanbul, the Black Sea Region, Ankara, Anatolia, Izmir and the Mediterranean Region.The 15 pilot universities participating in the Community Programmes could be models for other universities. Co-operative networking, student and instructor exchange and the accreditation of curricula seem to be crucial phases in this, such initiatives, in my opinion, could add to the vision of Turkish universities and motivate academics toward greater achievements in their teaching and research activities.

10. WWW.TURKISHACADEMICS.COM — “UNDER CONSTRUCTION” OR AN ENDLESS *FALL STORY*

The road from Darulfünun to the modern universities of today’s Turkey has been long, and equally so from the Ottoman Empire to the EU candidate Turkish Republic, especially in the light and shadows of the country’s three major reform movements and military interventions. Turkey’s higher education from 80s onwards is signified by YÖK’s central control mechanisms, a consequence of the 1981 military intervention. Student uprisings and political movements that started in late 60s had come to an end by the 80s and a process of apoliticisation began. That was also the time I graduated from and began to work as a research assistant at the university. Fragmented student groups, fights and struggles, the paranoid relationship between academics, administrative staff and police at the university left a wound in the generation that lived first as students and then academics in the circumstances of the 80s.

To have a closer, more intimate look at this wound I will end my paper, with several facts and figures, and by analysing Yavuz Özkan's film *An Autumn Tale*,[3] a rare and spot-on representation of the 80s university academic and finance environments.

The film begins with a car crash in the foreground and student uprisings and police intervention in the background. A young woman (Zuhal Olcay) trying to escape from gunfire is hit by a red sports car. The driver, a handsome man and the embodiment of the 'yuppie generation', meets her through this coincidence. I find this beginning significant, since the 80s were a times when almost every relation was '*par l'accident*'. So the young, pale, introverted beauty embodies the female academic and the handsome, extrovert man represents the eager bank/stock market manager of the era. There is no escape from death, except through a love story. If they want to escape the bullets or the police pressure, then they have to face the everyday reality of the nuclear family. The story of the 'red car and love' saves them from the images and sounds of the ideological environment because from the outset they live in the protective shelter of romance.

The woman is an academic at the Western Languages Literature Department. This information, given at the start, emphasises her education, her loyalty, her firm belief in the university and science and her role in society as an intellectual. She introduces herself to the man: "I'm an academic at the Western Languages Department". Representative of an 80s female intellectual, she wears greyish clothes, no make-up, carries an unhappy melancholic air, drives a Volkswagen (in contrast to her partner's expensive red car). She is an incurable romantic, and there lies her failure. She teaches like a poet, looking deep into a virtual sky while telling her stories from literature.

After marrying the no-escape-from-the-love-affair-man she finds out that he is an apolitical finance-man. His indifference towards political and social turbulence makes her even more vulnerable. She blames him: "In Turkey students are shot in coffee houses. The betrayal, the tragedy of this country does not interest you at all. Nobody desires such pain." The *Three Days of the Condor* is referred to as they discuss fascist academics.

Her inner struggle is intensified by her job at the university where she talks about Western Literature and the students in turn criticise her for being oblivious to the realities of the street. She lives in a dilemma, caught between the harsh atmosphere of the university and the escapist passion shared with her husband. He suggests she leave for America, but the woman, an existentialist and a responsible academic rejects the offer: “If everything here in this country were OK I would go to the US, but I’m an intellectual.”

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[3] This 1994 film won several prizes in national and international film festivals: Best Film, Best Actress, Best Actor at the 6th Ankara Film Festival, 3rd Best Film at the 14th Netherlands' Film Festival, the Succesful Film prize of the Ministry of Culture, Turkey.

After the birth of their child one night she wakes up with the television news announcing the military intervention. She goes mad while her husband sees the situation as positive. On television the intervention is represented by empty streets, the sleeping beauty of the Bosphorus accompanied by the sound of marching soldiers.

Later she is once-again lecturing and we find her telling her students: “I hope the reason that some of our friends are not amongst us today is their personal choice?” implying that most of them are imprisoned or killed. The rest of the lecture is a problem-solving session using Western texts which are metaphors for the pressure and violence and illustrate the pain of the era.

On the other hand, the eager yuppie husband continues his onslaught on life by changing cars and apartments. He finds that having no regulations and rules is a rule in itself. For him Turkey does not exist, he “aims at the world” he says. I think this expression summarises the definition of globalisation for a Turkish man of the era almost perfectly.

His rapid success at work brings new passionate relationships and the damage is done. She finds confidence in a young male student in this weird atmosphere. Decadence is felt everywhere. The stock market adventure of the yuppie husband ends in a social and political disaster that brings down several ministers and a huge group of adventurer-entrepreneurs who lose their money in this monkey business. The woman’s last connection with her ‘identity’, which was in any event very vaguely conceptualised in the 80s, is lost. The ship sinks in the sea and the man says: “I know how to swim.”

I allow myself to stretch the film out in time and continue the story until the fall of 2005. What would have happened to this couple? Where would they be? What positions would they hold? The woman probably would have continued at the Western Literature Department of the state university as an associate professor, and because of the affair with the student she would not have been appointed her professorship. She would have continued to teach romantic Western texts and would have married a professor from the architecture department. After divorcing her, the eager entrepreneur husband probably would continue to live in the limelight amongst other important figures in the heyday of the 90s telecommunications and media changes. Thus he would be a partner of one of the illegal media companies whilst also writing regular columns for one of the media tycoon’s newspapers. Towards the end of the 90s he would be one of the first in the privatised secondary education business and then certainly become a member of the Board of Trustees in one of the foundation universities. The students who reproached the woman in the classroom in the 80s for being westernised and blind certainly would be prominent art directors and managers in the advertisement and PR world. The lover of the husband could be an engaged member of one of the nationalist women's movements. Their daughter, probably 23 years old this year, could be a graduate from a media arts school and be doing her apprenticeship as news announcer for a Turkish private television company. Their housemaid would be one of the leaders in a pyramid marketing company selling plastic Tupperware® kitchenware. In short she would be an idealistic conservative academic with her vision of the Humboldtian university as the intellectual heart of Europe. He would be a *realist*, opportunist and flexible businessman seeing the future of the university in the combination of the university and market, hence an admirer of the higher education in the USA. Either way *Un homme et une femme aprés 25 ans* is a great disillusionment similar to Turkey's relations with and position compared to Europe and the USA. And will explain the feelings of certain Turkish academics who have their heart in state universities but their person in foundation universities This in-betweenness emphasises our nomadic character, which still persists, at least on a mental level. The mobilisation of people in every aspect will be the cause of problems and will be a cure in itself. This section www.turkishacademics.com: "under construction" or an endless *Fall Story* will be not constructed soon, or in other words, summer is very unlikely to come…

11. CONCLUSION

Turning again to the Istanbul metaphor I used above, it is possible to say that the careers of most Turkish academics are marked by contrasting ideas, spaces and identities.

In fact, my own career, which started in a state university and continued in foundation universities, constitutes a typical example of a Turkish academic career between the 1980s and 2004: an assistant in Anadolu University Faculty of Open Education in 1981; an associate professor in the Middle East Technical University, Eskişehir in 1995; and a full professor in Istanbul's Bilgi University — a foundation university — in 1997 and then finally at the Istanbul Bahçeşehir University, another foundation university, till autumn of 2004. In short, I began my story in the fall of 1981 and ended it by the fall of 2004. My academic web site is also "under construction".

I would like to conclude with a reference to Nabi Avcı, whose following remark explains the journey of a Turkish academic in a nutshell: "Every time I look in my address book, I realise that most of my friends have changed their telephone numbers at least four times." With the exception of a few who started at and retired from the same university, most of us have gone through our careers as 'nomad academics'. Be it a journey in search of new identities or new homes, there is certainly a need for a third space for Turkish academics. “Being a Turkish Academic in Europe” represents an endless search for a new space, a new shelter and a new institutional identity.

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Chapter 10

THE CHALLENGE OF BOLOGNA

The Nuts and Bolts of Higher Education Reform in Georgia

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1. PREFACE

The impact of Georgia's 'Rose Revolution' of November 2003, and of the peaceful political change that followed it, have been strengthened by a number of expatriate Georgian intellectuals who, for the first time in more than a decade, have begun to return to work in academia, building a knowledge society at home on the basis of *strengthening a stable, peaceful and democratic society*, as suggested in the Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999). A message to this effect was delivered in the inaugural speech of the President of the Republic of Georgia, Michael Saakashvili, on January 25 2004. He highlighted education as one of the key strategic areas of development in building a free and prosperous Georgia (Saakashvili 2004). Incorporation into the European Higher Education Area offers Georgia a unique opportunity for integration with Europe beyond the traditional spheres of political and cultural co-operation by building close links in higher education and through this, offering the globalised world access to the treasures of the Georgian educational tradition.

2. INTRODUCTION

Georgia, as a former Republic of the Soviet Union, came into being as an independent nation state after the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991. In April of that year, Georgia declared its independence, becoming a member of the United Nations on August 4, 1992. The following description is

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typical of those that any Internet surfer eager to learn more about this neglected corner of Eurasia, the confluence of Europe and Asia, will find on their computer screen:

> Described variously as a part of Europe, Central Asia or the Middle East, Georgia has long been a flash point for cultural and geographical collision.[1]

From a geographical perspective Georgia is considered a part of Asia, but despite its historical mix of Western and Eastern cultures, its civilisation has always had a strong Western orientation. One frequently-asked question, particularly in the context of a growing interest in Georgia's integration into European structures is: Where exactly Georgia belongs in the modern world?

Although Georgia is the host of one of the oldest Christian communities and cultural centres, its route to independence across the centuries, and even millennia, has been long and painful. Only recently has it broken out of its international isolation and begun to explore the prospects of playing an equal role among the European nation-states. Finally, it has received a unique historical opportunity to open up and demonstrate its culture to the rest of the world. Political, economic and social integration into European structures during the past decade has been perceived as one of the principal means for national development. At the same time, becoming a part of Europe imposes great responsibilities: Georgia must prove its readiness to reform itself to European standards. This is also true for education in general, and for higher education in particular.

The new Government of Georgia is fully aware that human capital formation is the key to political and economic development and reform, and a precondition of mutually beneficial regional, European and global integration. The government is fully aware that the existing system of higher education falls short of meeting the expectations of Georgian society in its need to build a vibrant democracy and achieve sustainable economic growth. The necessity of higher education reform is clear both in terms of content and policy. Ongoing social change has highlighted the changing role of the university in society, its need to relate more closely to the needs of society, to shift from teacher-centred to student-centred modes of teaching, to develop an institutional framework for lifelong learning, mobility, etc. This has created momentum in the search for new solutions on which national higher education policy could rely. The Bologna Process offers both a fascinating challenge for Georgia, and an inspiration in meeting several of its high priority tasks simultaneously: becoming part of political Europe; reforming its higher education system in line with the consensus achieved among the majority of the European countries; preparing politically and socially for integration into the European Union; gaining access to the global labour market; and introducing mechanisms of quality assurance—thus European quality standards—and achieving access to European and world-wide educational markets.

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[1] http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/georgia/

3. THE CURRENT SITUATION

Education has a long history and solid traditions in Georgia. A good education has always been a matter of great cultural importance and social value, with highly-educated individuals enjoying considerable respect in society. The first university in Georgia (and in the Caucasus as a whole) was established in January 1918, four months before the country gained its first, short-lived period of independence from Russia. During the Soviet era, Georgia had the highest proportion of university-educated citizens among the republics of the Soviet Union.

Under Soviet rule the Ministry for Higher and Specialised Secondary Education in Moscow was solely responsible for all policy decisions, with respective national agencies located in the 'Republics' merely supervising the implementation of orders received from Moscow—passing instructions from the top of the system to the bottom, and reports in the opposite direction. Power hierarchies were steep and commands were implemented unquestioningly since any reflection on the rationale behind a given decision, or the strategies for its implementation, was not generally tolerated. The concepts of devolved systems of management and governance were not to be found in the dictionaries of the Soviet bureaucracy. Since 1989, all the former communist countries, Georgia amongst them, have undergone some of the most radical social transformations modern history has witnessed. Dramatic events in the political and social life of Georgia in the 1990s have resulted also in radical changes in the education system.

Since gaining its independence, the educational sector in Georgia has experienced a disastrous reduction in its budget. This was a direct consequence of the collapse of the Georgian economy, which between 1991 and 1994 saw a decline in GDP of more than 75 per cent. As a secondary effect of that, the share of GDP allocated to education was reduced from more than 7 per cent in 1991 to less than 1 per cent in 1994 (Perkins 1998). In 1997 education received 1.7 per cent of Georgia's GDP, against an average figure for developing and developed countries of 3.9 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively (UNESCO 1997).

In addition to financial difficulties, problems inherited from the Soviet past, such as a lack of meaningful educational planning practice and a shortage of management skills, have aggravated the crisis in higher education in Georgia. Ironically, although the Academe has been deeply shaken by the social and economic changes in Georgia since 1991, little effort has been apparent in adjusting higher education to meet those changes. Neither methods of delivery in education, nor educational content bear much relevance to the country's developmental needs, and as things stand now, both curriculum content and teaching and learning methods are outdated. The breakdown of the Soviet system of central planning and the disintegration of the USSR, combined with an extreme shortage of funds, disrupted both the links between universities and those between universities and the labour market—to the extent to which the latter had continued to function given that the formal sector of the labour market had by and large disappeared. In addition to this, the disintegration of Soviet research structures terminated joint research projects with other universities and research centres around the Soviet Union, this left entire fields of knowledge and research isolated not only from the ideological West, but also from the East.

Still, one cannot assume that the Soviet contribution to Georgian higher education was entirely negative. At the very least, it laid the foundation on which the new Georgian higher education would be established. Despite the absence of any legal guarantee on exercising academic freedom under Soviet rule, higher education institutions (HEI) did harbour intellectual dissent, preserved Georgian culture, and sponsored—within obvious limitations—free and objective scholarship. Despite hard times, the HEIs have managed to retain qualified academic staff. Although a significant brain drain did develop in the 1990s that continues to some extent to this day, the young generation of academics trained in Europe and the US have at least re-established their contacts with their local alma mater. Students, perhaps the most important agents of change in higher education, are demonstrating their desire for reform in a variety of ways.

Introducing modern standards to Georgian higher education could contribute to alleviating problems that the country is facing. Amongst other things, HEIs must train professionals with a strong sense of citizenship of and affiliation to the country, whilst at the same time acknowledging their freedoms, rights, and privileges; and while developing a new higher education system that would serve its own needs first, Georgian higher education should become internationally compatible. Here the aim of integration into the European Area of Higher Education offers the primary and most important point of reference.

The decree from the Parliament of Georgia "The Main Directions of Higher Education Development in Georgia", adopted on March 1 2002, includes an important statement:

> In the increasingly globalised world, higher education has become international by its nature. Thus it is essential the higher education system of Georgia become a part of the common European educational area through partnership relationships with international organisations and leading schools (Parliament 2002).

Although the Bologna declaration is not directly mentioned in the decree, it is evident that it offers the only available means of achieving its goals and of developing a modern, internationally relevant system of higher education. The Bologna Process provides the political impetus for reforming higher education and a structural framework for doing so. The Ministry of Education and Science has understood this and has planned for a range of special activities that should allow Georgia to join the Bologna Process in the spring of 2005.

The political aspects of the Bologna Process have played a crucial role in this decision. In addition to the opportunity of reforming higher education, joining the Bologna Process is expected to corroborate Georgia's affiliation with the European part of the Eurasian continent, or in other words, recognise its traditional 'European-ness'. Joining the Bologna Process can also be seen as one of the steps leading to Georgian membership of the European Union. A close relationship between the Bologna Process and the EU has been supported in a report by Zgaga (2003):

> Although the Bologna process was initiated as mainly an intergovernmental process, there is an evident and growing convergence with EU processes aimed at strengthening European co-operation in higher education. … the Process was no longer merely a voluntary action for the EU Member States, or for the candidate Member States either. Therefore, in the light of EU enlargement, the growing convergence between the Bologna process and educational policy making on the EU level will soon become more and more visible. However, since its establishment the 'Bologna Club' has been wider than the EU, and even after the forthcoming EU enlargement in 2004 it will remain wider. This can only give additional dynamism to the Process.

Although turning the Bologna Process into an EU sectoral project in higher education is considered by some commentators to be a highly controversial step (see e.g. Tomusk, 2004), clear political advantages for Georgia cannot be doubted: the Bologna Process—as the European higher education 'brand'—and EU membership can be used in the fight against the Soviet legacy in Georgia's higher education. Full advantage should be taken of this opportunity. But at the same time we should be aware that

> … joining the Bologna Club… demands hard work at the national level to improve and connect the 'local infrastructure' to agreed 'common roads': readable and comparable degrees, quality assurance, promotion of mobility, etc., etc. (Zgaga 2003).

Implementing the basic requirements and principles of the Bologna Declaration at the level of universities, government, and society as a whole is not an easy task.

4. EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The basic principles of the Bologna process, derived from the initial Bologna Declaration and the Communiqués of the high level follow-up meetings in Prague and Berlin, are as follows:

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, essentially based on two main cycles.
- Establishment of a system of credits.
- International mobility of students and staff.
- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance.
- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education.
- Lifelong learning.
- Student participation in the governance of higher education.
- Public responsibility for higher education.
- Autonomous universities.

Where does Georgia stand in relation to these principles? How far does it stand from European higher education as expressed in the requirements of the Bologna Declaration? Some aspects of the possible implementation of particular parts of the Bologna Process in the reality of the Georgian setting are discussed below.

4.1 Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, essentially based on two main cycles

The requirement of the Bologna Declaration concerning the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, with relevance of first degree to the European labour market, could be considered as a major goal in modernising higher education in Georgia.

The Soviet higher education system was a version of the German model adopted by Russia in the early nineteenth century. On 25 April 1994, the

Academic Council of the Tbilisi State University (TSU) adopted "The Concepts of University Education", according to which the Anglo-Saxon model was to be introduced, starting with the Department of Physics. At the first level, that of the Bachelor Degree, broad higher education and special physics instruction was to be offered, whereas at the second level, Master Degree, holders of first-class Bachelor degrees (approximately 30 per cent of the graduates of Bachelor degree courses) receive a deeper and narrower specialisation. By 1998 almost all departments of the TSU, excepting Law and Medicine, had introduced the two-level model. However, this change was largely formal since neither the content nor the methods of teaching and learning were modernized: at the end of the day, five-year programmes were simply squeezed into four years, and Master degree programmes were not developed according to internationally established standards. While some departments have tried to develop Bachelor and Master degree programmes that include quality control mechanisms and have a strong research component (e.g. Social Sciences at the TSU); some departments have also created new Bachelor degree programmes with the help of their European colleagues (e.g. the Department of Telecommunications at the Georgian Technical University), either by themselves or with the support from various agencies (e.g. the EU Tempus-Tacis programme, Volkswagen Stiftung, the USA University Partnership Program), these constitute mere islands in the ocean of Georgian higher education across which the overall situation remains critical.

Georgia currently has more than 200 HEI, among them 26 state universities. For a country with a population of 4.5 million these are not necessarily figures that Georgia should be proud of. The mushrooming of private HEIs began in 1991. The vast majority of these are of poor quality and can only be viewed as 'diploma mills', despite being granted the same rights and privileges under Georgian law as the public universities. Weak management, lack of institutional capacity, as well as the absence of a proper legislative framework have prevented the Ministry of Education and Science from effectively regulating the Georgian higher education system. The involvement of the Ministry is limited to licensing the new universities and other HEIs. All issues related to the management of academic matters are in the hands of the institutions themselves, which often means that because of the lack of any effective quality assurance mechanism, universities design their degrees as they wish and there is nobody to advise them to do otherwise. The introduction of Bachelor and Master degrees mostly means that while the old structure has been destroyed, no common framework for new programmes has been established. This leaves the door open for corruption and cheating, it promotes low qualification standards, reproduces ignorance and creates false expectations for the future among the younger generation that are based on degrees and qualifications that often do not represent any kind of learning outcome—useful, liberal or their opposites.

One lesson to be learned from this reform is that achieving national higher education reform by initiating uncoordinated local change is unlikely. In the absence of clear policy guidelines only chaos can ensue, even at leading universities. With respect to the duration of the Bachelor and Master programmes a number of models are used in Georgian higher education: 4 + 2, 3 + 2 and 4 + 1. To make things even worse, in addition to a variety of versions of the Anglo-Saxon model, the old Soviet system also lives on. The former system of graduate training leading to the research degrees of Candidate of Sciences and Doctor of Sciences remains unaltered.

Failure to distinguish between the expected learning outcomes at Bachelor and Master degree levels constitutes yet another significant problem that above all illustrates the weakness of policy underlying the reforms. Surveys conducted by the Department of Sociology of the Tbilisi State University (TSU 2000; Kachkachishvili 2001) clearly show that neither professors nor students are able to differentiate between study at Bachelor and Master degree levels, although the professors seem to perceive Master degree level training in terms of preparation for the Candidate of Sciences training, the so-called *aspirantura*. However, given the difficulties of fitting the *aspirantura* into the changing system of academic qualifications, such a perception can easily be interpreted in terms of using Master degree training as a preparation for training at the same level, while the limitations on access to knowledge and methodology severely limit the horizons for academic development, both for individuals and across the system. Identical courses are often delivered as a part of both Bachelor and Master degree programmes. Furthermore, the latter are often characterised by the absence of any more substantial research component, and the concept of professional Master degrees is also absent.

There is a lack of knowledge and understanding about what exactly the title of ‘Bachelor’ stands for and how the old five-year programmes should be changed in order to produce coherent and meaningful Bachelor programmes. This, however, should not be seen merely as an outcome of resistance on the part of the faculty and administration. Any reform requires an appropriate legislative framework and additional funding. Universities with severely reduced budgets cannot be expected to undertake significant programmatic and staff development tasks. On the other hand, students are clearly in favour of two-level higher education, particularly because of the additional options available in designing their own educational paths.

It cannot be denied that in political terms the main reason for introducing two-level higher education in Georgia is to demonstrate the commitment to westernise and appear European. Large public universities perceive it as a means of gaining recognition within a broader academic community. Attempts are also being made to join peer-review and quality assurance initiatives offered by various agencies and organisations. For example the Universities' Project of the Salzburg Seminar has organised a review visit to the Tbilisi State University and has compiled a report that focuses on curriculum reform at the first-degree level (Salzburg 2002).

It is very often the case that reform does not lead to reductions in study and teaching loads, and this is so for the introduction of Bachelor-level training in Georgian higher education: all optional courses are additional to those already in existence. Furthermore, because faculty compensation and student fees have been based on contact hours, universities have actually had an interest in inflating teaching loads. Until 2003, for example, this resulted in 36 hours being the normal weekly classroom time. This limited faculty research activities whilst also curbing their ability to develop graduate programmes. Only in 2003 was this figure reduced to 24, and still further in 2004 to 20.

A further problem has been that labour legislation still does not regulate the status of Bachelor degree holders, consequently the Bachelor degree does not appear to be something one could enter the labour market with. This is the reason for so many, particularly private HEIs offering mainly five-year 'specialist' diploma programmes. The local labour market prefers Master degree holders, on the grounds that the qualification is seen as an equivalent to the old diploma. This, one might suggest, illustrates the cosmetic nature of the reforms so far.

It is hoped that joining the Bologna Process and integration into the European Higher Education Area will induce major changes in both the content and format of Georgian higher education. Overloaded programmes could be reduced to 25-course single major degree programmes and 27-course double major degree programmes; student mobility between faculties and universities could be introduced to allow students to build programmes according to their individual needs; research components could be increased not only for students but also for faculty; the introduction of Information Technology literacy would enhance access to new knowledge; traditional universities would move away from the teacher-centred models of education to student-centred models; higher education would relate more closely to the needs of the local and regional labour markets; different fields of study—for example, natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts—would be equipped with adequate teaching and research methodologies such as critical thinking and interactivity, group work, field work, problem solving, etc. It would also create an opportunity for national integration of the academic community with national standards for teaching, research and research ethics.

Whilst appreciating the positive impact that the Bologna Process could have on the restructuring of higher educational study in Georgia, we should be aware that while opening new perspectives in Europe, introduction of the 3(BA) + 2(MA) + 3(PhD) scheme could limit the chances of Georgian Bachelor degree holders entering graduate training in US universities that seem to question the value of the three-year European degrees (Chronicle 2004).

4.2 Introducing a system of credit transfer

As with the introduction of new degrees, the introduction of systems of credit accumulation and transfer has had a rocky history in Georgia. Two Georgian universities, the Tbilisi State University and the Georgian Technical University, have actually introduced credit point systems. Some small private HEIs, such as the European School of Management (ESM) and Caucasian School of Business (CSB) have also adopted credit systems, mostly based on the American model. The TSU credit system is unique and does not correspond to any foreign model, while that of the Department of Telecommunication of the Georgian Technical University is compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

It is not immediately apparent to an outsider what the roots of the difficulties in introducing a uniform credit transfer system are, be it ECTS or any other. Strange as it may seem to outsiders, the very idea of viewing education in terms of student workload is entirely novel in Georgia. If that novelty were not problem enough, then its financial implications threaten the traditional ways in which higher education has functioned, and in particularly the manner in which faculty teaching loads are calculated and compensated. Any such reform could easily jeopardise the already less than modest remuneration faculty receive, or more worrying for administrators, create loopholes for faculty to claim additional compensation for tutoring and other non-traditional teaching activities.

As stated above, at the Tbilisi State University the current average weekly student workload is approximately 20 classroom hours per week, to which should be added a minimum of 20 hours of independent work, in addition to mid-term evaluations. The problem is that credits continue to be calculated based on classroom hours, with the same figures used to calculate faculty teaching loads. Separating the two represents a major management challenge that requires the modification of both the university teaching regulations and the faculty compensation scheme. Whilst there is much talk about student-centred universities in Georgia, even resolving the rather straightforward administrative issues related to that constitutes a massive task in the context of the current level of management capacity in the

Georgian higher education system. Introducing a common system of credit transfer, in addition to allowing and fostering student choice and mobility, is crucial for institutionalizing life-long learning in Georgia. So far not enough attention has been paid to credit transfer and accumulation. Even newly launched programmes often ignore the issue of possible credit transfer, and in cases where credits are being used it is not always clear what they actually represent. Often, the requirements for students to obtain credits continue not to be transparent.

Two possible routes to a solution exist: either a consensus regarding the introduction of a credit transfer system compatible with ECTS will be reached among the universities; or a common system will be introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science, justified by the requirements of the Bologna Declaration and the European Higher Education Area membership, which are a high political priority for Georgia. However, the lack of information and coordinated policy poses a major obstacle to synchronizing Georgian higher education with the European developments. For example, although the Ministry of Education and Science had begun to require universities to issue Diploma Supplements, universities have failed to do so because of a lack of relevant information what exactly does the latter constitute.

The Bologna Process can be seen as a force that could potentially re-integrate the currently atomized Georgian higher education system at a new level, allowing the student mobility, choice and flexibility necessitated by the ongoing changes in society. Furthermore, Georgian students should be able to receive recognition for the credits obtained in other universities, at home or abroad. The same applies to foreign students spending a period of study in Georgia. Introducing a credit transfer system would also promote institutional research as well as curriculum reform, foster co-operation among universities and introduce international standards in teaching and research.

4.3 Promotion of mobility

The ongoing processes of globalization foster worldwide mobility of students and scholars, which supports economic growth and prosperity. As the higher education systems converge and degrees and qualifications become internationally compatible, universities seek talent wherever it becomes available. In an expanding marketplace, countries that create barriers against the mobility of students and scholars will be the first to suffer. Mobility may well, for the same reasons, constitute one of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process. Within the European Higher Education Area, students and faculty should be able to move freely and have their qualifications recognized on a ‘level playing field’. Barriers to mobility should be removed (McKenna 2004). As often emphasized in the documents related to the Bologna Process, mobility has significant academic and cultural, as well as political, economic and social aspects.

By joining the Bologna Process Georgia will become a player in the global marketplace of knowledge services and products. The question remains, however, as to whether a small country at the periphery of Europe can play a role equal to its much bigger partners? While global processes do open doors to mobility, for an unreformed Georgian higher education this might easily mean that both students and faculty leave. In a balanced situation the numbers of students and faculty leaving and entering Georgia should remain roughly equal. The international attractiveness of Georgian universities, for either faculty or students, however, has yet to be empirically established.

The first requirement here is the language of instruction. To attract international students, universities need to offer programmes in English. English, after all, is the lingua franca of the twenty-first century. In an increasingly English-speaking academic world, countries that have traditionally used their own languages for academic training are introducing English for various teaching and research-related purposes. Some small countries may be tempted to switch their higher education entirely into English. Even some Georgian universities, for example, the Tbilisi State Medical University and the International Black Sea University, already enrol considerable numbers of international students from countries like Turkey, Pakistan and elsewhere. Students and scholars from European and North American countries, however, have thus far been interested exclusively in Georgian Studies, that is, Georgian language and literature. It is unrealistic to expect significant numbers of students to be attracted from Europe, the USA and Canada to study other disciplines in Georgia in the near future.

Students from industrialized countries who study abroad do not typically earn their degree there, but rather spend a year or two in the country to broaden their horizons, academic and other. The question is of how to make Georgia more attractive to them. First and foremost, encouraging students and faculty to come to Georgia would require an improvement in the existing infrastructure and the upgrading of teaching, learning and research facilities. This would require additional funding that is not available currently. Still, despite the difficulties, and given that the political and economic situation will stabilise, it is to be expected that a number of the academics who departed for Western Europe and North America in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union will return and make their intellectual resources available to the renewal of Georgian higher education. International experience has shown this to be the case:

> More commonly, academics return home for lectures or consulting, collaborate on research with colleagues in their country of origin, or accept visiting professorships. The renewal of links between academics who migrate and their countries of origin mitigates this situation somewhat, but the fact remains that developing countries find themselves at a disadvantage in the global academic labour market. The same applies as well to small and more peripheral nations (Altbach 2004).

Although the perspectives laid out by Altbach do not appear overly optimistic, it is still believed that joining the European Higher Education Area would make Georgian higher education more attractive, if only for expatriate Georgian academics.

4.4 Promoting European co-operation in quality assurance

Per Nyborg explains the dimension of quality assurance in the Bologna Process in the following manner:

> Quality assurance systems will play a vital role in ensuring high quality standards and facilitate the comparability of qualifications. …quality assurance systems in each member state should be based on
> - a quality culture in the higher education institutions;
> - an independent body responsible for quality assurance on the national level.
>
> Co-operation between national quality assurance agencies is essential, developing common standards and common procedures (Nyborg 2004).

The importance of introducing a quality assurance system in Georgia has been widely discussed, but so far Georgia has failed to develop any modern quality assurance system for its higher education. Attempts to remedy this have been unsuccessful, despite a relevant presidential directive in 1998. Finally, the Parliamentary decree (Parliament 2002) discussed in the introduction to this chapter could potentially reverse this situation since it considers quality assurance to be a powerful tool in reforming the higher education system:

> Society—students, parents, employers, public authorities, funding bodies, professional associations, and other stakeholders—has a right to assess the quality of the services HEIs provide. This right comprises an assessment of the quality of the learning experience, the transparency of financial administration, and the direction of strategic management. Higher education institutions must be accountable to the public about

how and what they teach, how they allocate resources, and which strategic priorities they identify for their development.

The new draft Law on Higher Education[2] based on the Decree, stipulates the establishment of a State Quality Assurance Board, as well as Quality Assurance Units in HEIs. Those steps are fully in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Process. The establishment of a state quality assurance board is of crucial importance in the context of ongoing reforms since it offers both a structure and a process through which system-wide curriculum reform can be guided. In addition to this, quality assurance and accreditation allows the State to allocate its funding to universities that prove through open and critical self-assessment that they deserve funding from the public purse. Obviously, establishing a national quality assurance agency is not an easy task. It is well known that, for example, quality assurance must include an element of peer review. Peers should be drawn from outside the institutions concerned and may include non-academic stakeholders, as well as academics from outside Georgia. Georgia is small, and this may mean that truly impartial peer reviews will be difficult to conduct. This would suggest regional and international co-operation on quality assurance and accreditation, which, amongst other things, would increase costs.

Introducing units of quality assurance at an institutional level is even more important in allowing institutions and basic units to develop ownership of academic programmes and outcomes, to develop contacts with external stakeholders and to react dynamically to their changing needs. This means both that the system as a whole must be geared toward quality, and that the quality assurance mechanisms must be located at the lowest possible level. Establishing quality assurance units at the sub-institutional level would allow the staff and faculty to better understand related processes and secure their involvement in them. Such units, however, are not necessarily a substitute for system-level quality assurance mechanisms, but are rather complimentary to the national, top-down processes that would run in the opposite direction.

The Bologna Process offers an almost ideal framework for the creation of a quality assurance system in Georgia: given that the quality assurance board will be an entirely new structure and its operating rules, standards, evaluation criteria, etc., must be elaborated upon from the outset. Thus Georgia has a unique opportunity to develop a truly European quality assurance system. There is no need to change or adapt an existing quality assurance system to European requirements. Instead, the building of a national quality assurance structure that fully meets the requirements of the European Higher Education Area can begin.

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[2] www.moes.gov.ge

4.5 University autonomy

Higher education institutions in Georgia were declared autonomous in a Government decree in 1992, what that meant, however, remained unclear. On the one hand, there was an intention to restrict the bureaucratic controls exercised by the Ministry of Education and Science in order to encourage higher education to innovate. At that time, higher education was still bound by highly restrictive regulations established by the Soviet regime. On the other hand, as a side effect of declaring universities autonomous without instituting sufficient measures for accountability, the doors were opened to a flourishing of incompetence and a decline in standards, even in comparison with the Soviet era. As a result, innovation developed side by side with corruption and decline. While some universities were corrupted rapidly and deeply, others developed new programmes, taking foreign partners as their measure. Unfortunately, it so happened that the negative side of university autonomy became more visible than the positive developments it facilitated.

Consequently, university autonomy has been surrounded by controversy in recent discussions related to adopting a new higher education act. The latest draft version of the Law on Higher Education presented in November 2004, says little about university autonomy. It appears as if the legislator is trying to avoid the issue entirely. Issues related to the governance of universities are being referred to lower-level legal acts, while on the other hand, attempts are also being made to suspend the elected bodies within the universities for a two-year period and concentrate power in the office of the University Governor who is appointed by the President of the State of Georgia.

While it is obvious that the government is trying to find the most effective way of reforming the higher education system and ending the decline in many of its constituent parts, ultimately such an approach will limit development, particularly in the better institutions. Joining the Bologna Process and referring to its core principles could possibly allow the introduction and maintenance of university autonomy, particularly if this were complemented with an efficient system of quality assurance. In the current political turmoil, when several formerly influential individuals are leaving higher education, reforms cannot be facilitated simply by restricting the scope of university autonomy. Instead, more complex solutions should be considered that combine the establishment of proper governing and management structures, introducing the principles of autonomy and making universities accountable before the public for their use of public funds. International peer-review should constitute a significant element of the latter.

4.6 The Social Dimension of the Bologna Process

As a newly independent country Georgia has set before itself the clear goal of joining the family of European nations and integrating fully into European structures. As a means towards this end, Georgia is seeking membership in every European association of states. Public understanding of education constitutes one of the principles of such integration. Joining the Bologna process would allow Georgia to integrate in the European labour market and offer the opportunity of developing its higher education in close connection with the mainstream of European higher education. How Georgia will be able eventually to determine its new place in a world that is both local and global, and develop a higher education that is locally relevant and globally attractive, only time will tell.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen from this brief discussion, Georgia's prospective involvement in the Bologna Process is multi-faceted. There are many questions that will obviously follow the whole process of higher education reform in Georgia if one considers the traditional conservatism of the higher education system, and the lack of information concerning the Bologna Declaration in particular. We can only hope that the Ministry of Education and Science will provide comprehensive information on the process in order to avoid misunderstanding and gain supporters for the Process among university professors, students and their parents, and society as a whole.

A general goal for Georgia is the creation of a modern system of higher education based on the European model. The Bologna Process provides a unique chance for Georgia to initiate comprehensive reforms quickly and efficiently.

Globalisation in higher education and research is inevitable. The challenge it poses lies in acknowledging the related the complexities and nuances and being prepared for them. Being a small and economically developing country, Georgia has to use all the support available to it to improve the quality of teaching and research in order to claim its due place in the internationalised world. Accordingly, as Altbach (2004) states:

> Internationalisation includes specific policies and programs undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments to cope with or exploit globalization.

The powerful and wealthy countries and their universities have always dominated the production and distribution of knowledge, while weaker institutions and systems with fewer resources and lower academic standards have tended to follow in their wake. But Georgia does not need to fear losing its intellectual and cultural autonomy — the Bologna Process is not seen there as a trap for Georgian higher education, rather the opposite. That it will provide the most suitable framework for reform, and only a reformed higher education system can ensure the long-term development of the country in establishing a democratic society, protecting national and global cultural values, and defeating poverty and social exclusion.

Georgia is a newly independent nation. Global influences and internal issues have become the major driving forces for educational reform. The importance of the Bologna Process for Georgia cannot be overstated — it has ambitious targets that it knows will need time and enormous effort to realise.

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Chapter 11

PIZZA BOLOGNESE Á LA RUSSE

The Promise and Peril of the Bologna Process in Russia

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1. INTRODUCTION

More than once the Bologna Process has inspired culinary metaphors. While creating a European super-state has not proven to be an easy task, predicting the qualities of the common European cuisine is particularly difficult. Evidently, cultures have already influenced each other's eating habits to the point that depicting the truly traditional has become a hopeless task; and more change is in train. It remains to be seen whether the French will ever be able to digest the *freedom fries* so popular in new Europe, and what hidden agenda President Putin may have in making the world respect the original *bœuf stroganoff*, the recipe of which is still perhaps being kept in an undisclosed location somewhere in East Prussia under the close guard of the Federal Security Services, and out of the reach of former colleagues from Lithuania dieting on vegetarian *tseppelins*. *Côtelette á la Kiev* has still to join the equation, once the long term political goal of many Ukrainian academics is finally achieved and the new, *orange* Ukrainian Minister of Education is invited to sign the Declaration and join the Process known for its many meetings and abundant culinary delights:

> Not for nothing did the forging of a "European higher education identity" begin in a city famous throughout the known world for its spaghetti with meat and tomato sauce. Nor that the delights of the fork should continue in the home-place of the potato dumpling (Prague), make obeisance to the Berlin home of the Eisbein (pig's knuckle) and will, next year, assuage political appetite by feasting on Norwegian boiled cod at Bergen. The fusion of the delicious (national gastronomy) with the partially

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> digestible (the reconstruction of higher education in Europe) is in a very soothe a radical innovation indeed (Neave 2004a).

How enticing the European menu is we would rather leave open, if for no other reason than the very fact that, since the term *process* amongst other things entails continuous negotiation and re-negotiation of its goals, one will only be able to describe the menu retrospectively, once it is all over, which is no sooner than 2010. What we do know for certain, at least what we have been told by the highest authority available on such matters, the former Commissioner for Cultural and Educational Affairs of the European Commission, is that "Bologna cannot be implemented á la carte…" Once invited to the table, the dear members of the *Bologna Club* (Zgaga 2003) are expected to eat everything, or otherwise be kindly asked to leave. The obvious threat of that is that it may leave hungry both the orthodox lovers of kosher food as well as those whose digestive systems are *tuned* (Gonzales and Wagenaar 2003) to junk. But not only that, sitting at the European table also requires the right attitude:

> It has to be done across the board and wholeheartedly. If not, the process will leave European higher education even less strong and united than before (Reding 2003).

Shame on those whose limited appetite for Bologna or Eisbein threatens the future of the entire continent.

The Europe of the Bologna Process makes a more diverse group of countries than most of its ideologues dare to accept openly. From Scandinavia, through Great Britain, continental Europe, Albania and Russia it perhaps covers as wide a range of quality, as well as issues and problems that one could probably identify anywhere in the world. Making a European system of higher education out of that is an extremely challenging task indeed. While some of the countries are proud of their *haute cuisine and* see little reason for any change, for others opening a *western* fast-food outlet, a MacDonald's or a pizza restaurant, would mark a significant step forward. The country discussed in this chapter, the Russian Federation, belongs to the latter category. Despite its own continued claim to offer the highest level of scholarship available anywhere in the solar system, it has experienced massive difficulties over the past fifteen years in sustaining its higher education, not to mention reforming it in the wake of the disintegration of the state-socialist political régime and the Bolshevik empire.

Despite being but a poor man's repast, *Pizza Bolognese á la Russe* is a complex piece of culinary art. As we have argued elsewhere (Tomusk 2004a) the Bologna Process is being driven by three relatively independent forces: the cultural, political and economic agendas. In Russia, as in many other places, there is consequently more than one chef in the kitchen. Whilst each of them has his own team of advisers, it does seem to be the case that each of the chefs adds ingredients to the jointly-created dish independently of the others. Following another metaphor, it often happens that the right hand knows not what the left is doing. In the Russian case, Mr. Oleg Smolin, the deputy chairman of the Duma (Lower House of the Russian Parliament) Committee for Education and Research, argues that the right hand does not know what the right hand did just moments earlier (Smolin 2005). There is, therefore, not only little co-ordination between the Political, Cultural and Economic chefs of the Bologna, but even little consistency amongst each of their contributions to the implementation of the Bologna in Russia. Perhaps, it would be best to stop exploiting the culinary metaphor here and turn to more serious matters.

2. POLITICS OF BOLOGNA

Although academics may wish to deny their political interests, perhaps not so much to defend their own position of criticism and melancholy outside of society than that of privilege above it, historical evidence seems to advise against it. Since time immemorial, education has been used to serve the goals of conquering the hearts and minds of the enemies, and of corrupting their youth with foreign gods, goods, idols and values. It is no secret that in its own time, the Soviet Union had used education as one of the main information channels of the first truly global terrorist network—the Communist International, to spread communist ideology world-wide. The 'communist camp', as Coombs explains, experienced a degree of success in doing this, 'especially among the economically less advanced peoples of the world' (Coombs 1964, p. 12). President Eisenhower responded to the *Soviet cultural offensive* (ibid. p. 39) by supporting the cultural presence of the United States world-wide. Education eventually became a dimension of American foreign policy as a response to the view of the Soviet communists that everything was politics and politics always boiled down to war:

> During the years of Soviet rule, the inhabitants of the country of the Soviets were constantly taught the idea that their entire lives were a battle. The vocabulary of those years included phrases like 'the labour front', 'the battle for the harvest', 'triumphant messages', and so on (Prozumenshchikov 2004, p. 65).[1]

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[1] This and all other Russian sources used in this chapter have been translated into English by the author.

The American response was fully adequate. As Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs under President Kennedy, Phillip H. Coombs explains:

> Literally everything we cherish is at stake, and since America's ability to influence world events is limited, as our resources inevitably are, we can ill afford to waste either strength or opportunity (Coombs 1964, p. 17).

In the years of the Cold War there was hardly an issue of popular interest that was not mobilized to further political goals, from chess to space travel, and symphonies to ice hockey. Prozumenshchikov (2004) explains:

> Since the 1950s sport became one of the critical areas of the great confrontation between socio-economic systems that increasingly took the form of a battle between two superpowers – the USSR and the USA. While in the economic sphere, agriculture and particularly in the living standards of citizens the slogan announced by the Soviet leadership to 'catch-up and outrun the USA' remained an unachievable dream, then sports together with the space program, science and military capacity were the areas in which the Soviet Union not only did not lose to the United States but sometimes even prevailed over it (p. 91).

Whilst in the globalising world education is losing its political importance and gaining prominence as a dimension of the economic domain (Neave 2004b), and as the great battle at Armageddon fought between 'the kings of the whole world' (Rev. 16:14) may well take place by other, although by no means less lethal means — those of global economic competition — the old-fashioned geo-political thinking is far too close to those accustomed to measuring their influence in terms of geographical territories controlled by political and military means. In his recent introduction to the Bologna Process, Mr. Gennady Lukichev of the Russian Ministry of Education does not hesitate to explain to the Russian reader the political stakes of Russia's joining the process:

> Participation of the European Union and the Russian Federation in the process of creating a common educational space stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok should be seen as a move by the two main partners of the contemporary European political landscape towards each other (Lukichev 2004, p. 18).

And:

> This project, in the event that it succeeds, can serve as a source of experience for Europe-wide co-operation in other areas. This reveals another important meaning of our participation in the Bologna Process:

> Europe-wide educational space can become a bridge for further European integration (ibid).

This reveals quite a lot of what the author, and perhaps the institution he represents think the Bologna Process is about, and who the *superpowers* playing the game are. One may argue that the above statement does not tell us as much about the willingness to build what Mr. Gorbachev called *our common European home*, as it represents an attempt to consolidate itself internally against the presence of a massive external force, be it friend or foe. For such a purpose, being one of forty signatories to a political declaration is quite a different issue from that of being one of two superpowers, at times dividing and at times uniting the great Eurasian landmass stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok. A message concerning world-domination, or at least co-domination should be perceived as one manufactured for primarily internal consumption in a country that has not experienced much success since the launch of the Sputnik in 1957, and has historically known only one type of mobilisation—military mobilisation (Pain 2005). Whether or not that represents a successful knowledge society strategy we would rather leave open at this point.

With the exception of a small number of critical intellectuals, there does seem to be a broad consensus in Russia concerning the country's level of importance in world affairs, its cultural achievements, as well as its level of general and higher education. Less popular with either the academic community or the general public are the views expressed by a minority arguing, for example, that some of the messages Russia is spreading regarding its role as the primary vehicle of continuity in the identity of Indo-European civilisation may not only come across as racist but also as fascist; that its modernisation was achieved through massive use of slave labour imprisoned in the camps run by the *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerov* (the Ministry of Camps) better known through the works of Solzhenitsyn for its acronym GULag; and that contrary to the positions of many current theoreticians, educational achievement in Russia was never reflected in its economic development. It therefore comes as little surprise that, to paraphrase Neave (2003), both *bolognaphobes* and *bolognaphiliacs* share the position that Russian higher education represents a high level of academic excellence. They also agree that Russian higher education does not need far-reaching reform, and to the extent there are any problems at all, these are related to chronic funding difficulties caused by neo-liberal economic reformers taking their orders from the International Monetary Fund.

However, as the conservative circles in Russian higher education that gravitate around the Russian Union of Rectors also argue, despite all the discomfort that lack of funding has caused to higher education institutions and academics, it has not damaged the quality of education. That, as Chekmarev and Subetto (2003) argue, is as high as ever. As we have discussed elsewhere (Tomusk 2004b, 2004c), no attention has been paid to the fact that, having experienced major decline in the level of public funding in early 1990s, even in 2004 total spending on education stood at 75 per cent of the 1991 level (MINOBR 2004), having lost at least 70,000 academics through emigration, and having increased the total number of higher education students by a factor of 2.5 over a decade, the only logical conclusion left is that today the level of training that Russian higher education is in a position to deliver must fall significantly below the standards of the Soviet era, and in that it does not really matter how high one thinks that standard actually was. Clearly, it is much worse today. A recent education white paper offers unheard of insights into the realities underlying the traditional political propaganda:

> In the World, massification of higher education relates primarily to the transition from industrial economics to the 'economics of knowledge.' In Russia, to this is added the lack of broad institutionalized opportunities for professional self-realization among the younger generation. In the context of inadequate development of the infrastructure of educational markets in Russia, and inadequacy of the system of life-long learning, rapid massification of higher education in Russia relates to various forms of 'pseudo education' (MINOBR 2005).

This makes it abundantly clear that the phenomenal growth Russian higher education has experienced since the mid-1990s relates primarily to the fact that in the context of a continuously dysfunctional economy where paid employment is hard to find, the young have few alternatives (save the usual ones — military and prison) to gathering at the universities or provincial 'institutes' to spend what has turned out as the meaningless years of youth. However, this is only possible if the cost of education remains low, which leads to further deterioration in its quality. As there seems to be no internal way out of this vicious circle, it can only be broken by convincing the outside world that Russian higher education is excellent. That creates a theoretical opportunity, albeit difficult to realise, of attracting foreign students and badly needed cash. This, one may suggest, is the gamble that the Russian Bologna activists have taken in economic terms. Although not everybody feels the economic position is the most important.

A recent report from a special Duma committee *Russia in the United Europe*, having analysed the relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union since 1997, concludes that there is only one area in which progress can be made in the foreseeable future—culture and education. Progress in all the other areas, such as joining the common market or domestic and external security are inhibited by conflicting interests, as well as by

President Putin’s ‘authoritarian modernisation’ project, which is increasingly unpopular in Brussels (Arbatova and Ryzhkov 2005). In ‘cultural and educational co-operation’, however, the Russian interest, although somewhat narrow, is clearly defined:

> For Russia, one of the most important issues in this area is the mutual recognition of diplomas [higher education degrees and qualifications V.T.] that would encourage the harmonisation of the educational systems of Russia and the European Union (ibid. p. 202).

In the context of a broad consensus among academics and the political élite on the high status of Russian higher education, its historical achievements and need for cash, the higher education community is deeply divided over the issue of the Bologna Process. A significant proportion of prominent university leaders, starting with the Rector of the largest university in the country—the Moscow State University—Prof. Sadovnichii have strongly opposed Russia’s joining the Bologna Process, while the official position of the country, agreed back in 2003 between the then Minister of Education Mr. Filippov and President Putin himself, is that Russia should join the signatories of the Bologna Declaration. This it did in September 2003. It seems to be correct to argue that the decision to join the Process was made by the political élite against the will of the academic élite. The academics eventually mobilised to foster its implementation were, unsurprisingly, to be found among those most sympathetic to the foreign policy agenda, for example, the leaders of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the training base of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From the moment that President Putin concluded that joining the Bologna Process was in Russia’s interests, gaining access to the *Club* became a major foreign policy issue. As Mr. Filippov, the Minister of Education of the Russian Federation who facilitated Russia’s membership in the Bologna Process, stated in an interview on Radio Mayak, Russia did not accept the initial response it received from the Bologna follow-up group to the effect that its membership was to be delayed until after new membership requirements and conditions were worked out at the Ministerial meeting in Berlin in September 2003 (Filippov 2003). Instead, Russia mobilized its foreign policy resources to achieve the goal. For example, President Putin addressed the issue at his meeting with President Chirac (Savickaya 2003). While immediately afterwards Russia signed the Bologna Process, the Russian media reported that this event signified a major success for Russian higher education. Minister Filippov, describing the voting process in Berlin, leaves little doubt that the victory was that of Russian foreign policy:

> Voting over the membership of every new country was secret, behind closed doors. We were very much helped by Italy, Great Britain, Spain and Germany, and also by the Council of Europe (NEWSru 2003).

We do not know exactly what the price of that vote was, but having learned something from the history of diplomacy one can be assured that the helpful countries certainly received Russia's support in other fora on other issues. Having a say over appointments to leading positions in intergovernmental organisations is one issue that constitutes highly valuable capital in bargaining situations like this. Luckily enough, Europe experiences no shortage of such organisations and jobs.

Although it was a great victory for Russian diplomacy, not everybody is happy about it. Conservative university leaders like Sadovnichii, the Rector of the Moscow State University have adopted a typical isolationist approach. Sadovnichii thinks that if the West wants to co-operate with Russia, it could equally well adopt Russia's time-honoured higher education system:

> We could suggest to the partners that they apply our experience with no less success. We have to protect the interests of the Russian educational system (RSR 2003).

For many of the contemporary ideologues of the Russian identity, the gap between Russian spirituality and Western materialism is insurmountable. Any dealings with those influenced by American consumerist decadence, that is the *West*, are better avoided. Perhaps because consumerism is an extremely contagious disease. Back in 1970s and 1980s, the knowledge that there was another world where people ate meat and wore blue jeans spread like a cancer in the body of the communist empire and the desire for the same eventually ruined it. Sadovnichii declares that for Russia "joining the Bologna Process would equal brain surgery where Russia has been given the role of organ donor" (Subetto and Chekmarev 2003), meaning that the Process would give a new boost to the brain drain. What he seems to be ignoring is the fact that those academics who have left Russia over the past fifteen years and those who will in the future have not been forced to go. They have left voluntarily, mostly for the reasons related to their living standards and work conditions. Therefore one may argue that the special type of Russian spirituality stressed both by conservative academics, as well as neo-fascist Eurasanists, like Aleksandr Dugin (see e.g. Tomusk 2004c), simply constitutes a naïve attempt to demonstrate the failings of the Russian economy and its poverty in a positive light that loses its attractiveness as soon as alternative options become available. For the great majority of Russian academics the only way to bridge the gap between Russia and the West is by moving physically from Russia to the West. Given the scale of the emigration, in which not only individuals leave the country but entire laboratories and research groups together, not many choose to stick to past glory and non-material spirituality when proper work, food and shelter become available elsewhere. Clearly, the isolationist way of saving Russian higher education and research does not work. The only real option, therefore, is to co-operate. This is what the Russian bolognaphiliacs suggest. Although theirs is the minority voice in the academic community, they seem to be greatly encouraged by the top of the political establishment that finds it beneficial for its own massive geopolitical ambitions.

3. THE SOFT WAY

The pro-Bologna forces in Russian higher education lead by Andrey Melville, the Academic Vice-Rector of the Moscow State Institute for International Relations, propose what has become known as the *soft way* of implementation of the Bologna Process. It argues for careful and measured introduction of the main elements of the Bologna declaration while preserving the historical achievements and tested values of Russian higher education (Melville, et al. 2005).

While representing in many respects a minimum agenda, the soft approach constitutes a difficult compromise between what is tolerable to Russian academia and acceptable to the supra-national sponsors of the process as an implementation plan. Given the political nature of the compromise, it is therefore hard to judge to which extent the *softist* liberal-sounding academics actually share the view of the historical success of Russian higher education and how much it is being stressed to pacify the conservative communist romanticists. In either case, the soft approach obviously falls short of the expectations of the European Commission voiced by its mouthpiece the European University Association, that the Process is to be *implemented wholeheartedly across the board.*[2] Entirely sensible arguments for step-by-step implementation, like those presented by Melville and colleagues, fail to convince the emissaries of the Process:

> Responding to imaginary opponents one may say that in talking about the ‘soft approach’ to Bologna reforms in Russia we do not mean their imitation, but a conscientious and full meeting of the requirements of the Bologna Process (particularly the communiqués of the Prague and Berlin meetings of ministers responsible for higher education). At the same

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[2] This is exactly the position expressed by Ms. Sylvie Brochu, a Program Manager of the European University Association at the expert forum ‘Integration Assistance to Russian Higher Education Institutions into European Higher Education Area’ Moscow, January 18-19, 2005.

> time, complicating fulfilment of the requirements, which are anyway not easy given the current situation in Russian higher education, with total reforms in all possible directions leading to unpredictable outcomes would be both unrealistic and irrational (Melville et al. 2005, p. 74).

It is nothing short of ironic that this time it is the representatives of the democratic free world who demand that the children of communism in an increasingly autocratic Russia follow their own Party-line without reflecting on its meaning, or even on the most efficient ways of implementing the Process. At least in this case Brussels requires blind submission, perhaps in fear that by letting the Process loose nothing at all will be accomplished.

Implementing a change in a chronically mismanaged and underfunded higher education system that consists of thirteen hundred universities and six million students like Russia's is a complicated task. A recent Government white paper characterises the situation in Russian education as follows:

> The Low level of officially paid salaries and inadequacy of the frameworks for additional legal earnings have lead to a growing shadow economy and the spread of corruption in education. The reputation of teachers and faculty members are on the decline, internal brain drain is not being reduced (MINOBR 2004).

In this respect the attempt undertaken by the *softists*, even if its intellectual foundations might be shaky, of opening Russian higher education to the extent that would allow the discussion of systematic sector-wide reform, should be understood if not approved of. However, given the complexities of the Russian reality, the only option to further the Process the group seems to have identified is selling it. Once again people who apparently talk from the position of the intellectuals consciously engage in raising expectations that could not be met. It is highly likely that in this case the outcomes will not even reach a level that could allow them to be described as *mixed* (Cerych and Sabatier 1986).

3.1 Economic Arguments for the Process

The main argument which Melville and colleagues apply in promoting the Bologna Process to the Russian higher education community is the simplest possible. They argue that the Bologna Process has a massive potential to generate funding for both Russian higher education as well as the individuals involved. This is supported by the position of the former chair of the Duma Committee for Science and Education, Shishlov, who believes that joining the Bologna Process will allow Russia to gain access to many-billions of dollars worth of world-wide higher education markets (Arsenina 2003).

For most of Europe the thought that the Bologna Process could have an immediately positive economic effect belongs to the past, although the long-term expectations, perhaps misplaced, of its generating funds on a large scale in the future remain high. However, an attempt to save money by allowing graduates with Bachelor degrees to enter the labour market instead of the graduates from traditional continental European long-cycle university studies has failed. So far, no significant reduction of study durations and related costs has taken place. Instead, it is becoming apparent that in order to implement the Bologna Process at the institutional level significant additional funding will be needed. This money, like any additional public funding for higher education in Europe, does not seem to be available. It is therefore surprising to find the Russian Bologna expert group lead by Melville arguing that the Process constitutes almost an infinite source of additional cash, which needless to say, Russian higher education badly needs and has been waiting for, for nearly two decades. Both for politicians and academics the expected economic benefits of the Process prevail over those related to reforming the higher education sector and fostering cultural co-operation.

Together with the rising international competitiveness of European higher education, the competitiveness of Russian higher education, constituting an inseparable part of European higher education by virtue of its membership in the Bologna Process, is expected to rise. That is expected to allow Russia to attract students from all over the world. Degrees and qualifications conferred by Russian universities will be fully recognized across the entire European Higher Education Area, and thus become highly attractive internationally. It is being argued that even if exchange students do not pay for their studies, they will eventually spend significant amounts of money on accommodation, food, medical service and entertainment (Melville et al. 2005, p. 82). It has, however, been assumed that in one way or another Russian universities will be able to impose fees comparable to *European standards* even on exchange students, and in such a manner earn very significant additional funding, which they will be able to spend as they please:

> Thanks to mobility of foreign students coming to universities for a semester or a year, Russian universities will receive additional non-budgetary funding. While the economics of student mobility needs to be further studied, the prospects for the improvement of the economic status of particular universities are already emerging. The fees that a foreign student is charged for education of an adequate level of quality should meet the *European standards* … (ibid. p. 89, my italics, V.T.).

Subsequently, the authors are carving out a particular market niche for Russian educational services, arguing that offering higher education in the Russian language to students from the former Soviet Union countries would allow western-level income to be generated by offering Russian education. This would perhaps be a smart calculation, except that countries like Kyrgyzstan are also ready to offer the same service at a lower price. Expectations set for funds to be collected are high. These are not only thought to suffice for the additional payments to the faculty, but also to allow investment in the deteriorating university infrastructure to an extent that makes Russian universities competitive with universities in Western Europe even in this respect. One may think that here the authors had lost control of their imaginations.

The plan to sell Russian higher education services to the citizens of former Soviet Union, particularly CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, a somewhat post-colonial structure established to allow Russia maintaining close ties with its former colonies) countries at the *European* price may, however, be contested by a massive force of local origin—Russia's own foreign policy interests. According to President Putin:

> Training of specialists in [Russian] higher education institutions selected from among foreign citizens, primarily preparation of cadres for the member-states of the CIS, constitutes a task of absolutely the highest importance for Russia, both with regard to civilian as well as military education (RSR 2003).

Russia might after all not be able to make money from training individuals from the countries it intends to dominate by using the same individuals. Instead it may have to continue the practices developed by the Soviet Union (as well as the United States of America) during the Cold War, through which loyal elites in third countries were created by making free education available to a certain number of their citizens.

The Bologna Process is expected to add attractiveness to Russian universities internally, as well as externally. The internal reputation of universities that regularly send students to study in foreign universities (which to a significant extent is expected to be fully or partially paid by the government) is expected to rise. What, however, the benefits of that reputation would precisely be are not made explicit. The authors seem to feel somewhat uneasy about disclosing that Russian students will also have to compete both intellectually and economically for places in the better universities, an agenda for which low popularity among the Russian public is self-evident. Although carefully presented, the authors eventually acknowledge that the entire future of Russian higher education may depend on its ability to attract fee-paying students, particularly those in a position to pay the European price. Starting on the assumption that:

> According to many theoreticians the Bologna Process should by no means become a commercial enterprise, an educational business.

The authors continue:

> However, for Russian higher education institutions, experiencing significant financial difficulties, the issue of foreign students paying for their studies may turn out to be the one of survival (Melville et al. 2005, p. 102).

It is hard to identify the theoreticians on whom Melville and colleagues rely in their argument, and the situation seems to be exactly the opposite—at least, since the very early days of the process some of the most powerful sponsors of the Process have been stressing the importance of European universities becoming more entrepreneurial and selling educational services world-wide, eventually entering into competition with the US universities. In this regard the Russian hope of saving their higher education by entering the global educational markets does not differ from that of Europe, which also experiences significant difficulties in adequately funding its expanding higher education sector albeit on a lesser scale.

There are other mechanisms, perhaps somewhat more Russian in nature, that are expected to add attractiveness to the Process. Some of them are purely bureaucratic, for example, the introduction of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is expected to allow for *more efficient* measuring of faculty workloads, and that in turn is expected to lead to increases in faculty compensation (ibid. p. 87).

Travelling abroad is presented as a major source of motivation for both Russian students and faculty members implementing the process. It almost looks like everybody will travel and nobody will have to pay for it. Faculty exchanges are expected to become a regular part of university life and allow Russian academics to improve significantly their economic status as 'European standards of faculty compensation' start setting the level of compensation also in Russian universities (ibid. p. 88). Wider horizons are also being painted in bright colours:

> … participation in the Bologna Process should stimulate transition to western standards of funding of higher education and allow Russian universities to leave behind the current regime of operating at the level of mere survival (Melville et al. 2005, p. 81).

It is not entirely obvious where exactly all the necessary funds for this will come from and, if there is anything Russian government is expected to contribute, why it has allowed the higher education sector to reach its current rather unfortunate state in the first place. While it is being argued that foreign universities pay Russian faculty according to their own standards, it is also argued that large numbers of foreign faculty will be teaching in Russian universities. By whom and according to which standards their compensation will be paid is cautiously left open. One may assume though, that the current compensation level in Russian higher education does not appear particularly attractive to the Russians themselves since 90 per cent of the individuals working in the educational sector earn less than 200 USD, and 35 per cent less than 100 USD monthly (MINOBR 2004).

The Bologna Process is also being expected to allow automatic equalisation of the Russian *Candidate of Science* degree with the *PhD* and that would once again guarantee Russian *candidates* equal pay-scales with *European doctors* (Melville et al. 2005, pp. 92-93). Without discussing in any further depth the complex issues related to the equivalence of academic degrees and their mutual recognition by sovereign states, one may suggest that the very possibility of uncontrolled entry into the European Union of literally millions of holders of degrees of questionable quality may force the Bologna Process into the direction of introducing more rigorous quality assurance mechanisms than the European habit so far has been, for example, a supra-national institutional accreditation. More interesting, however, is the fact that by promoting the benefits rising from the implementation of the Bologna Process, Melville and colleagues move dangerously close to feeding the very roots of bolognaphobia—the accelerating brain drain from Russia. It looks like the authors are at least implicitly suggesting that implementing the Bologna Process will smooth the way out of Russia for the best academics. Mr. Vladimir Filippov, albeit modestly, extends this promise to all Russian degree holders:

> Russian degrees must become understandable to western employers (Kara-Murza 2004).

3.2 Culture and Education of the Process

While money is a strong argument, it is not everything. At least the authors cannot leave the reader with an impression that it is everything, because they would be charged with *American materialism* and other deadly sins. To demonstrate the intellectual benefits rising form the Process, Melville and colleagues draw a picture of broader horizons of mutually beneficial academic co-operation, and joint research in particular:

> Faculty members from co-operating universities can jointly produce books, textbooks and teaching aids; university publications may appear in several languages (Melville et al. 2005, p. 90).

The practical side of such high-level professional co-operation has not yet been developed, although one can envision certain difficulties since according to the same authors, foreign language proficiency among Russian academics' remains limited. This has been the case ever since the times when Russian, the language of the most advanced part of the communist movement, was expected to be spread rapidly world-wide. That would be the official explanation of the limited ability to speak foreign languages in Russia. An alternative would be to argue that under the pretext that the entire world would soon be learning the Russian language and rendering other languages useless, the Soviet leadership for many decades systematically cut off its population's access to alternative sources of information and knowledge available in other languages. The full impact of that has still not been understood even among the Russian academics, many of whom continue to argue that Moscow State University and St. Petersburg State University are the world's second and third highest-ranking universities. The first being, as seen from Moscow, Sorbonne (!) (Fedotova 2003). Still it is perhaps not a mere coincidence that engaging in any collaborative intellectual activity is being directly related to nothing other than gaining access to European levels of income:

> To the more professionally competent and ambitious Russian academics this [the Bologna Process] allows significant improvement of their economic status (Melville et al. 2005, p. 97).

Earlier in this paper we already discussed the political dimension of the Bologna Process for Russia—an opportunity to establish herself once again as a superpower that divides and rules the world with one or two comparable powers. In addition to the political promise and great economic attractions described in the previous section, Melville and colleagues explain what cultural benefits would rise from the implementation of the Bologna Process.

In a manner similar to the early student exchange programmes within the European Community where major stress was laid on developing mutual understanding among European nations, if for nothing else than to avoid yet another Franco-German war, Melville and colleagues see certain benefits rising from exposing students to European cultural richness, simultaneously assuring Russia's own conservative public that the interests of its unique cultural identity will not be compromised:

> Maintaining national identity he [a student] can become a carrier of the European ideals of humanism, feel himself to be a citizen of a united Europe (ibid. p. 94).

Although the authors are looking for ways in which Russian universities could claim a share of the global higher education services markets immediately, without needing to spend many years reforming programmes and learning foreign languages, for example by serving the educational needs of Russian speaking neighbours, students at least are expected to learn other languages, too (ibid. p. 88). Such processes, however, always move in two directions as

> - a large number of Europeans receive an opportunity to learn Russian language, to familiarize with Russian culture and the pedagogical traditions of Russian higher education, that will be organically spread among foreign students and faculty that arrive in Russia on academic mobility programs (ibid. p. 81).

In the context of Central East European higher education reforms since the fall of state-socialism, Russia's position is most peculiar. While in its former East European satellite countries, as well as some of the parts of the former Soviet Union, the issue of overcoming Soviet influence has been addressed, at least to some extent, by discontinuing the grossest violations of intellectual integrity and the corruption of social sciences, Russian higher education has seen little of that. Here, *outstanding* nineteenth century Russian academic traditions have been argued to be paving the way for the glory of Soviet academic success, and the still further success of contemporary Russia (see e.g. Subetto and Chekmarev 2003). The Bologna Process has been argued for, because of its potential to take the message even further as, as a result if it:

> The value of Russian higher education diplomas [i.e. degrees] grows and these will become known to the entire world (Melville et al. 2005, p. 88).

Needless to say, higher education is once again expected to correct errors made throughout the decades in many areas—foreign and internal policy, economic as well as military:

> Many Europeans treat Russia watchfully, not viewing it as a stable and trustworthy partner. The complete entry of Russia to the Bologna Process may have a positive impact on the perception of Russia among the Europeans (ibid. p. 82).

As we have suggested elsewhere (Tomusk 2004a), the Bologna Process includes hardly any positive programmes for higher education itself. Here, the Russian Bologna group offers a couple of points that are expected to make a positive impact on higher education. What is perhaps unique for the entire Bologna-movement, is the suggestion here that the introduction of new degrees would actually require the re-thinking of their educational meaning. So far it seems to have been the case for a large part of the Bologna Process membership that complying with the requirements has been far more important than making sense of them. Here, Melville and colleagues address the issue, though mentioning it is much easier than developing adequate structures and processes, not to mention funding these.

What is, however, even more interesting if not intriguing is the suggestion that introduction of the Master degree would allow Russian higher education institutions to be divided into research universities and undergraduate institutions, ending the artificially maintained *high level* of the entire sector, as

> It is not a secret that today many provincial higher education institutions cannot, for example in physics, offer more than what could be called the bachelor-level i.e. mass-scale basic professional preparation (ibid. p. 78).

This would perhaps be a step in right direction, although such divisions easily fail in massive political controversy since they lead to funding cuts for lower-ranking institutions, threatening their very existence and therefore mobilising political opposition among the inhabitants of small provincial towns where the poorest and lowest-quality institutions are located, and where people do not have the means to send their children to big metropolitan universities.

Another particularly interesting argument suggests that the implementation of the Bologna Process would allow Russian universities to fight the local educational bureaucracy. Universities, as the argument goes, could gain additional autonomy from the state bureaucracy by referring to the principles laid down in the Magna Charta of the European University. While this argument has a particular connotation in the Russian context where universities have fought for years against taxation authorities for the autonomy to use funds collected as tuition payments from the students, the issue also has a broader dimension. In order to create a federal Europe, the nation-state level should be weakened. Some of its powers should be devolved while others be concentrated in Brussels with a third group being handed over to the markets to take care of. Although regarding the latter, Europe has not been particularly successful. Even in higher education, its is more likely that choosing between the two evils—Brussels and the markets to look after higher education, Europe will choose the former, and that would be the end of Bologna, despite the intentions for the Process in Brussels have been clearly related to the desire to lead European universities to the marketplace. While Russian society is now being told that higher education actually carries a price tag, although only for foreign students, for the French to reach even that stage would still require time.

4. OSTAP IBRAGIMOVICH, ANDREY YUREVICH, AND THE UNIVERSAL METROPOLIS OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

Reading the arguments Melville and colleagues present for the implementation of the Bologna Process in Russia, particularly its economic benefits originating from three main sources—tuition fees paid by foreign students; salaries paid by foreign universities to Russian faculty members; and investments forced on the Russian government in order to save its reputation while opening its universities to foreign students and academics on a large scale—is reminiscent of a piece of early Soviet literature written back in 1920s.

In January 1928, Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov completed the manuscript of a novel that has served ever since as a guide to understanding Soviet life. The main characters of the novel 'Twelve Chairs' are Ippolit Matveevich Vorobyaninov (a.k.a. Kisa), a nobleman who has lost both his status and property in the event known in Soviet history as the Great Socialist October Revolution, and one Ostap Ibragimovich Bender (a.k.a. the Great Combinator), a petty criminal who with a great skill manages hundreds of legal methods of freeing fellow citizens from their property. In this novel, Ostap Bender and Ippolit Matveevich travel throughout Soviet Russia in a search of twelve antique chairs from the household of Klavdia Ivanovna, Ippolit Matveevich's mother in law, in one of which she had hidden the family diamonds. The trip takes both the heroes and the reader through an endless account of the dysfunctions of the emerging Soviet bureaucracy and introduces us to fools of all possible strains and varieties, whom the Great Combinator adeptly milks to fund his own and Kisa's adventures. In order to understand the argumentation that Melville and colleagues apply in their effort to convince the Russian higher education community in the (post)-Soviet context of the benefits of the Bologna Process, we should take a look at the events taking place in the chess club of the Horse Breeding Administration of Vasyuki, a small town on Volga, on June 22, 1927. The arguments presented by Andrey Yurevich Melville closely resemble the way Ostap Ibragimovich fundraises in Vasyuki.

Arriving in Vasyuki, Bender had not eaten for a full day—a hardship that adds particular eloquence to his speech. He introduces himself to the one-eyed chairman of the chess club as a grandmaster on his way from a tournament in Carlsbad to Kazan. To raise 30 badly-needed rubles he offers a paid lecture on the latest in chess thinking and a simultaneous match on 160 boards, although he has played chess only once in his life and his knowledge of chess thinking is limited to a few old anecdotes on Emanuel Lasker, Jose Raoul Capablanca and some other famous chess stars of his day.

In order to gain access to the funds of the chess club, an additional 20 rubles, Bender offers to organise an international chess tournament in Vasyuki, the participation in which of all his famous friends is already guaranteed. This event is not only expected to turn a town of 8,000 inhabitants into the capital of the Soviet Union; to be called New Moscow with Moscow being renamed to Old Vasyuki. It also carries the potential of turning Vasyuki into the chess centre of the entire universe:

> The thought of chess that turns a provincial town into the capital of the planet will be transformed into an applied science, out of which will grow a method of interplanetary communication. Messages will go from Vasyuki to Mars, Jupiter and Neptune. … And then who knows, perhaps in eight years from now, in Vasyuki for the first time in world history an interplanetary chess congress will take place (Ilf, Petrov 1928/2003, p. 163).

The people of Vasyuki have their doubts. It feels intuitively that such a thing could not be done without very significant funding. Like the academic entrepreneurs of our own era, comrade Bender assures them that investment is not an issue. What is needed is but a few rubles to deliver the first telegrams to his friends (twenty rubles would be sufficient for this), after that money will flood the town and its chess club:

> Vasyukivites will not pay money. They will receive it! It is extremely easy. Together with the greatest grand masters, fans from all over the world will come to the tournament. Hundreds of thousands of people, rich, well-endowed people will try to reach Vasyuki (ibid. p. 161).

And again:

> I repeat, everything depends on your own initiative. I will take care of the organisational matters. No material expenses, apart from the consideration of the telegrams (ibid. p. 163).

Massive chess tourism would give an unheard of boost to infrastructural development—port, railway, airport, chess-palaces and hotels will all be erected within a matter of months. Hypnotised by Bender's hunger-induced visions the chess activists of Vasyuki see the miraculous transformation of their miserable town before their eyes:

> Marble stairs descended into blue Volga. On the river stood ocean liners. Cable cars lifted to the city the mug-faced foreigners and chess ladies, Australian devotees to the Indian defence, Hindus wearing white turbans, adherents of the Spanish style, Germans, French, New-Zealanders, inhabitants of the Amazonian delta and those envying the Vasyukivites – Moscovites, Leningradians, Kievians, Siberians and Odessans (ibid. p. 162).

Almost eighty years later the Russian Bologna expert group suggests a similar boost to Russian higher education to be released by means of implementing the Bologna Process. Russians will not need to pay, the argument goes, they will receive billions of dollars gladly contributed by foreign students and universities alike. Ostap Bender at least promised a great show—all the famous chess players gathering in Vasyuki. The Russian Bologna expert group does not even offer that. What the students from all over the world are expected to pay for are university degrees enjoying full European and international recognition awarded by Russian universities. That may work for a while, although one has to be aware that milling out diplomas with impunity cannot last for too long. An obvious threat for Europe is that having members with such intentions in the Club compromises the reputation of European higher education in its entirety, if what is foreseen in the Process as such is developed.

Perhaps one could also learn from the end of the Vasyukivites' short-lived chess-dream. Having lost to all thirty of the chess amateurs who had gathered to enter the simultaneous match, the Great Combinator and Kisa escape into the darkness enveloping the Volga, vanishing along with the beautiful dream of the chess capital of the universe. Whether the Bologna Process will follow the same way, remains to be seen. Ostap Bender's last words to the chess amateurs of Vasyuki, delivered from an escaping boat were:

> Good bye, one-eyed amateurs. I am afraid that Vasyuki will after all not become the centre of the universe. I do not believe that chess masters will come to the fools like you, even if I would to ask them to. Good-bye lovers of mighty chess experiences. Greetings to the 'Club of Four Knights' (ibid. p. 167).

Five years from now, how much will Russia remember of the Bologna Process, of one of the most successful days in the history of its higher education—that of signing the Bologna Declaration in September 2003—we do not know yet, neither do we know what the new great projects will be in which the Great Combinators of Russian higher education and politics will engage by that time.

5. CONCLUSION

Pizza is a poor man's meal, made of all the leftovers to be found in the kitchen, and so it seems is the Bologna Process. It is a single program made responsible for resolving all the problems faced by European higher education, perhaps for the reason that no supra-national capacity exists to address different issues through different programs and co-ordinate between them. And while there are common European concerns, each of the countries have their own problems that sometimes coincide with the European ones, and sometimes not. As a result, prospects that anybody will be satisfied with the meal one is expected to accept with a thankful attitude from the Great Commission remain bleak.

But the Bologna Process is not only an educational project, it even appears that education is the least important thing about it. Instead, it is concerns saving European economics, serving the interests of particular political groups and agendas, and fostering cultural understanding between nations. But it includes surprisingly little knowledge for a growing knowledge society. Almost everybody involved seems to be suggesting that we have no problem with knowledge in Europe, although this may not be the case. Why otherwise would Americans and the Russians have wanted to learn at German universities in the nineteenth century without the European Commission and mobility programs? Perhaps there was something there that has been lost since, although its may be available somewhere else, where everybody seems to be going nowadays. The problem with the Bologna Process is that it focuses on selling the already existing and not on creating anything new.

The Process becomes even more complicated when one looks at it more broadly than as the European Union's higher education policy. For some countries the guiding agenda is to join as many European schemes and initiatives as possible in the expectation of eventually winning the grand prize — full EU membership. This, however, is not the case with Russia. It is obvious that Russia will never become a part of the European Union. It needs the Process for different reasons. Joining the Bologna Process has allowed, after many years of decline, people to talk again about the success of Russian higher education and its politics in the international context. It has also allowed, largely for the purposes of internal political mobilisation, people to argue for Russia's continued importance as a world-superpower, a term repeatedly used in Russia's descriptions of herself. For the academic community it is the emblem of hope for economic improvement, despite the thought occurring that this dream will be frustrated fairly soon. For the public the message is that even if the Russian economy continues its unenviable record of failings, an internationally recognised degree from a

Russian university would eventually allow escape from the country. Finally, for the emerging Bologna élite in Russia, as in every signatory country of the Bologna Declaration, travelling from one meeting to the next and then spreading all the Bologna news at home offers a degree of excitement as well as empowerment, if not power. It looks like a quadruple-win situation, albeit that what is still missing is the reform of Russian higher education since the fall of state-socialism.

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Chapter 12

EUROPEAN STUDENTS IN THE PERIPHERY OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

James Cemmell
The National Unions of Students in Europe

1. INTRODUCTION

The core of the Bologna Process is turbulent indeed. It is replete with local University fiefdoms, transnational education kingdoms, growling watchdogs straining at the leach of autonomy and European Over-Lords. These great and the good create knowledge of what it is to be a good and beneficent leadership in relation to experts, interests, lobbies as well as other assorted European and non European actors. A mediating role amongst all of these voices is conducted variously by discerning the words of the wise and the powerful into the European context: the high-minded but useless Council of Europe, the omniscient Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) showing the way to sustained global mass-consumption, the redundant but apparently well-provisioned Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the all seeing, virtuous but poor United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) desperate to sell the 'expertise' of its drowning agencies such as the European higher education office CEPES in Bucharest whomever has the cash, and certainly last and least - students, the peasants in suits, each other in the centre of the jungle. Within this quasi-feudalist jungle, what place for the vulnerable yet difficult to digest meat of the student opinion? Can the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) become a guest at the top table? Will the great still have the same dining conversations? Will the top table remain the top table with the National Unions of Students in Europe

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(ESIB) as a dining partner? Will a close look at the menu reveal that the caviar served to ESIB is one from lumpfish rather than sturgeon?

This chapter will discuss issues relating to the peripheral nature of ESIB within the Bologna Process regime. A question will be asked as to why exactly is ESIB a peripheral actor. ESIBs foray into the centre and the reasons why this can never be more than a fleeting visit will be explored as well as the structural form of the process and the power relations between the actors discussed. It will be asserted that constraints inherent within the process and the dominant actors intentions and logics dispel the myth that the European higher education area is undergoing a process of radical, open and free construction. Instead, what we are witnessing is the creation of a set of European influenced models utilising the tools that have real implications for students both within and without Europe as well as the societies and economies within which higher education (HE) sectors are based.

In short, what is at stake with the Bologna Process is far more than a simple enhanced student mobility scheme but the seeds of the structure of the European economic strategy interrelated with the fate of knowledge economy strategies across the globe and state activity across Europe.

2. THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The differentiated nature of the European higher education area is highly problematic from the start. How can we think about understanding and defining the European higher education area? What are the issues that arise over the rescaling of this space through European institutions? The role of the globalisation discourse in the construction of the Bologna regime is telling, what does this spatial construction mean for ESIB as an agent with the power of agenda setting in regional political processes?

Political geography can shed some light on the rescaling and spatial implications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). From this literature, Hudson discerns the principal concern of political geography as to ask:

> common to all research within Political Geography is a concern with the intersection of issues of space and power. How is power organized spatially, and how does the way in which power is spatially organized make a difference to the exercise of power? (Hudson 1998).

The higher education space in Europe has undergone radical spatial and temporal transformations (Dale 2003) that must be respected if the power centres in the Bologna Regime are to be identified, understood and utilised.

The logics inherent in the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation mean that certain aspects of the economic development debate and indeed entire discourses will necessarily become peripheralised by the transformations and importantly by the perception and paradigmatic labelling of the transformations (Hay 2001) at the behest of real actors with real interests. Though certain social forces are obviously undergoing transformation as a result of technological change and the further integration of the world trading system (Held et al. 1999), this does not imply that globalisation as a reality per se necessarily implies a strategic direction and response from within the Bologna Process as the Lisbon Presidency Conclusions would have us believe (Lisbon 2000). The partial dispelling of the myth of the 'globalisation necessarily means convergence' by Smith and Hay (2004) opens up the possibility of implying truly open and democratic directions to the Bologna Process. The ideational aspect of the globalisation discourse as evidenced in institutions such as the OECD and WTO has further implications for the Bologna Process as a policy paradigm, containing within it logics of the reorientation of the higher education sector towards the compelling and narrowly negotiable demands of the competitive global economy. These demands have been embedded in the institutions of the European Union from the Council down and are also supported by governance changes.

The Lisbon Objectives can be considered to be the paradigmatic enshrining of the competitive state (Cerny 1997) in line with EU Council decisions. Indeed, the contextualisation given by the Commission to the communiqué (Commission 2000) leaves no doubt about the intentions, strategy and logics of the European development priorities and understandings of the development of a knowledge-based economy. Purposefully creating a competitive state at the European level necessarily implies a great institutional upheaval due to the realignment of political and economic interests and their associated conflicts. This perceived need for upheaval is more than evident when the scope of the communiqué is examined.

As Cerny (*op. cit.*) noted, contradictions associated with the competitive state must necessarily be appreciated when reviewing these changes. First up is the need for 're'- (though sometimes read as 'de-') regulation to support accumulation and a supply-side driven, business-friendly environment. In this guise, numerous conferences and consultations have been dedicated to understanding the scope of the reforms, the institutions and actors involved and how upheaval can be created. Higher education features prominently among the target areas. This is perhaps not surprising with the profiling given to the knowledge-based economy dimension of the reforms. Implying higher education into the Lisbon Objectives radically increases the power of the Commission in the Bologna Process as others have argued (Tomusk 2004) and creates an unpredictable climate for institutional actors. Destabilising the policy environment in this manner has important implications for actors and their relationship with the state and European authorities.

As the 'need' for more 'flexible', 'democratic' institutions of accumulation becomes the latest policy imperative, popular and holistic conceptions of globalisation become influential in guiding shared visions of how education sectors should reform (Hay, Rosamond 2001). This can be evidenced in the lobby of BIAC, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD who, at the Irish OECD Education Ministerial session in 2004 argued for the increased autonomy of schools to make their own management decisions and business links free from state interference (BIAC 2004). Further, at a recent conference in Liege to discuss how the European Research Area could be constructed in line with the Lisbon Objectives (Commission 2004a), an overt debate was fashioned between those who would wish for universities to become more flexible with their relations to the business community versus those who would wish for universities to be able to make collegial decisions about these relations, both sides invoked the virtue of university autonomy to support their position. These positions had already been reported pejoratively in the synthesis report of the Commission's consultation over the future research programme (Commission 2003):

> **Managerial skills are needed** in order to introduce a "result-oriented" mentality with a "problem-solving" approach. Meanwhile the bureaucratic rules should be considered more as a "tool" to achieve results and goals, and not as the final target. In light of this, **recruitment of non-academic executives** for management positions could be considered. This presupposes that highly decentralised models of management will become the norm in European Universities, and that legislative changes are most often needed… Contributing to regional competitiveness, through: … The creation of enterprises to exploit research output (*op. cit.*).

As seen in the above quote, to create 'flexible' institutions with the intent of supporting accumulation is also to overtly commodify in governance and mission what is still seen in the context of Bologna as a 'public service and public responsibility' (Berlin 2003) with inherent difficulties in their continued legitimation as public entities. Here, amongst this destabilization of the institutional framework are the fault lines of political contest drawn. Actors such as universities, representative bodies, governmental agents, regulatory and transnational agents and businesses all struggle at the fault lines to become institutionalised in the new consensus. Indeed, often in European fora, these struggles are manifested by representatives of actors or individuals in tediously long speeches, with the content occupying secondary consideration to the signalling function that they are actors integral to the problem at hand. Aside from this example, actors also pursue a variety of signalling techniques to ensure their survival in the new institutional set-up from coalition building to branding themselves as indispensable experts in the new directions that Europeanisation is taking.

The language of the Lisbon Presidency Conclusions belies a further and more nuanced understanding of the economic policy that Europe values. The use of terminology such as 'human capital', 'knowledge based economy', 'globalisation', 'stability-oriented monetary policy' belies a new discourse of policy (Fairclough 2000) and can be construed as a 'Brussels Consensus' of economic policy, to draw a comparison with Williamson's now infamed Washington Consensus (Williamson 1990). In the case of higher education, this reform takes on aspects of directing the sector towards supporting endogenous growth models through the development and capture of human capital factors. This strategy stands at the forefront of hegemonic development strategies from Europe to the US, explicitly stated through the medium of the OECD (OECD 2002). The human capital capture strategy is explicitly written into the Berlin Communique as it supports the Lisbon Objectives (Lisbon 2000) of creating Europe as an attractive area; attractiveness meaning attractiveness to businesses, brains and capital.

In the case of brains, this attractiveness is directly written with respect to the capturing of human capital resources through the creation of the education system as accessible and flexible to extra-European citizens. This objective is further evidenced and supported by initiatives of the Commission such as the Erasmus Mundus programme that explicitly aims to attract the best talent to the European region (Commission 2004b).

The holistic and primarily economy-lead concept of European development policy emerges as an outcome of struggles around the contradictions in launching such a competitive state in terms of efficiency and growth. Nevertheless, an economic conception of development is further problematic with respect to complex social factors (Granovetter 1985) important in the reform of institutions as nested in localities such as higher education institutions. The treatment of social change within the Lisbon Objectives can be paralleled with the use of the social capital discourse favoured by the OECD and World Bank, whereby social policy and theory is expressed in economic terms (Fine 2001). The latter carrying further implications for the functioning of welfare states and institutions as social actors as well as the role of education in state and nation building.

3. THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA AS FLEXIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE

‘Flexibility’, ‘accessibility’ and ‘diversification’ as watchwords in European higher education policy formulation echo the ambitions of the new management culture as well as the role that higher education institutions are expected to take in the economic development of Europe as discussed above. Creating the EHEA as a continuous, accessible and flexible area with respect to third country brains is essential for the functioning of the endogenous growth model that requires constant technological improvements to assure growth (Solow 1953). Ambitions for realising this model of commodification (Naidoo 2003) through the higher education sector require students to flow through Europe in a flexible manner. This is reminiscent of the UK move to modularisation in the 1990s that brought with it marketing ideas materialised into ‘shop and mix’ degrees, composed of sometimes diverse and discontinuous courses. Two considerations rise from the construction of Europe in such a manner:

Firstly, it is a response to the perceived challenges of globalisation that implies the economic role of higher education being concerned with accumulation in a world of limited human resources. The response to globalisation, defined here as non-determinate supra-territoriality operating alongside territoriality (Scholte 2002), takes the form of rescaling the higher education system to accumulate and create global networks of ‘brains’ and to capitalise on the marketability of the European universities in terms of promoting academic tourism. This response is succinctly posited within the GATS four modes of trade (WTO 1995) with the academic tourists’ Euro (in the case of consumption abroad and movement of natural persons in certain cases) supplementing the revenues from educational services. Rescaling in this manner assumes that globalisation is first and foremost concerned with the economic dimensions of trans-territorialisation. In light of this, Knight reworked a typology of internationalisation of higher education (Knight 2003) in order to include educational dimensions into the discourse of higher education globalisation. The fact that this significant act only occurred in 2003 is indicative to the concept of globalisation used in the EHEA being predominantly economy based (as opposed to the educational dimension) and, with the political approach taken implying higher education as a saleable commodity.

The second consideration appears superficially less reductionist in nature, suggesting that curriculum reforms (particularly as related to ECTS compliance) and modifications in the resource allocation schemes are being driven by quality assurance considerations (Van Vamme 2001). The latter, however, are still closely related to the *attractiveness* discussed above, meaning the commodification of the entire institutions and the resultant subjecting of good governance agendas to the logic of the bottom lines. Aspects of rescaling the higher education sector should be considered in the context of the discourse of building globally competitive Europe, within which the Bologna Process actors operate. This rescaling has implications for the values and operational logics which higher education institutions follow, far beyond their direct remits as enshrined in mission statements and government legislation. These aspects can conspire to illustrate how the role of student opinion has been squeezed out of meaningful consideration within the Bologna regime by the forces of commodification and the drive for market accountability within an 'efficient' Europe.

4. RESCALING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ACCUMULATION: CASES FROM AN EXPORT CULTURE

4.1 International students as piggy bank

The European paradigm cases of market discourse dominating the higher education sector are usually taken to be the UK and the Netherlands. The section below will illustrate briefly how aspects of the commodification logic within the UK can work within institutions and describes the material effects that the logic can have on students.

Important focal points in the rescaling of higher education are at the institutional, national, European and global levels, in relation to domestic concerns and contexts. An example from the UK case is the development of an export sector as a response to domestic funding shortages (Williams, Coate 2004). The international student industry as seen today was virtually non-existent before the changes in the British higher education funding mechanisms started driving higher education institutions towards becoming for-profit entities with respect to foreign students, a position now shared, as on many other aspects, with the Dutch (Theisens 2004). This legislative move, coupled with declining real-terms per-student funding over the Conservative tenure in the 1980s and 1990s (Harvey 1996) forced the geographical boundaries of the British higher education sector to fragment and rescale in three important ways. The first two being related to global trade and ideology, involving the proliferation of trade in higher education services and the resultant commodification of the sector. The third involves the recasting of the social cohesion function of higher education institutions in terms of finding a market niche.

The first rescaling has been discussed in terms of the market for international students, quantified and recognized by the OECD (Larsen et al. 2002) as a significant contribution to the trade balances of (in particular) the UK, New Zealand, Australia, US. This rescaling has had real impacts on higher education institutions' marketing strategies as they have realized the importance of the international perceptions and the possible contribution of the latter to the institutions' financial viability. For example, during discussions with students from outside of Europe studying at a small North of England University, it became apparent that the impressiveness of the website and the University's presence at higher education fairs were instrumental in attracting foreign students. Perceptions developed by such means were sometimes more important than the reputation of the university, as several of the students had never heard of the town that hosted the university. Many of the students were, though, subsequently disappointed by their experiences. A policy metaphor, promoting such marketing practices can be evidenced in all three official Bologna ministerial communiqués (Bologna 1999, Prague 2001, Berlin 2003) that emphasise the need to create the European higher education system as an externally competitive and attractive one (see e.g. Tomusk 2004). The creation of a globally attractive sector would imply that trust in the quality of European higher education is higher then that of other 'brands'. The mentioned instance of foreign students being recruited to a university in Northern England indicates a mechanism through which this trust can be actualised in terms of creating information for the functioning of education markets by way of aggressive, if not misleading marketing. This can also be called linking social capital to policy from within the commodification paradigm.

4.2 Branch campuses

A similar phenomenon can be evidenced for the same reasons with regard to universities setting up branch campuses overseas. A response from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to monitor this activity (QAA 2004) concurrently with publicized failures by overseas campuses in and around Australia (Carr 2000) was to signal to the global market that UK higher education quality was under the supervision of a reputable authority. This further acted as an informational institution to support the increasingly complex market through state-based quality assurance mechanisms. This mode of global trade in higher education has some unlikely players involved, with a mix of pre- and post-1992 higher education institutions and indicates that more institutions in the UK than just the traditional 'old universities' can earn export revenue. In the context of the Bologna Process, this global rescaling of the British higher education sector draws more than the top tier of institutions into the globally competitive paradigm of institutional action.

This form of rescaling unifies the objective of the Bologna regime to create a European higher education system as competitive and attractive as a part of the Lisbon agenda to build a dynamic service industry, seen here through the development of the educational services sector.

4.3 Community services

The third way in which universities seek their market niche and survival is through the use of community service rhetoric and practice. Predominantly 'new', post 1992 *universities*, fulfil this niche that recasts community service and the social cohesion mission in terms of value for money services that the government purchases from the university to fulfil a service in the third way mould. This can be evidenced from the mission statements of universities such as Luton that reference themselves within the local community context and attracting non traditional student profiles:

> Mission Statement: The University of Luton is determined to establish an excellent reputation quality and vocational distinctiveness, and is committed to: providing innovative opportunities to participate in higher education for those able to benefit; giving a strong regional presence, consistent with the lifelong learning of individuals, groups and employers within a socially diverse community; helping all its students and staff to attain their full potential. (University of Luton 2004)

The social profile of students in universities such as Luton substantially contrasts with the profiling in universities such as Oxford that has been criticized as an institutional retrenching of inequality. Periodically this is manifested in the political arena as in 2000 when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown in a speech to the Trades Union Congress criticized the University of Oxford directly over its admissions procedures:

> I say it is time to end the old Britain where what mattered was the privilege you were born to not the potential you were born with…Remove the old barriers, open up our universities and let everyone move ahead (Brown 2000).

The case of the UK illustrates how the commodification logics prevalent within the higher education sector can give a rise to a discourse that allows diversification of action within a sector. However, the use of funding as both a carrot and a stick to reject alternative discourses and encourage UK higher education institutions to differentiate their missions leaves alternative approaches unexplored. For example, it is highly unlikely, given the current activity within the funding councils and the research councils, that serious notions of creating a level playing field in terms of funding and mission for all UK universities and departments could be entertained. Indeed, the rhetoric suggests that the opposite is the case and that the current logic is becoming increasingly institutionalised. An example is the Universities UK (UUK) representative body that defines its mission as:

> speaking out for a thriving and diverse higher education sector which creates benefits for all (UUK 2004).

Though the government has sought to regulate the profile of students entering various universities through the Widening Access and Participation funding advocated in the Dearing review (Dearing 1997), success is limited by social constraints and high drop out rates amongst those in the scheme. The British higher education, as a case of a competitive and commodified European sector, illustrates some of the logics at work in the Bologna regime. In light of these embedded logics that recur in European higher education systems ESIB, as an organisation operating in the European sphere, has been forced to look for diverse partnerships and open spaces of action.

5. ESIB IN THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP

ESIB as an organization has little in common with organisations such as the European Commission, European Universities Association (EUA) and the Council of Europe. From an economic perspective it has some catching up to do, as a poorly resourced, mostly voluntary-based organization with a secretariat of less than five compared to the administrative monolith that is the European Commission. If, to this condition, the ‘handicaps’ of a heavily politicised and contestable policy-making process are added, the situation becomes in some ways chaotic. The policy is the result of a conflation of voices from the revolutionary to the conservative. This contrasts strongly, for good or for ill, with the carefully managed and facilitated process between experienced actors speaking the same language, if not tongue, of diplomacy evidenced in other supra-national institutions.

A look at the organizations that ESIB works with will also illustrate that it is in an unusual position with respect to other organizations that are part of the official Bologna follow up group. In 2002, at its twice-a-year board meeting, held that time in Debe, Poland, ESIB voted to become involved with the European Social Forum (ESF) and its overarching World Social Forum (WSF). The latter body, has been described by one of its instigators as

> it holds no clearly defined ideology…the WSF conceives of itself as a struggle against neoliberal globalisation (Santos 2003).

Further, the body understands its 'knowledge' as embodying alternative epistemologies to hegemonic discourses in the West (ibid.) and strategise methods for promoting, permitting and developing alternative discourses (ibid.). The WSF is a broad church and to say that ESIB is involved in it is not to say too much about its beliefs but to give an indication that ESIB is an open-minded organization, incidentally the same organization that went to some efforts to open up channels of communication with the OECD, perhaps the dialectical antithesis of the WSF. That ESIB would participate in a forum that openly distances itself from the orthodox Western Modernity illustrates the diverse views that contribute to ESIBs policy.

5.1 ESIB's policy agenda

This author, whilst acting as an ESIB representative in political fora has heard criticisms of the organization of the nature that it is 'utopian', 'unreasonable', 'irrational', 'out of touch', 'full of junior bureaucrats' and with its policies characterised as 'rhetorical rather than substance-based'. Perhaps, in some specific instances, these criticisms can be justified, but to generalise more broadly about the organisation is to misunderstand something of the nature of the organisation and its activity. If its activity in recent years is seen, as it should be, in reference to the changing policy-spaces and time-spans that mark policy development today, ESIB offers itself as a global actor. The global can be considered as 'deterritorialisation' (Scholte 2002). In this sense, ESIB with its position in networks involving UNESCO, WTO, European Commission, National Governments, National Student Organisations, European University Association, Regional Student Bodies, Transnational Lobby Groups, WSF, Local Student Organisations, Trade Unions, etc., working on a shared agenda, can certainly be said to be involved in social relationships across scalar and global geographical space. This positioning of ESIB entails numerous, sometimes complex relationships with the actors that can set ESIBs policy agenda.

ESIBs policy agenda is set (in part) by its participation with supra-national actors ostensibly to that of the supra-national organizations in whose processes it is involved as a participant. For example, currently ESIB is seeking to develop a substantial policy on tuition fees, as a response to both member national unions pressures and the debate around the Bologna Process circles. Other topical examples have been a European Student Convention held in 2003 in Palermo dedicated to discussions on the knowledge based economy/knowledge based society. This was in part a response to the Lisbon Objectives of the EU (Lisbon 2000) of making Europe the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based economy and the imbuing of higher education with this task as discussed above. In Berlin, reference was made to these objectives in the most recent Bologna Process Ministerial Document (Berlin 2003). Once these topics are set on ESIB's policy agenda, they are debated, researched, discussed by the members and policy positions are developed. This is the moment when ESIB can be peripheralised in terms of ideology and interest and it is in response to this that many of the complaints of the organization are made. ESIBs non-conventional partners, lack of resources and young personnel can all be mostly forgiven by the hegemonic policy makers but the content of the policy begs scrutiny, comparison and derision. The root of this derision? It can be utopian, unrealistic and politically inappropriate, the holy trinity necessary for castigation from the hegemonic discourse table.

5.2 ESIB and work on the commodification of education

ESIB has since 2001 been running a project to examine the issues related to commodification of higher education. This has scoped the discourse of higher education as discussed with reference to its tool in contributing to an economy. The economic paradigm that is most commonly encountered could be described as Post-Fordist, human capital driven with reference to its understanding of what constitutes an optimum graduate and neo-liberal with respect to the orientation of policy towards promoting economic productivity, albeit in an increasingly sophisticated manner (Tickell, Peck 2002). The Lisbon Objective of promoting a competitive area is a manifestation of the current role of the EU in setting a direction in European policy (Dale 2001). This requires a tailoring of educational systems towards performance, reckoned primarily in output terms as opposed to a process of learning (Magalhaes, Stoer 2003). Here is where ESIB takes issue with the competitive agenda. Castells noted that the current age is marked by feelings of frustration, disenfranchisement, powerlessness and estrangement from identities caused by the attitudes towards globalisation (Castells 2000). During policy discussions in ESIB circles, views have been posited that the notion of training solely for the labour market is a dehumanising one. These comments are frequently made in the light that to be educated to this end can be at the detriment of an emphasis on the personal development role of education, the democratising function and the cultural reproduction function.

Another related example are the discussions on including statements to the effect that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility, within the Bologna Ministerial texts. ESIB members felt that to include such a position and to advance related debates would provide a counterpoint to the economic utility discourse of education. This can be related to the idea advanced by Colin Hay (Hay 2000, 2001) that popular constructions of globalisation, such as certain understandings of a flexible labour market, can and should be reclaimed by the political sphere and contested.

The last example has a footnote that whilst at a recent higher education convention, the current author overheard a discussion between senior government policy makers agreeing that discussions on higher education as a public good and a public responsibility *á la* the Berlin Communiqué were purely rhetorical in nature and added nothing to the debate. This was a moment when ESIB was cast out of the winners' circle.

5.3 Creating change through coalition-building

The above two moments of contest with the hegemonic discourse were made from structural positions of weakness but a political position of strength. The structural position of weakness is related to ESIBs material weakness. As a confederational organization of national unions of students, rather than a mass movement, ESIB cannot exert pressure through traditional student movement means of mass mobilization. ESIB was also not in a position to withhold funds or other material benefits from affiliates. Further, many students unions are weak in comparison to other actors in the regime. Here it is appropriate to contrast ESIB with another actor that is confederational in nature, has a similar number of actors and is weakly resourced, the OECD. Whereas ESIB has coercive power over prospective members, the OECD has coercive power over its current members, the thirty most powerful liberal democracies. These are, of course, central actors in all supranational policy negotiations, a difference from the members of ESIB that operate at a different space and scale where strategic movements may well be less effective then those made by state actors. The OECD has reviewed its mechanisms for using coercive techniques through processes such as peer review and peer pressure (OECD 2002). The poverty of ESIB in enforcement and creating change as a body by virtue of its being excludes it from a central role.

The second way that ESIB can seek to create change is by political means. ESIB can force its ideas to the fore by utilizing its political power of legitimation and strategic instrumentalisation. These two strategies were used to effect by coalition-building with central actors, namely the European University Association and the Council of Europe. Here shared agendas merged that relate to either the conservatism or radicalism of ESIB, the values of the Council of Europe and the strategic and negotiated interests of European Universities. It is, however, important to differentiate the types of relationships developed by ESIB in terms of permanence, reason and outcomes. The long-term and deep relationship with the EUA has been the product of shared approaches and values to the development of the European higher education space as well as fulfilling short and long-term material objectives of policy agendas. This can be contrasted with the relationship with the European Commission where the relationship can be best defined as periodically cooperative. An example of the flexibility of this arrangement can be made of the discussions over the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Initially the Commission frequently consulted ESIB over the development and implementation of the initiatives. However, with the production of an ESIB policy paper critical of the programme, the Commission no longer invited ESIB to participate in discussions with such regularity or meaning. Perhaps due to the different values of the actors and the different mandates it is possible to say that ESIB tentatively estranged from the EU in terms of policy development.

The first case of the relationship with the EUA can be used to illustrate a coalition case whereby ESIB is contextualized as a non-peripheral actor in something of a symbiotic relationship. The result of this is a sustained period of central, agenda setting activity due in part to the institutionalization of the relationship. The latter case of the relationship with the European Commission illustrates a much weaker working relationship. Here, the European Commission can easily sever its relations with ESIB and thus partially redefine ESIB as an actor external to policy processes.

Coalition-building can be a necessary tool when ESIB is reacting to an agenda not of its own making and choosing and acts in an unfamiliar space. Many of the spaces of activity within the Bologna Process regime are those relating to technical aspects of the implementation of the ministerial declarations such as the diploma supplement. ESIB in this context is involved in a myriad of stakeholder meetings and discussions focusing predominantly on a narrow discourse of implementation. To engage in these meetings on the terms of technical discussions removes ESIB from more value-based analyses of the process as a whole. This is the space of political activity and it is in this space that ESIB must act. However, the internal logics of the technical discussions often construct ESIB in a technical advisory role, hence the sometimes criticism of ESIB representatives as 'junior bureaucrats' comes from an observation of ESIB in this role. A criticism of this process within the context of the GATS has been made by Jane Kelsey, Professor of Law at the University of Auckland, who argued that the legal, technical approach to legal text implementation should be subjected to a political critique that:

> …raises crucial questions about the identity of the power bloc, the nature of the problem they want to solve, the ideologies in which they perceive and understand the problem, and the political opposition that confronts them… (Kelsey 2003).

Understanding ESIB as an actor displaced from its sometimes preferred territory of critical positions based on values and norms sheds some light on the reasons as to why it cannot be easily situated within the Bologna Process regime.

6. CONCLUSION

The challenges of modernity and its associated phenomena such as globalisation and the knowledge based economy signal profound changes for higher education sectors around the world. These changes can be evidenced most strongly in the Bologna Process, a heavily politicised process that seeks to integrate the European higher education sector into the EU economic development strategy whilst at the same time under pressure from strong national traditions and stakeholders. The student experience and the role of the students are immeasurably changed in this institutional dislocation that juxtaposes European politics with economic globalisation. ESIB experiences the new institutional fix through its national members' complaints of national legislators implementing Bologna Process components whilst at the same time introducing policies that commodify the sector. The result such these policy changes is that students are increasingly being labelled as consumers of higher education services, a rhetorical move that belies substantial changes in the relationship between the student and the university. This change can have negative consequences on the student's day-to-day experience within the university. ESIB as an organisation is in a difficult position as it seeks to challenge deep rooted paradigms of reform that create policies such as user/tuition fees in its members' interests. ESIB's lobbying strategy is further complicated by the nature of ESIB as an organizationins that is heavily internally politicised, poorly resourced, differentially networked from other higher education stakeholders and is operating to different logics from the other members of the Bologna Follow Up Group. Due to these institutional and political constraints, ESIB and the student interests are frequently invoked and just as frequently discounted in the emerging European higher education sector.

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Chapter 13

THE END OF EUROPE AND THE LAST INTELLECTUAL

Fine-Tuning of Knowledge Work in the Panopticon of Bologna

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> It is waste of time to belabour shady schools, corrupt journals, stupid government officials, and unscrupulous exploiters of the eternally gullible. The ignorance of the unlettered takes no scrutiny to establish. What we need to plumb is the ignorance of the educated and the anti-intellectualism of the intellectual.
>
> Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect*

1. INTRODUCTION

Whether the final years of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first will from the historical distance be eventually seen as high intellectual modernism reaching even higher with one of its key institutions — the modern university — continuing to prosper, or something else, remains yet to be known. Commentators as different as Randall Collins (1998) and John Deely (2001) remain skeptical, suggesting rather that we stand at the beginning of deep revision of our philosophical understanding similar in the scale to that of the late Latin period in the early 17th century (Deely 2002). Philosophers of higher education in best of the days see the university in terms of complexity almost beyond the grasp of human understanding (Barnett 1999), on other occasions just in turmoil (Wallerstein

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1969) or the institution of higher learning being ruined (Readings 1996). The chances that the period in the history of European higher learning known to future students of the continent's intellectual climate as the decade of *Bologna Fever* will be remembered as a period of great intellectual revival, or even of temporary stability remain slim. For many in the academia these are tough times after unprecedented growth and prosperity of the university. While academics make enormous efforts convincing themselves first, on the exponentially growing value of exponentially increasing amounts of knowledge circulating in our *knowledgeable societies*, before moving on to mesmerise the *stakeholders*, it is likely that with the availability of funds lagging significantly behind the rate of growth in the volume of knowledge products on offer, the unit price, and with it the value of any single knowledge producer, has been set on decline.

Undeniably, during the second half of the twentieth century, as post-war reconstruction and economic growth permitted vast growth in university enrolment, at least west of the iron curtain, European higher education experienced major expansion, if not success. This has borne many positive consequences: increasing social mobility from the working to the middle classes, the democratisation of society and rising cultural levels. Expansion of higher education, particularly in the context of the more recent economic down-turn, seems to have drawn European universities into a vicious circle — to survive they need to expand even more. However, further expansion, either by admitting more students to existing programs or by opening programs in new areas, threatens the identity of the university "as an aristocracy of trained intellect" (Searle 1975, p. 88), as well as exposing it to new economic risks.

Since 1999, European higher education has been subjected to the most systematic and extensive reform effort in its more than eight hundred year history: the Bologna Process. Views on the meaning of those reforms vary widely, some argue that it is nothing short of an attempt to bring a European higher education system into being; others suggest it is nothing more than the launch of a 'glorified mobility scheme'. Either way, the energy and resources invested in the Process by its sponsors, particularly the European Commission, can only be compared with the campaigns that communist dictatorships were able to afford, both politically and economically. The irony of the Process is that one of its goals — ensuring the success of European higher education on the world higher education services market — is a clear contradiction to the methods applied to achieve it, which include subsidising service providers, as well as political intimidation.

Once the process has been set in motion, irreversibly as the sponsors prefer to see it, it is legitimate to ask what its implications will be for the academics in European universities. Does the Process offer something positive to the European intellectuals gathered in the universities? Will European intellectual thought be revitalised? Albeit still tainted with the shame of its tolerance of the Aryan nonsense of the Nazis until it was too late or of its sympathies with the likes of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which has resulted in, amongst other things, intellectuals resorting to post-modern theorising (Wolin 2004), a large segment of the intellectual community has tacitly, if not wide open, accepted the Trotskist view to truthfulness:

> The life and death struggle is unthinkable without military craftiness, in other words, without lying and deceit. … To a revolutionary Marxist there can be no contradiction between personal morality and the interests of the party, since the party embodies in his consciousness the very highest tasks and aims of mankind (Trotsky 1938/1964, p. 394).

Positive intellectual change is not necessarily a part of the Bologna Process. Expansion of higher education over the past thirty or so years may turn out to have been self-defeating, in that by becoming a mass industry it may well have destroyed its own privileged status. In this context one could argue that the Bologna Process neither restores the former status of European higher education nor intends to improve to any significant extent its quality or even relevance; not to mention its intellectual vigour. One could then argue that in the best scenario it will remain intellectually irrelevant, in the worst case it may even harm European intellectual life. A large-scale technocratic process has evidently only a limited number of relatively simple tools available to accomplish its task. These may be sufficient to furnish new offices in every country and — should funding prove sufficient — every university, perhaps even to hire thousands of new quality commissars, job-profile developers, course modularisers and student exchange officers. More often than not, technocratic projects fail to make significant contributions to culture, a concept devoid of content for a technocrat in any case. Intellectuals — reduced to service providers by definition — and their concerns have only a peripheral position in the Bologna Process. In the event that the Process succeeds, universities will be subjected to additional pressure to exclude intellectual elements from the academic profession. If that does happen it will draw to a close the two-hundred-year battle for the hearts and minds of the free-floating intellectuals of Europe. Having gradually exchanged freedom for status and economic welfare, faculty members must soon realise that the only expectation their university has of them is that they be successful in selling standardised knowledge products: skills and competencies wrapped in credit-hours.

2. SOCIETY AND ITS KNOWLEDGE

Prophecies, self-fulfilling or otherwise, about our increasingly knowledgeable societies, with many rumours spread but little hard evidence, seem to have driven us into limbo. The alleged exponential reduction of the half-life of knowledge has apparently created a condition opposite to that of possessing knowledge — no knowledge appears to be worth learning or taking seriously any longer. The speed with which produced knowledge is being returned for recycling discourages any sensible person from investing in learning. In preference one should purchase an MBA degree, thus becoming a salesman or woman of knowledge produced by somebody less smart, or a manager steering rivers of knowledge, and anticipate solid returns from investment in the transferable skills of turning book summaries into PowerPoint® presentations for corporate executives. Imbalance between the consumption of knowledge and its critical assessment confuses the matter still further, since few possess sufficient interest or resources to explore the nature of the liquid flowing on the beds of the perceived rivers of knowledge. Or to put it somewhat less poetically, while social sciences are increasingly policy-oriented, support to theoretical and conceptual work is diminishing (Young 2004). There is every good reason to suspect that the final depository of the *old* knowledge is critically close to the source of the *new*, and that with this, the flows may well constitute closed circles. The nutritional value of what was once milk and honey may have been extracted long ago. In the best case, the issue with much of that knowledge is similar to that of French thought in Viktor Pelevin's short story "The Macedonian Critique of the French Thought" (Pelevin 2003) — for an instant it makes you almost believe that there might be a point to it. Lack of substance in knowledge products is not a narrowly French issue. It may equally well be a Macedonian problem, or if not that, then at least a Slovenian one. This is how Terry Eagleton sees the products of the most renowned contemporary Slovenian thinker Slavoj Žižek:

> Žižek himself is both dauntingly prolific and dazzlingly versatile, able to leap in a paragraph from Hegel to *Jurassic Park*, Kafka to the Ku Klux Klan; but just as Lacan's fantasy-ridden world of everyday reality conceals an immutable kernel of the Real, so Žižek's flamboyant parade of topics recircles, in book after book, to this very same subject. The almost comic versatility of his interests masks a compulsive repetition of the same (Eagleton 2003, p. 197).

As a sign of prophetic premonition, George Orwell might have delivered a final judgment on Balkanese and other versions of the post-modern thought even before the intellectual bankruptcy of the old world had given the birth to it. Although he obviously had noticed the pain Europa, the labouring mother, suffered of. What he says about the English language equally applies to other minor and major languages equally:

> A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language make it easier to have foolish thoughts (Orwell 1945/2002, p. 954).

The problem, as pointed by Sebald (2003) in the case of German literature after the fall of the Nazi regime resonates more broadly with the European intellectual climate during the second half of the 20th century:

> When a morally compromised author claims the field of aesthetics as a value-free area it should make readers to stop and think. (Sebald 2003, p. 131)

The same applies equally to human as well as social sciences that in attempt to remain ‘value-free’ ended up supporting fascist and communist politics. Just becoming irrelevant, as the recent trends seem to be suggesting, does not appear as a particularly good approach to restoring the intellectual integrity of arts and sciences.

Since the fall of state-socialism one can notice a somewhat exotic version of post-modern thought emerging in Tajikistan, a country that uses as her official medium of communication a Russified version of the Persian language written in Cyrillic script. Over the past decade or so, a Žižekuesque version of Russian philosophical language has also been created, not entirely without the influence of thinkers or not so much, from Western-Balkans, at the time when the country’s sporty leader still seems to be hesitating whether to return to leadership traditions established by Joseph Stalin or to move on and adopt the way of Augusto Pinochet. One of the sites in Russia where the full use of the opportunity to cultivate ‘advanced western thought’ is being made is the Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the country’s first Liberal Arts college established by the Philology Department of the St. Petersburg State University Russia in partnership with the Bard College in New York. Despite the American connections, not all of which is immaterial by nature, minds gathered at Smolny College feel much closer to Paris than New York. Remembering that while for the Soviet intellectuals between 1917 and 1989 Paris was accessible only after time in GULAG and deportation (Andrei Sinyavskii would offer a good example here) and that in contrast to that for the Yugoslavian knowledge workers Paris had been open and its opportunities well used for most of the time of Tito’s rule after World War II, would allow one to see how the ideas of responding to the shame of the intellectuals for not standing up against fascism and communism have moved around Europe. Mr. Putin of Russia, Mr. Rakhmanov of Tajikistan and other strong leaders in Europe, Asia and elsewhere should be well pleased with such a development. Nothing this new social and philosophical thinking reveals even to those few who take the trouble of digging through the heavy verbiage under which its small ideas a buried, threatens their authoritarian ambitions. And if nothing else, another trip to Paris helps washing away the remnants of shame.

Edward Said has his own view on what constitutes the main source of the problems with postmodern thought recently so intensively discussed — complacency and intellectual laziness of its adherents:

> I've always thought that Lyotard and his followers are admitting their own lazy incapacities, perhaps even indifference, rather than giving a correct assessment of what remains for the intellectual a truly vast array of opportunities despite postmodernism (Said 1996, p. 18).

The ultimate irony of European knowledge production is that it is not here that success is being determined, but across the Atlantic — in the mass universities of the United States that mediate the *sophisticated* European thought to the rest of the world, including re-exporting it back to Europe. In the character of the protagonist of his novel "White Noise", Prof. Jack A.K. Gladney, Don DeLillo has captured the heart of American higher education, which Europe intends to challenge on the world knowledge markets by implementing the Bologna Process:

> I am chairman of the department of Hitler studies at the College-on-the-Hill. I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968. … When I suggested to the chancellor that we might build a whole department around Hitler's life and work, he was quick to see the possibilities. It was an immediate and electrifying success (DeLillo 1984, p. 4).

Opening a Department of Prince Charles Studies would perhaps take the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom one step further in the direction that the European Commission expects all of European higher education to move.

We do not know for sure how much knowledge is offered in books like those by Žižek, or in all the new *studies* — Hitler, Elvis, Gender, Britney, etc., although one might suggest that the volume of pages typed-up (or copied and pasted) is not a fully adequate indicator of any growth in knowledge, and even less so in demonstrating the progress made in advancing human understanding on issues fundamental to its existence. Flows are sustained by hordes of knowledge intermediaries such as consultants who travel with briefcases full of freshly squeesed snake oil, developing 'projects' out of simplified versions of recent theories, for example on creation of social capital to be funded by the World Bank that destroy all social networks in the way, or fight corruption by corrupting entire communities and countries.

Consultants, writes Neave,

> serve to empty the wastepaper basket and thus ensure the ideas of others are recycled, sometimes repackaged and rarely recognised by their original creators (2004a, p. 1).

It is almost fifty years since Jacques Barzun lamented that the literary genre most commonly practised by academics was the grant proposal (Barzun 1959/2002), making no secret either of the expected outcome of this:

> The world has long observed that small acts of immorality, if repeated, will destroy character. It is equally manifest, though never said, that uttering nonsense and half-truth without cease ends by destroying Intellect (p. 50).

To afford this, the world does not seem to be lacking in either funds or ignorance. We may actually have a shortage of knowledge, but this poses no problem as long as those in the position to express that view can be kept quiet by writing grant applications and reports, or busy doing other things like drafting policy papers, rote lecturing to undergraduate students or theorising post-modernally.

2.1 Knowledgeable society

Daniel Bell in his classic "The Coming of Post-Industrial Society" stresses two aspects of the *knowledge society*. First, that in the knowledge society "the sources of innovation are increasingly derivative from research and development" (Bell 1974, p. 212); and second, that "the weight of the society — measured by a larger proportion of Gross National Product and a larger share of employment — is increasingly in the knowledge field" (ibid.). Even thirty years on, both of these aspects remain perfectly valid. However, when comparing with some earlier conceptualisations of the knowledge society, it becomes obvious that Bell's knowledge society does not necessarily advance human understanding of fundamental issues, either natural or social. Back in 1966 Robert E. Lane wrote:

> As a first approximation to a definition, the knowledgeable society is one in which, more than other societies, its members: (a) inquire into the

> basis of their beliefs about man, nature and society; (b) are guided (perhaps unconsciously) by objective standards of veridical truth, and, at upper levels of education, follow scientific rules of evidence and inference in inquiry; (c) devote considerable resources to this enquiry and thus have a large store of knowledge; (d) collect, organise and interpret their knowledge in a constant effort to extract meaning for the purposes at hand; (e) employ this knowledge to illuminate (and perhaps modify) their values and goals as well as advance them (quoted in Bell 1974, p. 176).

The issue, first with Bell and then the other knowledge society gurus that followed him, seems to be that while stressing the importance of knowledge for economic growth, they ignore its intellectual element—the very meaning of the knowledge and its impact on our identity and values. As we have discussed elsewhere (Tomusk 2004a), the marginalisation of philosophy is primarily accountable for the situation in which scientists and engineers demonstrate their growing eagerness to free mankind from the burden of its worldly existence by up-loading the contents of our brains onto memory chips and launching them into space to travel for eternity.

Knowledge, as we are told in these days of the stakeholder, ought to have a practical value. Knowledge should support the solving of our 'problems'; if not, then its value should be even more direct — one should be able to exchange knowledge directly for cash. Bernstein (2000) has expressed the latter point as clearly as anybody possibly could:

> Of fundamental significance, there is a new concept of knowledge and of its relation to those who create and use it. This new concept is a truly secular concept. Knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit. Indeed knowledge is not like money, it *is* money. Knowledge is divorced from people, their commitments and their personal dedication. These become impediments, restrictions on the flow of knowledge, and introduce impediments in the working of the symbolic market. Moving knowledge about, or even creating it, should not be more difficult than moving and regulating money. Knowledge, after nearly a thousand years is divorced from inwardness and literally dehumanised (p. 86).

Our universities are expected to produce problem-solvers in a somewhat naïve belief that problems are objectively given to us as, or so it seems that Sir Karl Popper thought, and that the institution of science is responsible for this. One does not need, however, to leave the industrial West too far behind to understand that, for example, the concept of a risk society has different meanings to different groups in different locations and carry very little meaning to the groups on the bottom as well as on the top of the social hierarchies. This concept, like many others, has been coined by middle-class academics who write theory out of their own social milieu. Exactly why and to whom is the *digital divide* a major problem when neither a software engineer in Mumbai nor a poor in nearby shantytown have access to clean water is not always easy to grasp.

Scientists tend to remain romantic about their profession and the contribution it makes to our common good. Elkana, for example, argues from a position on high, what Passmore (1978) calls "aristoscience":

> Science is autonomous, value free and as objective as one can ever get, once its problems have been formulated, and practitioners are working towards solutions (Elkana 1989, p. 186).

Passmore characterized such position a decade earlier:

> When the aristoscientist talks about social questions, one is often struck, rather by his sociological naivete, his refusal to believe that it takes work to find out what is happening in the society (Passmore 1978, p. 57).

Elkana's argument, if valid, is not something that should instil pride, rather be a source of sadness: the understanding that by lending out their cognitive capacities to those who compile the lists of problems to be solved scientists have lost their role as intellectuals.

In the same vein, a psychologist in her naïveté may truly believe that by studying a recently popular phenomenon such as emotional intelligence she is contributing to the fundamental understanding of human nature, only to find out that those who fund such research are interested in the results as long as they can be used practically in the selection of personnel — to identify individuals who are nice, but not necessarily too smart to join a particular *team* (Haefliger 2004). One may also think that the reason behind the Ford Foundation's support of research on private higher education world-wide is motivated by the conviction that such research helps us to understand the functioning of human society. One should, however, acknowledge that since the concept of private higher education is a broad one, a hefty grant helps considerably in consolidating it and making it a part of the language we speak. The enthusiasm by which governments and international agencies welcomed Burton Clark's book on the entrepreneurial university (Clark 1998) a few years ago falls into the same category, as the rushing of higher education researchers and consultants to exploit that enthusiasm indicates.

By selectively supporting research in certain areas, funding agencies have gained significant role negotiating the language the learned classes speak. Since the world is held together by words, as Louis Wirth (1936/1968) suggested, those who decide what is to be studied, written and published do, to a large extent, decide what kind of a world we inhabit. Science, as much as it explores the reality around us, also constructs it.

Entrepreneurial social scientists who wish or are forced by their universities to milk every cow to the last drop, are at the same time losing their critical function to negotiate the nature of the reality surrounding us. To argue otherwise, one must be able to show a research report concluding that a topic has been exhausted or is not worth any further study. "The intellectual class," argues Barzun "which ought always to remain independent, even of Intellect, has been captivated by art, overawed by science, and seduced by philanthropy" (1956/2002, p. 28).

2.2 Intellectuals and knowledge workers

As they are transformed into knowledge workers, the fundamental identity of the individuals who carry intellectual responsibilities in our societies is irreversibly changing. Or to put it more precisely—the process by which universities first absorbed intellectuals during the second half of the twentieth century, and then transformed them into workers in the knowledge-production industry has decimated the class of independent intellectuals (Jacoby 1987/2000). By developing such an argument we obviously assume that only a small part of all cognitive activities qualify as intellectual. A science aristocrat doing routine laboratory experiments would certainly not qualify; neither would an even extremely skilful stockbroker. On the other hand, a *samizdat* author in the Soviet Union, to whom only the lowest grade of manual employment was available, say that of a stoker, would qualify as one, perhaps the only type of intellectual under the Soviet régime. For us, moving and regulating knowledge like money, as Bernstein suggests, has no particular intellectual value; just the opposite, any intellectual engagement is necessarily *closely related* to "persons, their commitments, their personal dedications".

One might suggest that being an intellectual is more than a job, a function an individual performs for a certain number of hours each week for pre-determined remuneration; being an intellectual means playing a *role* in the *Theatrum Mundi*:

> The character, a person in the theatre of the world, is totally involved in his role. He relies on his intimate intuitions and feelings much more than he would in fulfilling a function. He counts neither his time nor his effort. He mobilises all his faculties. The *function* brings to mind a kind of work that produces a reliable result, is measurable and verifiable. But the *role* suggests a vigilant presence, aiming for an end described in terms of well-being or happiness, which is to say that it cannot be measured (Delsol 2003, p. 141-142; my italics V.T.).

It should come as little surprise that, as the economy has become war by *other means*, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, everyone is expected to become a foot-soldier in the global economic war, with university as the military academy. Delsol offers a sobering explanation of how the global economic regime transforms societies into massive armies:

> Functions require interchangeable actors with equal levels of required competency. A typical example is the army, in which by definition the players must be instantly replaceable; they must therefore become indistinguishable from their functions, whence the anonymity of uniforms and the use of rank for identification. In similar but less obvious ways a hospital requires a radiologist, a university requires a medieval specialist, and a business needs a sales manager (ibid, p. 142).

In such a world we no longer ask ’What is true’, but only ‘How can we live better’. Obviously, ‘living better’ will mean different things to different people, and having broad-band access to the Internet is not exactly what the world's most needy people dream of, although we view it as a universal blessing on the assumption that what makes Mr. Gates richer should be good for everybody. But even in this task—showing a way to a better life, that is, how to achieve *growth*—the intellectual cum knowledge worker has but a poor performance record to demonstrate. Immanuel Wallerstein believes that the time of growth as we have learned experience it is pretty much over, and that the coming twenty-five to fifty years will bring forth a new world-order:

> I believe there exists today, as a result of long secular trends that have been moving away from the equilibrium, a massive policy squeeze that will block the continuation of an endless accumulation of capital, the motor of capitalist development (Wallerstain 2004, p. 50).

We live in an era which Wallerstein calls a *systemic crisis*. To support Wallerstein’s thesis, Geoffry Garrett (2004) argues that while economic globalisation makes the rich richer and even poor countries receive access to additional resources as a result of out-sourcing production and services from the developed countries, middle-income countries that are not smart enough to compete on the knowledge production front and are too rich to sell cheap labour enjoy no benefit and move toward impoverishment.

Systemic crisis entails possible risks, as well as opportunities. Among the latter one can find an opportunity to move cognitive work onto an intellectual ground, noticing that “there is no search for truth that does not involve arguments about the good and beautiful” (Wallerstein 2004, p. 57). Wallerstein has been particularly disappointed in the products, or rather lack of them, of social scientists, particularly academic economists:

> The fact is that, after 150 years of an amazing amount of work, world social science has much too little to show for itself and is unable to perform the social task that outsiders demand of it—providing wise counsel about how to solve what are considered to be the 'problems' of the present (ibid, p. 176).

He is perhaps right in arguing that the number of social problems social scientists have solved over the past century and a half is not an impressive one. For him the solution lies on a radical reform of social sciences. One might, however, ask to what extent it is realistic to expect social scientists to act as critical intellectuals in the public sphere, produce knowledge, teach students and draft and evaluate policies. The outcome of the involvement of critical intellectuals in policy development, as Michael Young (Young 2004) demonstrates in the case of South African educational policy, easily leads to disappointments. The uncompromising position of the intellectual is good neither for policy development nor politics. Engaging in those areas puts the integrity of intellectuals at risk. Policies are always to be negotiated on political grounds; however, truth politically negotiated can be seen as truth by nobody aware of the process of its creation. While in his time, Karl Mannheim thought it possible to combine intellectual responsibilities, science and politics (see e.g. Mannheim 1936/1968), on this point we would rather agree with Barzun (1959/2002) who, while arguing for the intellectual freedom of intellectuals, also understands that the house of intellect has its limits, both regarding the tasks it can undertake without compromising its identity, as well as its sheer size. An intellectual is, after all, a dangerous creature:

> The servant of truth seems always ready to kill: the mild scholar lives to destroy his colleague with a theory, and this fratricide is his duty and title to fame (Barzun 1956/2002, p. 176).

Not a good disposition for writing, let us say, a policy paper. While explaining how eccentric intellectuals lured into the contemporary university fail as intellectuals, as well as cognitive workers, Wallerstein also argues that the social sciences lack the tools, and above all the language that would allow them to deliver the promise of resolving problems. The problems identified and the language used to resolve them originate from the same liberal world view, meaning that the solutions are in the language of the problems. That may well mean that no amount of additional *research* will break the verbal circle. As already mentioned above, the very language of such problem-solving is irrelevant to the life experience of those who have not been endowed with university-produced knowledge. This unfortunately shows at least social scientists in the contemporary university in a somewhat unfavourable light: as problem-solvers they face the threat of being irrelevant, as intellectuals being corrupt.

2.3 Intellectual and the University

Intellectuals, as Shils (1969) tells us, have existed at all times and in all societies. What separates our period from many others is the fact that moving knowledge and intellect directly into the economic realm has encouraged many individuals with little or no particular talent in the area, to aspire to the status of an intellectual. Particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, the rapidly growing higher education sector has encouraged massive mobility into the knowledgeable classes. Still, as Ryan and Sackrey argue, for newcomers the paradise of *vita contemplativa* may not necessarily offer the status and privileges comparable with those of the times when higher education was the privilege of the few endowed economically or otherwise, rather than an entitlement of the masses:

> Thus, the university looks more like a knowledge factory, and an increased percentage of the professoriate shares a degree of vulnerability and exploitation comparable to a Greyhound bus driver or a line worker in a shoe factory (Ryan, Sackrey 1996, p. 98).

To remain fair, university has always been a somewhat problematic home for intellectuals, at least as long as by this we do not mean all possible types of cognitive workers, including those whose ethos runs close to those representing the oldest profession men can remember. Instead, what we mean by the task of the *intellectual* in the context of the current paper comes from an earlier piece by Dahrendorf:

> all intellectuals have the duty to doubt everything that is obvious, to make relative all authority, to ask all those questions that no one else dares to ask (Dahrendorf 1969, p. 51).

These people, as Dahrendorf suggests, are not affected by society's "gradations and careers, its privileges and petty quarrels."(ibid., p. 50). They are, as Alfred Weber has suggested *freischwebende Intelligenz*—free-floating intellectuals—a relatively classless stratum in society (Mannheim 1936/1968, p. 155).

Anybody who has seen a contemporary university from within knows that petty quarrels and struggles over careers and privileges do not leave too many of its members intact. As such, the university's ability to offer a site for independent intellectual discourse is easily compromised. It is compromised each time any of its members thinks what can and what cannot be said, and what impact that might have on one's chances of receiving tenure or being awarded a distinction, of becoming dean, head of a school, etc. Fuller argues that the freedom academics are believed to be enjoying in their universities has been grossly over-estimated. In his view control is the very idea behind the modern university as invented by Wilhelm von Humboldt:

> Faced with the inadequacy of the old feudal-clerical order's response to Napoleon, Wilhelm von Humboldt came up with the inspired idea of co-opting intellectuals, many of whom had been sympathetic to Napoleon, by declaring the university the natural home of 'Enlightenment'. In one fell swoop, free-floating gadflies were flattened into civil servants (Fuller 2000, p. 83).

Particularly since the years of Cold War expansion, the university has served a purpose similar to that of a safety valve on a pressure-cooker through which the excess steam created by intellectuals, that might otherwise have stirred up the masses, is safely and slowly released (ibid., p. 51). Accommodating possible troublemakers in the home of Enlightenment has allowed the channelling of their cognitive abilities and energy to non-destructive purposes such as matching military-related scientific efforts with similar efforts on the ideological front by promoting an unquestionable liberal orthodoxy. In his new role as a knowledge worker, an intellectual has become the ideologue, having lost his ability:

> to step back and gain perspective with regard to contemporary expressions of our mode of government, in such a way as to understand its weaknesses, and subsequently to correct them (Delsol 2003, p. 102).

It took the university approximately a century to safely sublimate the critical impulse that animated Voltaire and Marx "in the cramped prose of Max Weber" (Fuller 2000, p. 77). With taking the university to the market place the nature of control over knowledge workers has changed. It is increasingly the economic value that determines the importance of academic work. In this sense, one would probably agree with Readings (1996) that political control over academics has been loosened as long as they are able to sell increasing amounts of increasingly *excellent* knowledge on the market. Market success serves as the main criterion of excellence. Thinking of a market as a site where a large number of relatively ignorant individuals exchange their hard earned cash for the goods they desire may, however, suggest a gap between market success and the excellence of knowledge products.

The life of intellectuals, even those belonging to a university, has never been an easy one. So we read of the Rev. Simon Ockley, the first great Arabist in the early eighteenth-century University of Cambridge:

> [Simon Ockley] was writing to [James Keith] from Cambridge Castle, the debtor's prison to which he had been committed in February of the preceding year; the sum he owed was £200, and as his annual stipend from the professorship was only £40, … the prospect of an early release must have been somewhat bleak. Thanks to Keith and other influential admirers his debts were presently paid and he was free to return to Swavesay. But his health and spirit were alike broken, and on August 9, 1720, he died, being forty-two years of age (Arberry, 1960/1997, p. 11).

More than ever before, during the second half of the twentieth century intellectuals—persons with an unusual sensitivity to the sacred, an uncommon reflectiveness about the nature of their universe, and the rules which govern their society (Shils, 1969, p. 26)—have been absorbed in the university, challenging their natural inclinations for critical inquiry with the imposed tasks of industrial production of knowledge, noise and plain propaganda. Noam Chomsky tells us of America's first propaganda agency—the Committee on Public Information which is to be understood as 'public disinformation':

> Run by leading progressive intellectuals, its task was to turn the pacifist population into hysterical jingoists and enthusiasts for war against the savage Huns (Chomsky 2002, p. 179).

Although debtor's prisons no longer exist, this does not necessarily mean more freedom. Post-modern writing can be seen as the contemporary equivalent of the Cambridge Castle[1] where Cacodaemons haunted Simon Ockley. Compiling *analytical reports* to the European Commission on the implementation of the Bologna Process is perhaps as tormenting an experience for any intelligent human being than that which the Rev. Ockley suffered for his debts.

Taking a turn towards lower levels of abstraction and more practicality, something any reader of this humble volume of an applied social science background may well appreciate, we will now take a quick look at the toils of knowledge workers in the field of higher education research. Although perhaps not entirely conclusive, this small test could perhaps still shed some light on the intellectual commitment and practical value of the works in our own camp of labour. Teichler's recent paper (Teichler 2003) echoes some of the issues raised by Wallerstein and indicates the relevance of his arguments in the context of higher education research. According to Teichler, higher education research has been a growing field over recent decades, and those involved in it act concurrently as consultants, institutional researchers and administrators (p. 178). However, it is not obvious what this precisely means. Could it be about the growing attractiveness of higher education researchers for many jobs in the city of intellect or the knowledge factory, and also for administrative responsibilities? Rather than, as it was until recently, simply to occupy academic positions in sociology, political science and economics departments, as Teichler seems to be assuming; or do we actually see a reverse causal connection—representatives of a growing number of previously non-academic professional categories claiming academic, if not intellectual status in an attempt to elevate their professional standing by developing publication records and lists of conference talks for their Curriculum Vitae? This, as we well know, is often the case with provosts from the College-on-the-Hill presenting their old war stories for the latest innovations in the field. Be that as it may, the result is not exactly satisfying:

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[1] This point I owe with thanks to Prof. Guy Neave.

> Most analyses emerging are so strongly shaped by the high expectations that they are somewhat blind to the possible 'mixed performance' which tends to show up in the implementation process of reforms (ibid. p. 178).

At this juncture, one might wish to ask Professor Teichler what it means to be *somewhat blind*? It sounds almost as good as suggesting that somebody be *somewhat pregnant*, say, three and a half per cent, for example. His statement is obviously an expression of professional solidarity, an attempt to say politely that learned colleagues had failed to see that their research has drifted away from reality and is no longer, if it ever was, in a position to inform the once-again unsuccessful reforms. As Wallerstein argues, this failure has deep epistemological roots. The conceptual apparatus applied has a high expectation built into it, so that failure has become inexpressible. One could also make an argument for newly born administrator-researchers being neither fully competent researchers nor fully responsible intellectuals. Finally, it cannot be ruled out that maintaining high expectations is the very aim of much of social science research, a direct expression of the interests of the scientists themselves. Systematically cultivated high expectations keep the funding streams alive and politicians whose programmes receive scientific legitimisation satisfied. Unfortunately, such research fails to see beyond itself being merely, as Teichler suggests, *l'art pour l'art*. Perhaps not the aesthetically most satisfying art one could possibly find.

Multiple identity as described by Teichler allows the creation of a need for certain kinds of knowledge, supposedly applied and closely policy-relevant while ignoring theoretical and conceptual work that would require more solid preparation, or critical discourses that might not necessarily yield cash flow. Policy research to manufacture a discourse of permanent progress is, however, a safe genre both in social sciences in general, as well as in higher education research.

3. THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM OF THE BOLOGNA PROGRAM

Public Man, Sennett tells us, who walked the streets of the great European cities of London and Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has fallen (Sennett 1977). In his stead we now have the holder of the Master of Business Administration degree. Instead of culture the MBA stands for its antithesis. It reminds us that the ultimate truth of the society we inhabit — the dissemination of which is being perceived as a sign of irreversible progress, and not only in the offices of the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund — is that *Greed is good.* Without greed there is no growth, no progress (Gellner 1994). Democracy requires a plus-sum game, growing public wealth so that even those moving downwards on the social hierarchy to allow the masses to contemplate the way up should not feel too badly hurt and give rise to hordes of young Marxes, Trotskys and Lenins.

The reduction of the great *theatrum mundi* to the battlefield of global economic competition leaves little space for intellectuals, parasites on society who are in such pain thinking about other things, that they do not have the slightest intention of becoming economically productive. Mass mobilisation in the global economic war requires everybody to become a soldier on both fronts—production and consumption. While in communist Eastern Europe failing to participate in socialist production was labelled as anti-social behaviour, under global capitalism, avoiding consumption constitutes a far worse act of sabotage against society's interests, even threatening the liberal-democratic order. Higher education, as we have already argued, has become one of the expensive services every good citizen is expected to consume to keep the economy growing, even if the dreams of gaining upward social mobility through higher education degrees are being frustrated at an accelerating speed. Lifelong learning, so much spoken about recently, merely institutionalizes the obligation to consume education, not to learn — humans always learn as long as they live. Neave perceives this shift in higher education in following the terms:

> This is the transition of higher education from being considered as a subset of the political system—the selection of, formation and enculturation

> of elites—to its redefinition as a sub-set of the economic system—the training of the mass for the private sector labour market (Neave 2004b, p. 8).

In our view, here the *Magister Ludi* of European higher education discourse fails to see one important element — while the level of educational attainment is rising significantly, new and higher degrees do not necessarily stand for knew knowledge and skills that the labour marker receives, but is one of the symptoms of what Dore (1976/2000) called the *diploma disease*, and Collins described in his classic "The Credential Society" a few years later (Collins 1979) as the proliferation of the level of *sold* degrees in the context of the relatively stable content of studies. Through this process educational experience has been decoupled from the symbols that once represented it, and although every symbol makes a pretence of standing for something far greater than itself, the very notion of an institutionalised status and symbols related to it contradict, in a rather fundamental manner, the market democracy. Mass higher education is being asked to provide the impossible: exclusive degrees available to everybody at a reasonable cost and without too much hassle. Obviously, in such a manner level after level of institutionalised symbols—bachelor, master, doctoral degrees are being drained of value, with the latter being defined according to Bourdieu (1989) as a correlate of relative rarity, with new exclusive symbols being established, following the same market demand.

The Bologna Process offers through the Tuning project a somewhat naïve solution, rather than trying to fill symbols with significant content, it is trying to lower existing institutions by reducing higher education qualifications to a laundry list of skills and competencies (Tomusk 2004b). Although it may appear to be a solution to the problem of empty symbols, it can be opposed on economic and cultural grounds, as well as on that of cognitive psychology (Tomusk 2003).

Although they are few in number, there are still those who imagine a university that does not reduce humans to their capacity of industrial production. Ben Okri has recently shared his hopes for the university of the future:

> The academies of the future will do one thing we do not do today. They will teach the art of self-discovery. There is nothing more fundamental in education. We turn out students from our universities who know how to give answers, but not how to ask questions. The wisdom centres in our culture do not reach our students. They leave universities with skills for the workplace, but no knowledge of how to live, or what living is for. They are not taught how to see. They are not taught how to listen. They

> are not taught the great art of obedience, and how it precedes self-mastery. They are not taught the true art of reading (Okri 2003, p. 8).

Okri is very clear about what most of the universities do with the majority of their students:

> We take the living potential that are young minds and turn them, reduce them into job-fillers and economy providers (ibid.).

This clashes sharply with his deep conviction that "we are more than the functions and jobs that we do." While we sympathise with his hopes for a more meaningful future for our children, there is no sign on the horizon that might auger a better future to come. Delsol has made it abundantly clear that the current generation has already learned not to ask questions. As she argues, asking those fundamental questions that Okri insists our children should be asking, threatens the fundamentals of our security, which most probably are illusory anyway.

> [A life] is paradoxically worth something only to the extent that it admits itself not to be supreme value, by recognising what is worth more that itself, by its ability to organise itself around something else (Delsol 2003, p. 4).

Life that does not signify anything but itself is, one might say, in-significant. What should be thought of a life that has become a symbol of something considerably less than itself would be unethical to express.

Policy developments we can see in European higher education in the wake of signing the Bologna Declaration in 1999 suggest that what we have seen so far is but a humble beginning to a radical shift in the opposite direction to Okri's vision.

3.1 Propagandists of New Europe

There is no necessity for the project of creating the European Higher Education Area to take a radically anti-intellectual shape, as it currently seems to be doing. One may even suggest that spending a few units of the common currency might wisely allow some people *with an unusual sensitivity to the sacred and an uncommon reflectiveness*, as Shils (1969) suggested, to engage significant intellectual tasks which otherwise could not be pursued. Though it may well be the case that — as was in 18th century Cambridge where supporting writing letters was not in the interests of too many benefactors — in the same manner, generating propaganda is perceived a more honourable task among those controlling the purse in Brussels.

The issue with cognitively well-endowed individuals is that they can be useful to a society in many ways. Their abilities can be used for creating technologies of life as much as of death, to engage in science as well as in politics, to promote virtue as well as vice. Society may appreciate all of these functions of the intellect, some perhaps more explicitly than others, meaning that the material rewards from the latter tend to be particularly high. In an era when roles are being reduced to functions, the threat is that the moral ground of all the roles is disappearing and an intellectual, for example, may well wish to take on the job of politician.

Newton-Smith (2000) draws our attention to the unbridgeable ethical cleavage between certain cognitively demanding professions:

> One is just not supposed to tear out those pages of one's laboratory notebook that go against the hypothesis one has advanced in print. Clearly this norm serves the epistemic ends in science. And it highlights a contrast with other institutions such as politics and diplomacy. In the case of these institutions the suppression of data is often seen as a positive virtue (p. 345).

A position as the one expressed by Newton-Smith may belong to a scientist as an expression of an empirical fact, but not to an intellectual who, for ethical reasons, cannot agree with such a miserable state of affairs. While in the world of Newton-Smith Leon Trotsky can find his well-deserved ecological niche, for our hypothetical intellectual both should remain anomalies — the morally corrupt one, as well as the one who approves degradations.

Turning to the rapidly growing body of *Bologna literature*, one may notice that borders between the genres are increasingly blurred. Under that are the politically motivated declarations: Magna Charta Universitatum (CRE 1988), the Sorbonne Declaration (Declaration 1998) and the Bologna Declaration (Declaration 1999). On that fundament lies a second layer of political documents: communiqués of bi-annual ministerial meetings. Beyond that blurring begins: Declarations of the European University Association's conventions constitute the first level of an attempt to reconcile what Neave (2002) calls the "*pays politique*" and the "*pays real*", that is, the political discourse and institutional realities of European higher education perhaps not fully appreciating the inevitable imperfection of the outcome of any such attempt. The *Trend* reports, officially called "Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education" (see e.g. Reichert and Tauch 2003), represent, at least formally, a move in a different direction, an attempt to inform the political process from the actual state of affairs in European universities as related to various issues of implementation of the Bologna Process. On the top of all of that cognitive production stand the works of the academics who by claiming the status of intellectuals represent the ambition of presenting the naked truth in its entire Apollonian beauty. Contrary to their, one may assume, entirely sincere intentions, His Majesty has been dressed in the most eclectic mix of brands and styles that any fashion designer could imagine.

This production carries signs of compromise and it often presents political declarations in the place of descriptions of the actual state of affairs and boosts high expectations while ignoring the inevitably mixed nature of the outcomes. Among the recent Bologna literature we find, for example, a progress report (Zgaga 2003) compiled by somebody who has burdened his earthly existence with two incompatible roles: those of academic and politician. The report, which is a mix of political declarations and attempts at objective analysis, in itself indicates the apparent cognitive dissonance caused by Destiny's evil experiment to lock in a single skull the minds of both a Professor of Educational Studies and a Minister of Education.

Zgaga (ibid.) has apparently no difficulty in first declaring that "Nobody pushes them [the signatory countries] to that direction administratively; it is more and more the national need and national priority", and then a few pages later precisely the opposite — push: "the Bologna Process was not a mere voluntary action any more for the EU Member States and not for the candidate Member States either", this already in full unison with the former Commissioner Reding in whose professional vocabulary the word *voluntary* seems to have been entirely missing (see e.g. Tomusk 2004b). Somebody obviously has to be out there making the Bologna Process a *need* and *priority* for the European nations. Since, however, even the European Union cannot make the Bologna Process compulsory for its member states, as action in higher education remains the prerogative of the member states, it is doing it under the heading of "strengthening European co-operation" (Zgaga 2003). With the big stick comes the carrot—the much anticipated market success of new European higher education:

> 'Bologna' has become a new European higher education brand, today easily recognised in governmental policies, academic activities, international organisations, networks and media (ibid.).

Reading the mentioned report and other similar papers encourages one to join Neave (2004a) in his question:

> Can it be that the architects of Bologna truly believe that in default of academia, the academic interest can be represented vicariously by a motley and Ersatz conglomerate of experts, consultants many of whom have 'taken the Queen's shilling'?

While there are theories other than moral corruption available to explain the views expressed in the *Zgaga Report* and similar documents, the situation is somewhat different looking at writings on Bologna of academics functioning as academics. That leads us to another of Neave's observations, that:

> In the absence of counter comments, even the most scholarly and balanced piece of research finds great difficulty in distancing itself from propaganda (ibid.).

The way Neave expresses his position is similar to Teichler (2003, p. 178), to the effect that some researchers are oftentimes *somewhat blind* to certain aspects of certain issues. A recent article by Huisman and Wende that appeared in a learned journal (Huisman and Wende 2004) as a result of an EU funded project suggests that the reason for academics presenting propaganda as research outcomes lies neither in a limited visual impairment nor an absence of critical comments, but rather directly induced by the *Queen's shilling*.

Huisman and Wende have come up with an analysis which appears sanguine even in the context of the most politically motivated official Bologna knowledge. One may think that last time in history similar enthusiasm was expressed by the academics was when comrade Stalin received reports from his *secular priesthood* regarding the success and enthusiasm of peasants joining the *kolkhozes* during the Soviet Union's forced collectivisation. Without hesitation the authors declare that:

> In less than 10 years, harmonisation (preferably labelled as 'convergence') of higher education structures changed from an undesirable objective to a highly advisable aim (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 350).

It is only a part of the problem that the approach Huisman and Wende have taken focused entirely on those signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration that belong to the European Union, skipping the issue of harmonising European higher education with that of the Russian Federation — 1,300 chronically under-funded and mismanaged universities enrolling close to six million students. They also ignore a widely known fact that so far the Bologna Process has been primarily political in nature and that the capacity of universities' to absorb any of the envisioned reforms remains yet to be tested (see e.g. Reichert and Tauch 2003; Neave 2004a).

One should obviously not push too far the comparison between the European Union as a federal super-state in the making and the Soviet Union as a federal super-state gone by, although certain similarities, starting with a top-heavy bureaucracy are too visible to ignore. As are the intentions of the enthusiasts of both the constructions. As in the days of yore, Huisman and

Wende appreciate the enthusiasm of the European nation states embracing the Union's intervention in an area for which it does not even have a mandate — higher education (see e.g. Tomusk 2004b) — and is therefore, strictly speaking, illegal:

> We have maintained that the presumed lack of national governments' acceptance of inter- or supranational interference is not as profound as expected (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 355).

The following sentence from the same article will perhaps for some time tower over the Bologna writings, reflecting a particular state of mind in all of its richness and with all its subtleties:

> Fuelled both by the general expectations of the European Commission pleading a European dimension in higher education, but maybe even more by the education policy reviews of OECD, national governments to a considerable extent realised (albeit subjectively) whether their national higher education system was still sufficiently in line with a certain (European) model, even though such an ideal model might never be attainable or might even not be existent in practice (Huisman and Wende 2004, p. 351)

Asking for the meaning of *a national government's subjective realisation* would be certainly perceived as a malicious act. It is obvious that the phrase is devoid of meaning if analysed from the point of view of political science or educational policy. H.G. Wells, back in 1935, wrote exactly about using such phrases, seeing nations, or for this matter, governments, as personalities:

> That sort of thing seems to me a romantic simplification of what is really happening in human affairs, and I think it leads to disastrous results (Wells 1935).

Adding a reference to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, seeing the ever-present but still lacking *European model* in terms of an *empty signifier* would make this paper a good match to some other post-modern writings. However, as such a reference is missing, this option is not available. What remains is an option to choose between the two alternatives Jacques Barzun has offered, either a reflection of the *ignorance of the unlettered* or of the *anti-intellectualism of the intellectual*. There is no doubt that by instigating the production of such texts and reports, which fail to draw a line between political propaganda and intellectual analysis or have been written with the simple aim of pleasing the funding agency, the Bologna Process is not only corrupting the intellectual sphere, but is also eroding the integrity of the scholarship within universities, as well as beyond them.

3.2 De-intellectualisation through Tuning Educational Structures

In the context of economic globalisation and the shift of the global economic focus from the North Atlantic region to the Pacific Rim, it should not come as a surprise that, despite everything said about the glorious traditions of European higher education and the great cultural treasures of the continent, economic concerns occupy a prominent place among the driving forces of the Bologna Process. The difficulty of funding mass higher education from the public purse is a strong motivation for the European Commission, as well as many national governments, to try to move universities closer to the marketplace. That would allow a gradual increase in cost-sharing with European students, as well as more aggressive recruitment of students from other countries such as China and India who would then be expected to bear the full cost of *the educational service*. Gaining a market-share from US universities, with the commensurate additional stream of cash into European higher education, is in our view the most important reason for the European Commission's intense interest in presiding over the Process. In her recent article Langan leaves little space for any ambiguity:

> As a response to US dominance in higher education, France and other European countries are therefore utilising Bologna to not only develop international activities and bilateral agreements between institutions but also to create commercial activities such as the export of educational products and services (Langan 2004, p. 449).

Harnessing Bologna like a horse to the carriage of European economics is not an easy task. It entails significant political compromises: on the one hand opening, under pressure from students and academics who are both concerned about their own economic security, a futile discussion about the social dimension of higher education as a safety valve on the pressure cooker to release excess steam from the Process; and on the other hand, creating *the Bologna brand* that from the outset establishes by political means a relatively equal level of quality in higher education provided across the signatory countries — from the United Kingdom to the Russian Federation — which obviously does not correspond with the reality.

Winning temporary peace on two fronts allows the architects of the process to pursue the main task of the Process — transforming European higher education into knowledge products that can be sold on the global marketplace. This agenda more than anything else reveals the love-hate relationship Europe has with US higher education. While it envies the latter for its resources, it hates the means — markets and a low-level of regulation — that has allowed it. Europe, having its hands tied politically, has to achieve global market success by the non-market means of using political and technocratic tools. In this the European response as it emerges from the Bologna Process more closely resembles the Hungarian reform socialism of the 1970s — in which the Socialist Party, in an attempt to invigorate production, decided to produce the *market signals* itself — than a free market economy in which, in addition to winners, losers also abound. While the free market demands a wide range of products, allowing both high and low quality universities and colleges to operate in their niches, and a rare free-floating spirit to remain alive within it, the European approach designed by technocrats in Brussels and politicians from various countries threatens the imposition of the ethos of industrial production upon the entire higher education sector, thus reducing it to the level of the lowest common denominator.

It is surprising how close the logic of such policies is to those of the Soviet Bolsheviks since 1920s: collectivising, industrialising, and electrifying the country. As soon as politics take over the market, party-technocrats begin designing their great-leap-forward type of utopian programs, as the Soviet Union had been catching-up with the United States since Khrushchev, now the European Union attempts the same by almost the same means. The Tuning project constitutes a perfect example of such policy.

The Tuning project funded by the European Commission constitutes a bold move to reach the core of higher education by ignoring the historical safe-guard of its autonomy — the nation-state:

> The Tuning project does not pay attention to educational systems, but to educational *structures* and *content of studies* (Gonzáles and Wagenaar 2003 p. 22).

Its logic is to develop professional profiles for a range of European professions in seven subject areas: business, chemistry, education science, geology, history, mathematics and physics (ibid. p. 32). Each profile is to be attributed a list of generic and subject-related competencies (ibid. p. 24) which are to be delivered by means of ECTS credits that allow both transfer and accumulation of credits.

Implementing that would mean transforming European higher education into a massive shopping mall of higher education, where a student can walk from one university to another, travel between countries and buy credits filled with competencies. Having collected a sufficient number of credits, a student can approach the checkout and demand a degree in exchange for a shopping list of competencies. Institutionalising a European Curriculum Vita, another tool of bureaucratic control promoted by the European Commission (Zgaga 2003, p. 13), allows the imposition of a forced knowledge consumption régime on every European citizen throughout their professional careers as the actual implementation of the lifelong learning program.

A few final words regarding the anti-intellectualism of the Tuning project. We identify three such sources: first, the Tuning project seems to borrow its logic from vocational education, something the EU actually does have a mandate for, as well as experience in. But clearly, this approach entirely ignores the needs of more academically and intellectually inclined branches of higher learning. It is driving European universities towards the narrow preparation of interchangeable job-fillers, instead of allowing personal growth and the emergence of individuals with strong intellectual commitment, people concerned about the meaning of things and carrying *values*; second is the motivation of making European universities attractive to students from other parts of world as a tourist destination. It appears to invite a relatively small number of extremely affluent students from developing countries to walk from one university to another, enjoy the sites and sounds — as the Cable News Network advertises tourism to a variety of countries — and on the top of that receive a university degree sporting the European brand-name. For us, promoting such an agenda, even if economically successful, equates to loss of intellectual integrity. Finally, as a utopian project, the Bologna Process and the Tuning project as one of its expressions:

> implies a reckless heaping-up and insatiable gathering-in, and unbounded *cumulation* of advantages, with the counterpart of balancing and circumscribing drawbacks shut out, extruded from the field of consciousness (Kolnai 1960/1999, p. 125).

As we have seen thus far, and as Neave has confirmed in his critical comments (see e.g. Neave 2003), the Bologna Process includes a number of irresolvable contradictions, confirming Kolnai's position:

> It is not that the utopian bliss cannot be satisfactorily put into practice: the trouble is that it cannot be thought out consistently in the theorist's study (Kolnai 1960/1999, p. 130).

3.3 The Panopticon of European quality assurance

In this final section we would like to return once again to the issue of social control that has already surfaced several times in this chapter. The Humboldtian research university itself can be seen as a mechanism of social control over formerly free-floating intellectual troublemakers. Also institutionalizing lifelong learning does not so much encourage individuals to learn as it forces them to consume certified educational services. In this section a few additional words will be said regarding the emerging European higher education quality assurance process as a further means of social control and of fostering the agenda of a federal Europe.

The need to promote common European higher education quality assurance measures are manifold. First, establishing the European higher education brand-name without an adequate quality assurance mechanism would be impossible. There is simply no way of convincing the customer without some transparent procedure that the University of Tirana is comparable to Oslo or Oxbridge. Second, as no responsible national government could ever accept an inferior position in such comparisons, if for no other reason than at least for the sake of its own legitimacy, to allow the creation of a European brand the national governments' role in quality assurance should be neutralised as much as in *Tuning the education structures* discussed in the previous section. Both areas should be freed from the oversight of the Nation State. The third issue is that, as Neave (2004b) has recently discussed, different nations have developed different quality assurance mechanisms, some of them including elements of evaluation and others not, some to justify heavy handed administrative intervention while others have been set up with the precisely opposite aim of allowing steering from a distance. We should also add that as the group of signatory countries was extended in 2003, quality assurance procedures as institutionalised in some of the countries are no longer in a position to inspire a great deal of confidence in their function of assuring that the universities meet any minimum standards of quality. To put it another way, if a country's government and public services are known to be corrupt then there is no good reason to assume that its universities and related quality assurance measures are not, even if the Government claims not only to meet the highest international standards but actually be setting them. Fourth, declining per-capita funding in many European higher education systems has contributed to the need to employ quality assurance measures that increasingly look like the enforcement of minimum standards. Such quasi-policing measures allow cost-reduction in the face of possibly severe sanctions for a decline in *quality*. Finally, setting-up anything that is even mildly reminiscent of a supra-national accreditation agency offers a multi-million Euro business opportunity that many would be interested in seizing, and perceive as a good enough cause to lobby for. As Langan mentions in her paper:

> Bologna also calls for quality assurance of academic standards, which is primarily conducted by the European Association of Universities (EAU), an independent organisation not affiliated with any state accreditation agency (Langan 2004, p. 448).

This indicates that the European University Association that has been responsible for compiling the Trend reports, as well as conducting other activities related to the implementation of the Bologna Process, mainly funded by the European Commission is already perceived, at least in some quarters, mistakenly or otherwise, as an emerging supra-national European accreditation agency.

As has been argued elsewhere (Tomusk 2004b, 2004c), the need for quality assurance does not rise from an overwhelming perception of excellence in the universities. It arises when a significant segment of a society no longer trusts the university and the academics belonging to it. The need for external quality assurance indicates that on any account the community of scholars is no longer able to guarantee, by its own means, that its members abide by the mostly implicit rules of the game in what Habermas (1989) has called the "communication community". Obviously, certain members of the community have decided not to communicate what is true, but rather what is rational based on economic or political calculations. Society's response to this is a policing action — setting up an agency that makes sure that the taxpayers receive at least some truth, proportionate to that which the provision of tax monies allows. Such a line of argumentation suggests that quality assurance as it has become known in Europe over the past fifteen or so years does not so much offer a road to better quality higher education as it constitutes an imperfect solution to a grave problem of corrosion in academic culture. The solution, as some British colleagues suggest, is not entirely new since it was proffered by Jeremy Bentham who, having learned from his brother's experience in 19th century Russia, came up with an idea for a new type of social organisation, the Panopticon, initially designed as a prison. Although Michel Foucault has since argued that in contemporary society the Panopticon is very useful for many purposes, including that of educating the young. What follows is the description of the Panopticon offered by Foucault:

> In the Panopticon each person, depending on his place, is watched by all or certain of the others. You have an apparatus of total and circulating mistrust, because there is no absolute point (Foucault 1980).

In case any doubt that this applies to quality assurance in higher education should remain, one needs only look at how Geraint Johnes from Lancaster University thinks that the cost of quality assurance can be reduced in face of the increasing severity of the sanctions:

> … it is possible to design incentive structures which ensure honest self-evaluation. The thrust of the argument is that by heavily penalising any visited departments which are found to be cheating in self-assessment,

> honest revelation can be induced by reducing to below unity (indeed close to zero) the probability of a visit (Johnes 1997, p. 100).

Threatening departments with heavy penalties would turn, as Foucault has suggested, *each comrade* into an *overseer*, making sure that nobody provokes the wrath of the Quality Agency. How much any of that has to do with quality is an entirely different question. In our view sanctions may be helpful in eradicating a certain element of explicitly corrupt practice, but is not sufficient to restore the culture of academia. The latter relates to shared values among academics, which the shift from committed individuals to job-fillers has seriously eroded.

As is the case with the Bologna Process as such, the introduction of new political technologies under its auspices offers new employment opportunities for young and dynamic Europeans who do often not care much about the broader implications of their responsibilities:

> Like Bentham's prisoners, university staff become more or less unwitting accomplices in the setting-up of a wider system of imprisonment. In Foucauldian terms, this is a classic example of the moulding of subjectivity through the internalisation of externally-imposed norms (Shore and Roberts, 1995).

We already see growth in the numbers of new types of experts: 'educational development consultants', 'quality assurance officers', 'staff development trainers' and 'teaching quality assessors'… (Shore and Wright 1999) as a response to the European concern for the quality of its higher education. However, the army of European quality commissars, as Neave (2004b) seems to be suggesting, is by definition not even in the position to improve the educational process from which the Evaluative State has "resolutely withdrawn", but instead "replaces a circle of trust and confidence with a cycle of suspicion". Concluding his discussion of the Bologna Process as a part of the agenda of the Evaluative State Neave leaves the final outcome open:

> What remains to be seen is whether the Evaluative State will be able to resist the temptation to surround it with further reglementary controls operating not at supra-institutional level, but rather an inter-governmental level. In short, it remains to be seen whether the new vintage of the Evaluative State will be sufficiently robust to hold out against the temptation to 'cut' it with the old and feeble beverage of bureaucracy rampant (Neave 2004, p. 21).

As far as we can see, the writing is already on the wall: "*Mene, mene, tekel, parsin*" (Jer. 5: 25), and it is not only commissar Belshazzar in Brussels who is to be blamed.

4. CONCLUSION

Universities are profoundly ambivalent institutions. As Weiler (2005) argues, there is hardly anything universities are not ambivalent about: knowledge, society, democracy and so on, and so forth. Universities are also ambivalent about truth and intellectuals. Both are important in the justification of the university's existence before society, and both threaten the power and stability within, and also without. Gellner's explanation of the situation may be perceived as somewhat extreme:

> The reason why society must be based on falsehood is equally obvious. Truth is independent of the social order and is in no one's service, and if not impeded will end up by undermining respect for any authority structure. Only ideas pre-selected or pre-invented and then frozen by ritual and sanctification can be relied upon to sustain a specific organisational set-up. Free inquiry will undermine it (Gellner 1994, p. 31).

We have no doubt that free inquiry into the Bologna Process would undermine it, and this is the main reason why there is so much propaganda and so little intellectual rigor about it. Still, both society and its processes, Processes and *die Processen* (after all, Franz Kafka should not be ignored in the context of the contemporary European processes either), including the Bologna Process, need truth to legitimate them. They need the truth and the house of intellect because nobody else is left to serve as the fount of their legitimacy — no ultimate power, no universal church. University has to play that role. But then, because its presence is so very inconvenient, it is to be compromised by any means — sticks and carrots, grants and intimidation. All of that we have seen in this paper.

We have no doubt that the contemporary mass university already has been compromised on a massive scale. Intellect and truth are rare by definition, therefore *mass university* is itself a contradiction in terms. The Bologna Process, as we have shown, erodes European intellect still further. One can hardly imagine a more radical break from the idea of liberal education as expressed by Cardinal Newman, than that imposed upon European universities by the architects of the Process. Newman's words that have shaped the most successful part of European higher learning today sound nothing short of a shameful heresy in the context of the current attempts to rise its level of competitiveness:

> Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any knowledge, if it be really such is its own reward (Newman 1996, p. 78),

The consequences of that threaten to be particularly disastrous if the Spirit of Bologna succeeds in entering training at the doctoral level, as it is doing. That would represent nothing less than the replacement of training in free inquiry with the purchase of certificates of skills and competencies. On the other hand, an intellectual who is not able to resist the temptations and stand against the power of the Process does not deserve the title anyway. Intellectuals are as rare now as they have always been, but as they always have, they continue to exist. It is disappointing to see colleagues becoming propagandists, but here too, the twentieth century has shown us still worse examples. The strength of the Bologna Process is its main weakness — cognitive workers who compromise their intellect will eventually also compromise the Process. For a functionary, a profiled job-filler, filling the job is devoid of moral commitment. The hope we have for the future may well be charged with elitism to the extreme, although the available alternatives look inherently worse. Either the most exclusive parts of European higher education will succeed resisting the technocratic and politically imposed extremes of the Bologna utopia, or its remaining intellectuals should look for other hosts instead of corrupt credit-trading and *tuned* illiberal universities. In an extreme case, the society of knowledge that is worth of its name would once again need to hide itself from the eyes of the commissars and commissioners. Bologna Process has already created ample opportunities for the individuals who can never miss an opportunity to promote themselves. This, as Primo Levi suggests, is not unique even in the context of recent history:

> Do we not see individuals living without purpose, lacking all forms of self-control and conscience, who live not *in spite of* these defects, but … precisely because of them? (Levi 1987, p. 104).

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Index

Aamodt 26, 39
Aaviksoo 118,
Aberbach 21, 39
Accardo 83, 84
Acevski 152, 153, 155, 156
Adenauer 72
adoption 13, 20, 37, 47, 69, 142, 146, 152, 156, 170, 173, 180, 214
Adorno 16
Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (see also *AUF*) 70, 75
Ahola 301
Aktay 192, 207
Albania 88, 91, 101, 102, 149, 150, 158, 228
Alpkaya 207
Altbach 102, 103, 221, 234
Amaral 89, 119, 127
America 8, 97, 114, 204, 220, 230, 238, 274, 283
american model 109, 188, 218
Ančevski 153, 154, 166
Andorra 88, 158
Anglo Saxon 70, 74, 75, 77, 78, 215, 216
Apple 120, 121, 185
Arbatova 233, 248
Arberry 283, 299
aristoscience 277
Arnaud 72, 84
Arsenina 236, 248
Aru 138
aspirantura 216
Atatürk188, 195
Attali 83, 84
AUF 70
Australia 23, 77, 144, 258
Austria 198
autonomy 9, 11, 25, 45, 74, 83, 95, 112, 152, 153, 155, 157, 172, 173, 195–197, 199, 201
Bachelor 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 47, 49, 55, 57, 58, 131, 143, 147, 154, 174–179,181, 215–218, 237, 243, 286
Balkans 15, 87, 88, 273
Barlett
Bartlett 6, 16
Barto 78, 84
Barzun 275, 278, 280, 291, 299
Bayrakdar 9
Becher 43,54
Belge 195, 196
Bell 275, 276
Benda 6, 16
Bender 244–246
Benin 75
Bentham 296
Berkan 194, 207
Berlin 44, 47–50, 60, 88, 96, 100, 101, 104, 113, 115, 146, 158, 214, 227, 233, 235, 254, 255, 258, 262, 263
Berndston 97
Bernstein 276
Bertola 138
Bertricau 119
Beti 76
Beverwijk 169
Biggs 144
Bilkent University 189
Bisopoulos 130
Bleiklie 43, 54, 64
Boeri 135
Böllhoff 21
Bologna club 10, 213
Bologna Declaration 4, 13, 20, 28, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 44, 69, 82, 87, 89, 91, 97, 117, 141, 142, 152, 170, 171, 173, 174, 176, 178, 180–183, 209, 213,214, 219, 224, 233, 235, 246, 248, 287, 288, 290
Bologna Process (see also *Process*) 18, 10–16, 19–22, 24, 28, 29, 31–39,

43–49, 52–68, 87–91, 94–112, 117–121, 123, 125–129, 131–138, 141–143, 145–148, 151–154, 158, 164, 197, 201, 210, 213, 214, 217–220, 222, 224, 225, 227, 228, 230, 231, 233, 235–244, 246, 247, 251–255, 257–259, 261–265, 271, 274, 283, 286, 289–299
bolshevik 228
Bosnia & Herzegovina 151
Bosphorus 190, 205
Bourdieu 73, 76, 77, 121, 133, 286
Bradley 147
brain drain 111, 130, 132, 135, 212, 234, 236, 240
Brown 259
Brubaker 121
Brücker 135
Brunsson 39
Brussels 118, 233, 236, 243, 255, 287, 293, 297
Bulgaria 100, 102, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 178–180, 183
bureaucracy 79, 89, 211, 243, 244, 290, 297
Callon 21
Cambridge 282, 283, 287
Canbeyli 196, 197
Cand. Mag 26
Candidate of Sciences 216
Carnoy 108, 109
Carr 258
Carter 134
Cassen 76, 77
Castells 120, 122, 262
Catin 84
Central Asia 210
CEP (see also *Civic Education Project*) 160, 161
CEPES (see also *UNESCO-CEPES*) 95, 150, 154, 158, 251
Cerny 253
Cerych 236
Chekmarev 231, 234, 242
China 292
Chirac 72, 233
Chomsky 283
Christensen 21
Christianity 71
Civic Education Project (see also *CEP*) 160
civil society 71
Clark 94, 127, 277
Clayton 104
Coate 257
Cohen 21
Coimbra group 129
Cold War 73, 74, 230, 238, 282
College de France 77
Collins 136, 269, 286
Commission (see also *European Commission*) 12, 14, 24, 27, 28, 31–33, 36, 38, 69, 88, 92, 101, 106, 111, 117–119, 130, 137, 158, 169, 187, 200, 201, 203, 228, 235, 247, 253–255, 260, 264, 270, 274, 283, 285, 291–293
Community Programmes 197, 201–203
commodification 34–36, 97, 256–259, 262
Continental Europe 34, 105, 228
convergence 31, 76, 88, 89, 97, 98, 119, 125, 127, 145, 146, 213, 253, 290
Coombs 229, 230
Corcuff 83
Cowan 144
Crance 84
Craven 143
credit system 30,49, 147, 157, 163, 179, 218
credit transfer 20, 30, 119, 142, 143, 147, 154, 172, 178, 218, 239
culture 74, 79, 92, 93, 105, 117, 120, 121, 123, 125, 135–137, 150, 210, 212, 221, 232, 240, 242, 256, 257, 271, 285, 296
Currie 90
Czarniawska 21, 43, 54, 65
Czech Republic 100–102
Dahrendorf 281
Dale 252, 262
De Gaulle 72
Dearing 144, 260
decentralization 109

Deely 269
Delanty 72
Delbanco 4, 16
De Lillo 274
Delsol 278, 279, 282, 287
Demirer 207
Denmark 24, 117, 198
Diploma Supplement 31, 47, 170, 174, 264
Dolowitz 21
Dore 286
Drechsler 118
Durand 78
Dybesland 28
Eagleton 272
EAIE 142
Eamets 130
Eastern Europe 10, 88, 102–104, 106, 107, 111, 135, 285
economics 51, 130, 134, 162, 172, 232, 237, 247, 284, 292
economy 22, 69, 92, 96, 98–101, 103–105, 109, 110, 117, 126, 127, 130, 200, 211, 232, 234, 236, 247, 252, 253, 255, 261, 262, 265, 279, 285, 287, 293
ECTS (see also *European Credit Transfer System*) 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 47, 49, 52, 55, 119, 142, 143, 146–148, 151, 153, 156–165, 178–180, 203, 218, 219, 256, 293
Ehala 124
EHEA (see also *European Higher Education Area*) 88, 92, 93, 96–98, 101, 104, 106, 107, 110–112, 143, 144, 146, 252, 256
Eisenhower 229
Eliste 139
Elkana 277
Enders 90, 108, 110
Enderun 187
English 31, 58, 76–79, 84, 124, 125, 220, 273
ENIC/NARIC 173
Enlightenment 70, 282
ERA (see also *European Research Area*) 25, 72, 88, 90, 92–94, 96, 101, 104–106, 110, 121, 123, 146, 151, 204, 205, 211, 223, 232, 245, 279, 288
ERASMUS 60, 122, 137, 142, 146, 170, 178, 202, 203, 255, 264
ESIB (see also *National Unions of Students in Europe*) 142, 251, 252, 260–265
Esping-Andersen 96
Estonia 100–102, 117–119, 121, 123–126, 128, 131, 136–138
Estonian Bar Association 131
Estonian Business School 117, 125, 128, 129
EU (see also *European Union*) 24, 38, 70, 72, 79, 82, 87, 88, 90, 91, 93, 98, 100, 101, 103–105, 108–111, 117, 119, 121, 122, 125, 130, 131, 137, 143, 169, 178, 190, 196–201, 203, 213, 215, 247, 253, 262, 264, 265, 289, 290, 294
Europe 14–17, 19, 20, 22–24, 26, 28, 29, 32, 34, 37, 38, 48, 55, 69, 71–74, 79, 82–85, 87, 88, 92–99, 102–107, 110–115, 117–119, 122, 123, 126, 128, 129, 132, 135–138, 142, 144, 145, 148, 151, 152, 158, 161, 162, 165, 185–187, 189, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 212, 218, 220, 225, 227, 228, 230, 231, 232, 234, 237, 238, 239, 242, 243, 246, 247, 251, 252, 255–258, 260, 262, 264, 269, 271, 274, 285, 292, 293, 295–297
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (see also *EURASHE*) 142
European Commission (see also *Commission*) 69, 88, 92, 106, 118, 137, 158, 169,187, 203, 228, 235, 247, 260, 261, 264, 270, 274
European Council 96
European Credit Transfer System (see also *ECTS*) 20, 30, 142, 178, 218, 239
European Cultural Convention 14
European Economic Community 142
European Higher Education Area (see also *EHEA*) 24, 34, 47, 50, 69,

87–89, 96, 97, 101, 107, 112, 121, 143, 144, 147, 209, 219, 221, 237, 252, 287
European integration 24, 71–73, 88, 90, 92, 119, 231
European Research Area (see also *ERA*) 69, 87–89, 94, 103, 146, 254
European Social Forum (see also *ESF*) 250
European social model 104, 108, 109
European Union (see also *EU*) 22, 57, 58, 71, 72, 77, 79, 89, 94, 100, 104, 108, 111, 169, 232, 233, 240, 247, 253
European University Association (see also *EUA*) 142, 202, 235, 261, 263, 296
Europeanisation 19, 22, 23, 34, 72, 73, 118, 142, 153, 255
EURYDICE 35, 37
evaluative state 297
faculty 70, 73,79, 95, 118, 145, 151–155, 159, 160, 169, 178, 179, 188, 197, 201, 206, 217, 218, 239
Fairclough 255
Fedotova 241
Filippov 233, 240
Filliatreau 80
Fine 31, 107, 255
Finheec 52, 53
Finland 44–57, 59, 61–63, 65, 129, 198
Forr 33
FOSIM 158, 159
Foucault 296, 297
Framework Programmes 23
France 70–75, 77, 78, 80–83, 91, 122, 142, 144, 145, 292
Francophone 75, 76, 78, 79
Frankel 73
Frau-Meigs 74
Fry 145
Fukuyama 300
Fuller 163, 282
Gallie 113
Gamkrelidze 225
Garrett 279
GATT 74
Gellner 285, 298
Georgia 210–225
Georgian Technical University 215, 218
German model 110, 188, 214
Germany 87, 90, 122, 142, 144, 145, 188, 234
Ghosh 130, 133
Gibbons 301
Giske 34
globalization 72, 219, 224
Gonzáles 228, 293
Gornitzka 32
Granovetter 134, 255
Graz Convention 88
Graz Declaration 93, 146
Great Britain 23, 228, 234
Greece 100, 149, 190, 198, 200
Green Paper 27, 34, 38
Grigg 79
Güçlü 194, 195
Guilén 84
GULag 231, 273
Habermas 296
Hackl 35, 141, 145
Haefliger 277
Hansen 33
harmonization 113
Harvey 257
Haskins 17
Haug 127, 176, 180, 183
Havel 71
Hay 253, 254, 263
hegemony 76, 77
Held 142, 145, 188, 192, 253, 260
Hemerijck 113
Héretier 39
Hernes Commission 27, 31
Higher Education Council (see also *YÖK*) 185, 189, 191, 194, 201
Hoffman 43
Holy See 88, 158
Homo Academicus 73
Hostaker 66
Houghton 101
Hudson 252
Huisman 290, 291
human capital 131–134, 210, 255, 262

Humboldtian 44, 145, 187, 206, 294
Hungary 100–102
Huusko 60, 63
identity 70–72, 78, 119–126, 191, 195, 205, 231, 234, 241, 265, 276
Ifversen 72
Ile de France 80
Ilf 244, 245
IMF (see also *International Monetary Fund*) 151
India 292
intellect 196, 270, 275, 278, 280, 281, 284, 288, 298, 299
intellectual 2–8, 70, 71, 73, 76–78, 204–206, 212, 225, 240–242, 270–291, 293–299
internal market 8, 12, 14, 22
International Monetary Fund (see also *IMF*) 231, 285
Ireland 198
irony 6, 270, 274
Irzik 196, 197
Italy 142, 234
Jacoby 278
Janev 143
Japan 55, 96, 112
Joerges 21
Johnes 296, 297
Johnson 134
Johnston 103
Joint Declaration (see also *Bologna Declaration*) 13
Justice and Development Party 185
Jyväskylä 53, 55
Kachkachishvili 216
Kafka 272, 298
Kankaala 52
Kant 16
Kara-Murza 240
Karjahärm 125
Katz 4
Kaukonen 66
Kelsey 264, 265
Kivinen 301
Knight 256
knowledge 14, 16, 23, 34, 54, 59, 69, 76, 87, 88, 91, 92, 94, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 108, 110, 120, 121, 123, 130, 131, 133, 134, 148, 155, 156, 159, 212, 216, 220, 224, 231, 232, 234, 241, 244, 245, 252, 253, 255, 261, 262, 265, 270–276, 278–284, 286, 290, 292, 294, 298, 299
knowledge society 14, 94, 96, 231, 247, 275, 276
Kogan 54
Kolnai 294
Kom 76
Kosovo 149
Kroos 15, 121
Krueger 54
Kutinlahti 66
Kwiek 10, 104, 105, 113, 114
Kwok 133
Kymlicka 123
Kyrgyzstan 238
labor market 27, 35, 47, 49, 58, 61, 63, 65, 90, 92, 104, 117, 118, 122–126, 130, 131, 132, 134, 164, 170, 175, 177, 187, 201, 202, 211, 212, 217, 221, 224, 237, 262, 263, 286
Langan 292, 295
Larson
Latour 21
Latvia 100, 129
Leamnson 144
learning 3, 4, 6–9,13, 15, 25, 26, 31, 47, 50, 73, 98, 103, 118, 120–122, 125–129, 134, 136, 137, 141, 143–149, 151, 153, 155–156, 158, 160–165, 170, 179, 192, 210, 212, 214–216, 219–221, 232, 241, 242, 259, 262, 270, 272, 285, 288, 294, 298
legitimacy 37, 69, 126, 295, 298
Lehikoinen 46
Lemola 66
Lenin 123, 246, 271, 285
Leonardo (see also *Leonardo da Vinci*) 22, 201
Leonardo da Vinci (see also *Leonardo*) 201
Lepenies 301
Leterre 85
Levi 5, 299

Levy 101, 103
lifelong learning 13, 47, 147, 170, 210, 214, 259, 285, 294
Light 4, 15, 88, 89, 120, 143, 144, 164, 185, 196, 203, 213, 234, 252, 254, 256, 260, 262, 265, 281, 283
Lisbon Objectives 253, 254, 255, 262
Lisbon Strategy 2, 3, 5, 96, 108
Lithuania 101, 227
Luik 119
Luiker 139
Lukichev 230
Luxembourg 113, 198
Maassen 24
Maastricht 72, 169
Maastricht Treaty 10, 72
Macedonia 5, 9, 88, 91, 101, 141, 143, 149–152, 156–161, 163–165
Macpherson 139
Magalhaes 89, 262
Magna Charta 10–12, 88, 91–95, 101, 142, 197, 243, 288
Mannheim 280, 281
March 21, 24, 81, 131, 154, 157, 162, 212, 274
Marga 95
Markovits 73
Marrot 78
Marsh 21
Marshall Plan 188
Master 9, 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 55, 58, 59, 63, 77, 143, 147, 154, 170, 176–179, 181, 192, 215, 217, 243, 285, 286
McConnell 132
McKenna 220
McLuhan 79
Medrese 187
Melville 235–237, 239–244
Meri 119
Meunier 74
Miclea 153, 164
Middle East 206, 210
Midré 33
ministry of Education 26, 46–48, 51–53, 63–65, 150, 152, 157, 158
Ministry of Justice 131
Mjøs Commission 24, 28, 32–34
Mobility 12, 13, 20, 24, 25, 31, 47, 48, 56, 59, 60, 68, 69, 71, 80–82, 90, 95, 103, 110, 111, 117, 119, 122, 132, 134, 142, 143, 146, 147, 153, 159, 164, 169–171, 173, 178–180, 210, 214, 217, 219, 220, 237, 242, 247, 252, 270, 281, 285
Modernity 261, 265
Moguerou 85
Monaco 11
Morgan 150–152
Moscow 123, 211, 233, 234, 235, 241, 245
Musselin 73
Myles 113
Naidoo 256
Napoleonic 8, 72
National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (see also *NEAA*) 173, 174, 180–182
National Unions of Students in Europe (see also *ESIB*) 142, 251, 252, 260–265
NEAA (see also 180
Neave 6, 34, 73, 83, 90, 106, 117, 228, 230, 231, 275, 283, 285, 286, 288–290, 294, 295, 297
Neiminen
Nelson 126
neo-liberal 77, 231, 262
Netherlands 77, 111, 204, 257
Newman 298
Newson 90
Niglas 124
Nkot 75
NOKUT (see also *Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education*) 25, 32, 35
Nõmman 138
Nordic dimension 24
Nordic mobility 24
Nordic region 24
Nordic societies 24
Norway 14, 19, 20, 22–25, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38

Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (see also *NOKUT*) 25, 32, 35
Nybom 5, 7, 16
Nyborg 34, 221
Ockley 282, 283
OECD (see also *Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development*) 28, 34, 76, 93, 99, 101, 110, 111, 251, 253–255, 258, 261, 263, 291
Okri 286, 287
Olsen 7, 21, 22, 24, 34
Öncü 189
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (see also *OECD*) 28, 34, 76, 93, 99, 101, 110, 111, 251, 253–255, 258, 261, 263, 291
Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (see also *OSCE*) 158, 251
Orwell 272, 273
OSCE (see also *Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe*) 158, 251
Östling 40
Ottoman Empire 187, 188, 190, 203
Ottosen Commission 27
Oxford 8, 259
Özbudun 207
Özkan 204
Özuğurlu 207
Pagani 267
Panopticon 269, 294, 296
Paré 85
Passmore 277
Patten 8
Paul 1
Peck 262
Pelevin 272
Pennanen 54
Periphery 7, 15, 19, 22, 28, 38, 70, 71, 76, 80, 125, 188, 192, 220
Perkins 211
Petrov 244, 245
Ph.D. 26
Philosophy 4, 84, 151, 153, 155, 159, 160, 163, 164, 276
Pierson 96, 104
Plato 145
Poland 100–102, 198, 199, 260
policy 3, 13–15, 19–25, 28–32, 35–38, 43–50, 53, 59, 62–65, 70, 73, 75, 82, 88, 92, 98, 100, 102, 107, 118, 119, 121–123, 127, 136, 137, 175, 191, 198, 210, 211, 213, 216, 219, 229, 233, 238, 242, 247, 253–256, 258, 260–265, 272, 275, 279, 280, 284, 291
Polytechnic 44, 45, 49, 50
Pontusson 104
Portugal 100, 102, 198
Pötsönen 54
Prague 13, 34, 35, 44, 47, 48, 88, 96, 97, 101, 170, 214, 227, 235, 258
Prague Communiqué 34, 35, 97
private higher education 102, 103, 112, 277
Process (see also *Bologna Process*) 3–5, 8–15, 19–22, 24, 28–39, 43, 44, 46–49, 52–65, 68, 87–107, 109–112, 117–120, 122, 125–129, 131–134, 136, 141, 143, 145–148, 151–154, 158, 164, 180, 197, 201, 210, 213–214, 217–225, 227, 228, 230, 231, 233–244, 246, 247, 251–254, 257, 258, 261, 262, 264, 265, 270, 274, 283, 286, 288–294, 296–299
Protectionism 98
Prozumenshschikov 249
public good 34, 35, 73, 106, 262, 263
Putin 227, 233, 238, 274
qualification 137, 169, 170, 175, 176, 215, 217
quality assurance 13, 20, 25, 32, 33, 36, 38, 47, 49, 50, 60, 61, 63–65, 127, 143, 146, 147, 170, 180, 181, 211, 214, 215, 217, 221–223, 240, 256, 258, 294–297
Quality Reform 19, 21, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 34–38
Rado 114

RAE (see also *Research and Assessment Exercise*) 114
Rakhmanov 274
Ramanana-Rahary 80
Ramm 3
Readings 270, 282
Reichert 89, 91, 96, 104–107, 110–112, 288, 290
Research and Assessment Exercise (see also *RAE*) 144
Roberts 297
Román 149
Romania 14, 100–102
Rose Revolution 19
Rothschild 128,129
Russia 5, 9, 11, 15, 88, 91, 1001, 102, 128, 129, 158, 211, 214, 228, 229, 231–238, 240–242, 244, 246–248, 273, 274, 296
Ruutsoo 119, 137
Ryan 281
Ryzhkov 233
Saakashvili 209
Sabatier 236
Sackrey 281
Sadlak 108
Şahin 192, 193
Said 2, 274
Salzburg Seminar 217
Santos 261
Savickaya 233
Scholte 256, 261
Schott 76
Scott 114, 301
Searle 270
Sebald 273
Second World War 188
Şenatalar 192
Senegal 75
Sennett 285
Serbia & Montenegro 88, 101, 151, 158
Sevón 54, 65
Sévon 21, 144
Sewton-Smith 288
Sharvashidze 225
Shattock 144
Sheehan 101
Shils 281, 283, 287
Shore 188, 297
Simmonds 25
Sirk 125
Sivertsen 24
Slagstad 33
Slancheva 169
Slovenia 100, 101, 151, 272
Smallwood 6
Smeby 23, 24
Smith 72, 253
Smolin 229
Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences 273
social field 64, 65
Socrates 22, 137, 201, 203
Solow 256
Sorbonne Declaration 87, 101, 142, 152, 170, 288
Southeast Europe 151, 161
South-East European University 150
soviet era 123, 211, 223, 232
Soviet Union 73, 121, 123, 126, 209, 211, 212, 220, 229, 230, 238, 242, 245, 278, 290, 293
Sputnik 231
St. Kliment Ohridski University 150
Stakeholder 264, 276
Stanley 139
Stensaker 32, 35
Stoer 262
Subetto 232, 234, 242
Sulkunen 54
Sweden 24, 77, 129
Tallinn Pedagogical University 124
Tanbay 196
Tauch 89, 91, 96, 104–107, 110–112, 127, 176, 180, 183, 288, 290
Tbilisi State University 215–218
teaching 3, 11, 25, 31, 52, 54, 57–59, 61–63, 69, 81, 83, 87, 89, 102, 110, 119, 122, 143–146, 149, 151, 153–165, 171, 179, 180, 182, 187, 191, 198, 199, 203, 210, 212, 215, 217–220, 224, 240, 241, 297
Teather 26, 54, 109, 137, 142, 145, 154, 210, 217

Teeple 96
Teichler 6, 82, 283, 284, 290
Tekeli 187, 192, 193
TEMPUS 158, 159, 170, 178, 215
tertiary education 34, 98, 99, 119
Terzioğlu 199
Theisens 257
Tickell 262
Tiido 119
Todorov 172
Tomusk 1, 4, 5, 14, 95, 100, 103, 106, 126, 213, 228, 232, 234, 242, 254, 258, 276, 286, 289, 291, 296
Totomanova 179, 180
translation 20–22, 32, 35–39, 44, 65, 77, 163
Treiman 140
Trends 21, 29, 32, 33, 35–37, 72, 81, 88, 90, 91, 96, 99, 102, 104, 105, 108, 111, 112, 134, 136, 273, 279, 288
Trondal 23
Trotsky 271, 288
Trowler 43, 54
truth 16, 100, 110, 275, 276, 279, 280, 285, 289, 296, 298
Tuning 4, 98, 107, 286, 293–295
Turkey 9, 10, 14, 100, 185–193, 195–205, 220
UK (see also *United Kingdom*) 87, 274, 292
underclass 77
UNESCO (see also *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*) 93, 95, 110, 142, 150, 154, 158, 211, 251, 261
UNESCO-CEPES (see also *CEPES*) 95, 150, 154, 158
uniformity 30, 98
United Kingdom (see also *UK*) 87, 274, 292
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see also *UNESCO*) 251
University of Luton 259
University of Tartu 118, 125, 128, 129
University of Tirana 295
Uppstrøm
USA 3, 76, 96, 99, 104, 112, 187, 206, 215, 220, 230
Uzelac 150, 153, 157, 160
Vabo 66
Vaht 140
Välimaa 44–46, 51, 60, 63
Van Damme 97
Van der Wende 105
Velinova 183
Verheugen 121
Vorobyaninov 244
Wacquant 76, 77
Wagenaar 148, 228, 293
Wallerstein 269, 279, 283, 284
Weiler 104, 298
Weirs-Jenssen
Weltanschauung 193
Wende 105, 290, 291
Wendt 23
Western Europe 29, 99, 103, 106, 107, 111, 112, 133, 135, 136, 149, 151, 165, 220, 238
White 1, 24–26, 33, 38, 128, 129, 232, 236, 246, 274
Williams 257
Williamson 255
Winkler 302
Wolin 271
Wong 121
World Bank 9, 92, 93, 98, 99, 101, 102, 110, 111, 135, 151, 158, 255, 275
World Social Forum (see also *WSF*) 260
Wright 297
WSF (see also *World Social Forum*) 260, 261
Yetkin 194
YÖK (see also *Higher Education Council*) 185, 189, 191–196, 198–201
Yugoslavia 149, 150
Yuzhuo 5, 10, 88, 151, 153, 164, 213, 214, 226, 228, 289, 290, 293
Zgaga 5, 10, 88, 151, 153, 164, 213, 214, 228, 289, 290, 293

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