Chapter 11
Curriculum Trends in European Higher Education: The Pursuit of the Humboldtian University Ideas

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Introduction

From the end of the 1990s, the Ministers in the European higher education area have sought to develop an instrument enabling Europe to educate employable and flexible citizens and to coordinate qualifications for a European knowledge society (Bologna Declaration 1999, p. 1). This ambition is based on the argument from 1998 that "the segmentation of the European higher education sector in Europe was outdated and harmful" (Bologna Beyond 2010, 2009, p. 3). The way traditional universities and academic institutions were organized and managed, and the way academics taught, were seen as malfunctioning in terms of the public responsibility and the challenges in contemporary societies (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Framework 2005, p. 23). In order to cope with social and cultural challenges encountered in today's Europe, and in order to secure Europe's competitive strength in a global market (ibid. p. 189), higher education had to open up and become more attentive to the interests of employers and the needs of students as learners in a lifelong learning perspective.

Our focus in this chapter is on how the restructuring of European higher education is manifested in curriculum policies with particular interest in the consequences for universities. We analyze initiatives taken by the European Union (EU) and the Bologna Process. The three curriculum themes that organize our analysis concern educational purposes, educational knowledge and notions of students.

Research shows that supra/transnational policy initiatives like the EU and the Bologna Process are understood and handled differently by the national states (Karseth and Solbrekke 2010; Powell and Soga 2011). Nevertheless, aspects characterized as "appropriate" curriculum design in higher education at the European

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Higher Education policy text level are of significance, because they tell us which intentions and goals are given priority and brought to the fore, and which are left aside. Even though restricting the analysis to policy texts does not allow us to determine how the defined goals and intentions are followed up in practice in concrete programs, research has revealed that "policy words are not mere rhetoric; they are policy" or, at least, that "policies are textual interventions into practice" (Ball 1993, p. 12). Studies of prescriptions are therefore important in order to capture the cultural and social context of education on the level above educational practice. The implications of curriculum policy as expressed in European higher education policy documents *do* influence national policies and, to some extent, regulate the daily teaching and learning practices in higher education institutions.

As Ravinet shows, almost all European countries, both within and outside the EU, participate in the Bologna Process or what she labels the Bologna game. "Policies may not necessarily be the same," she argues, but "it is no longer possible to create national higher education policies that are anti-Bologna" (Ravinet 2008, p. 354). Although the Bologna Process is a voluntary process and EU initiatives should confirm to the principle of subsidiarity[1] (European Parliament Council 2008, point 15), recommendations are produced that are legitimizing forces. The normative pressure then, according to Liesener, "makes it advisable to participate voluntarily in this kind of governance – who wants to be at the bottom of the European table regarding education?" (Liesner 2012, p. 297).

The texts studied in this chapter are documents produced by the EU and its agencies, the Bologna Process and the European University Association (EUA). Below the main text are listed:

- The *Bologna Communiques* from the Ministerial Conferences (1999–2012, every second year). The last communique was signed by ministers of higher education from 47 European countries. In addition we have also looked into two Bologna documents prepared for the Ministerial Conferences.
- Conclusions from *the Council of the European Union* and the *European Commission*. The European Council consists of Heads of State or Government of the Members States (27). The commission is the executive body of EU.
- Documents produced by agencies under the *Directorate General for Education and Culture*, the executive branch of the European Union responsible for among other things education. We have looked into the Tuning project and the ECTS users' Guide.
- One document produced by the European University Association (EUA). EUA is the largest and most comprehensive organization representing universities in

[1] Cf. Article 149 of the treaty on European union and of the treaty establishing the European community "the community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between member states and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the member states for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity (European Union 2006).

Europe. One text produced by the predecessor of EUA, the Magna Charta of the European Universities.

The selected documents analyzed are limited in number as compared with the myriad of documents published, yet they are of high significance and are seen as containing the main constitutive aspects of European policy on higher education with particular relevance to the curriculum. In addition to the present analysis of the policy texts, we draw on vast scholarly literature on the policy of higher education in Europe and our own previous research in that field.

In the final part of the chapter, we argue that the identified new language of curriculum represents a final break with the main ideas of the Humboldtian University both with regard to teaching and learning in higher education and the way in which knowledge is framed and governed.

Before we present our analysis, we briefly address the position of curriculum in European higher education as well as some characteristics of the higher education system in Europe.

Higher Education and the Curriculum

In most European countries, we find a wide range of institutions that offer short-cycle professional and vocationally oriented programs, but as pointed out by Kyvik and Lepori (2010), the status of these programs as higher education institutions is relatively new. After the 1960s, Western European countries gradually developed dual and later binary systems by upgrading professional schools as well as by establishing new types of institutions. The process of upgrading led to what in the research literature has been labelled "academic drift" characterized by an effort to acquire some of the basic features of a traditional university (ibid.). Thus, what is labelled higher education today consists of faculty and programs that represent not only different academic cultures, but dramatically different historic traditions and cultures related to practice, vocationalism and conceptions of knowledge (Amaral et al. 2002). The borders between institutional types of the higher education system have become blurred. However, we address curriculum changes with the university sector in mind.

Curriculum as a field of study has not played a central role in the research literature in higher education in Europe (Karseth 1994). However, as universities have expanded and moved from elite to mass institutions, the planning of these institutions, and thereby the management of the curriculum, has gained more research interest (e.g. Solbrekke and Sugrue 2014). Still, the academic staff most often regards curriculum and knowledge production in universities as internal or even private matters. Slaughter (2002) notes that the dominant view has been that "knowledge makes its way into the curricula as part of a lengthy but rational and linear process" (p. 261). She criticizes higher education curricular scholarship for not paying sufficient attention to social movements, the political imperatives of the professional class or the influences of external entities.

Slaughter's argument may also be understood as indicating a lack of awareness of the tensions that may emerge between what Ensor (2004) has described as contesting curriculum discourses in universities. One of the distinctions she makes concerns two kinds of discursive orientations. The first represents an *introjective orientation* as typical of the traditional disciplinary curriculum discourse. The rationale underpinning this discourse is that we rely on an epistemological and cognitive legitimation with reference to the program's relation to the scientific and intellectual *qualities of the discipline*. This discourse develops primarily among stakeholders within the university. The second curriculum discourse represents a *projective orientation*, meaning that we rely on a social legitimation pointing to the *utility of the program* with primary references to external functions (in work life) and stakeholders outside the university. While these discourses foreground different aims of higher education and emphasize different approaches when it comes to how education is being legitimated, they additionally function as useful analytical concepts for us in this chapter when it comes to identifying shifts in the rhetoric on curriculum and embedded rationales.

At an overall EU policy level, the *concept* of curriculum is not central. However, in the documents from the biennial Ministerial Bologna Conferences, the main objectives and action lines express clear expectations with regard to curricular reforms. This is visible in the Communiqué from the London meeting where the Ministers urged the higher education institutions (including universities) to develop partnerships with employers in the ongoing process of curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes (London Communiqué 2007). Likewise, the Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué (2009) pointed out the importance of empowering individual learners and new approaches to teaching and learning, and demonstrated that the ministers expect a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner and the development of flexible and more individually tailored education paths and a projective orientation toward the interests of employers and the global world. A key characteristic of the discourse is modularization of the curriculum and descriptions of modules in terms of outcomes that can be measured, matched and exchanged as part of a process of accumulating credit toward academic qualifications.

In the following, we dig into the three selected curriculum dimensions, educational purposes, educational content and the notions of students, in order to identify and discuss the implications of more projective orientations in the Bologna Process and European higher education policy.

Educational Purposes: Toward Employability and Lifelong Learning

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, national universities of Europe became distinct from each other (Torstendahl 1993). Educational historians have traditionally referred to the "Humboldtian," the "Napoleonic" and the "Anglo-Saxon" traditions within European higher education. These traditions reflect different missions

of higher education. While the Humboldtian tradition embraces academic freedom, research and *Bildung,*[2] the approach of the Napoleonic tradition highlights high-level vocational training. Within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, personality development through liberal education was at the core (Sam and van der Sijde 2014). Having a basic understanding of these traditions is important in order to explore how initiatives taken on a European level are perceived. For instance, it gives explanations to understanding national differences with regard to boundary drawing between vocational training and university education, and how the purposes of higher education are formulated (Karseth and Solbrekke 2010). Nevertheless, in this chapter, it is the Humboldtian tradition that will be emphasized since Humboldt has become one of the most important references in defining a research-oriented university not only in German-speaking Europe, but in most of the modern European universities. In many ways, he and his followers conceptualized the modern European university while institutionalizing research and scholarship and transforming the way we perceive and think of universities.

The "Old" Humboldtian Ideas: Academic Freedom and Bildung at the Core

William von Humboldt (1767–1835) believed strongly in individual freedom and argued in favor of a university model where the professors were free to teach what and how they wanted to teach and students were free to choose their subjects and professors (Lehr- und Lernfreiheit). In contrast with traditional education and schooling at that time, this implied a radical break with any form of a prescribed curriculum (Ash 2006). According to Humboldt's ideas, intellectual institutions should "devote themselves to the elaboration of the uncontrived substance of intellectual and moral culture, growing from an uncontrived inner necessity" (Humboldt 1970, p. 243). Furthermore, the primacy of "pure" science (*Bildung durch Wissenschaft*) over specialized professional training (*Ausbildung, Spezialschulmodell*) was crucial. Humboldt saw science and scholarship as processes of inquiry – "not a

[2] Bildung is derived from bilden, to form or in some instances, to cultivate. It is conventionally translated as "education" although this does not cover the connotations the word has in German. Therefore, we leave the term in German. However, Gert Biesta's way to approach the concept seems fruitful to remind us of the complexity and situatedness of the concept: 'The concept of *Bildung* brings together the aspirations of all those who acknowledge – or hope – that education is more than the simple acquisition of knowledge and skills, that it is more than simply getting things "right," but that it also has to do with nurturing the human person, that it has to do with individuality, subjectivity, in short, with "becoming and being somebody." (Biesta 2002, p. 343). From 1810 Bildung was a key concept in German university teaching and education where the main purposes were to give the students advanced teaching based on research, ability to carry out scientific research on their own, and a large amount of scientific and philosophical knowledge within all academic disciplines such that they could act with dignity as members of the learned and academic society (Olesen 2010, p. 1).

finished thing to be found, but something unfinished and perpetually sought after," as he put it. In other words, this was not the repetition of things to be learned from textbooks, but an approach to learning, an attitude of mind, a skill and a capacity to think rather than specialized knowledge (Humboldt 1809/1990, p. 274, here from Ash 2008, pp. 1–42). Another core principal was the unity of science and scholarship. There was no fundamental distinction in principle between the natural sciences and the humanities because the concept of *Wissenschaft* applies to both. Embedded in these ideas is the need for universities to keep a distance from the market in order to encourage and maintain a critical academic awareness of the balance between fundamental and applied research and its relationship with education.

Toward New Ideas of Universities in the Wake of the Knowledge Economy

Humboldt's ideas are visible in the Magna Charta of 1988 signed in Bologna by 430 rectors of European universities. This one-and-a-half page document underscores four important principles for the university: the university as an autonomous institution, the inseparability of teaching and research, the freedom of teaching and research and the notion that a university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition (Magna Charta Observatory on University Values and Fundamental Rights 1988). The Magna Charta text resembles in important ways the Humboldtian ideas of the university with its strong emphasis on *institutional autonomy* and *academic freedom* of the faculties as well as its responsibility to define and disseminate knowledge while retaining the capacity to question, to search for truth and to adapt to circumstances.[3] However, 34 years after the 430 rectors of European universities signed the Magna Charta document, the European University Association (EUA) with 850 members from 47 countries (institutions and national organizations) gave the following input statement to the Bologna Ministerial Conference in April 2012:

> Europe's universities are increasingly acting as strategic motors of regional development, collaborating with a range of stakeholders including business and industry, local communities, national and regional administrations. It is crucial to provide further encouragement to universities to become fully involved in the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation, as well as in promoting interdisciplinarity and entrepreneurship. The resulting improvement in skills and competences is essential for enhancing the employment prospects of both traditional students and lifelong learners. In this context, EUA underlines the importance to universities of being able to track the progress of their students and graduates

[3] Although the semantics of this text also includes a concern about the role of the societal responsibility of the university, e.g., "they must also serve society as a whole; and that the cultural, social and economic future of society requires, in particular, a considerable investment in continuing education", we do not see this text as an merger between a Humboldtian discourse and a service discourse the way Fairclough and Wodak (2008) argue because the dominant vocabulary clearly can be connected to the core of Humboldtian ideas.

> as part of their institutional impact assessment procedures in order to promote better learning, as well as provide improved and more targeted management and services. (EUA 2012, p. 4)

Even though the meaning of "interdisciplinarity" and "entrepreneurship" is left to individual institutions to interpret, the language used by the EUA suggests a new orientation of universities' missions or purposes. It situates the universities in a very different way, and the meaning of academic freedom is far from what was stated by the rectors in the Magna Charta text, which argued that, for the university "to meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all policy authority and economic power" (Magna Charta Observatory 1988; see also Corbett and Henkel 2013). While the Magna Charta text reflects a dominant discursive orientation which can be described as introjective and hence resembles Humboldt's emphasis on academic freedom, the EUA quotation represents a projective orientation that emphasizes meeting the needs of the labor market and the students; thus, it focuses on meeting students' needs by providing them with the skills of employable graduates.

As Teichler (2011) argues, the policy from this perspective is that higher education should subordinate itself to the presumed needs of the employment system in order to provide adequate preparation for employability and lifelong learning for the world of work in the "knowledge economy." As underlined by the Council of the European Union,

> …progress has to be made to improve the identification of training needs, increase the labour market relevance of education and training, facilitate individuals' access to lifelong learning opportunities and guidance, and ensure smooth transitions between the worlds of education, training and employment. (Council of the European Union 2011: s. 2)

The core driving force for modernization of and investment in Europe's higher education remains preparation for a labor market – a force motivated by the concern of lagging behind in economic competition – because "Europe is no longer setting the pace in the global race for knowledge and talent, while emerging economies are rapidly increasing their investment in higher education" (ibid. p. 2). According to this rationale, the key point is to design curricula that promote the earning of competencies and skills that are needed in today's and tomorrow's economy. This represents a drift away from longer term needs of the society, such as ensuring for the provision of important centers of knowledge and research, to more immediate work to meet market needs; indeed, the text of *Bologna Beyond* (2009) notes that "there is a need to encourage a more systematic dialogue between higher education institutions and employers" (ibid., p.10). Although the purposes of today's higher education are manifold, encouraging and developing a seamless transition from higher education to work life seems to overshadow other dimensions. As Žiljak (2013) notes, the policy of lifelong learning bridges the distinctive positions of academic and vocational tertiary education as the university has become more vocationalized since their purposes "merge" in their common concern with employability.

While academic freedom is emphasized in the Magna Charta text from 1988, the texts produced by leaders of European higher education institutions as well as different European stakeholder groups in the age of the Bologna process, conceptualize teachers in higher education as providers rather than independent scholars. Hence, the academic profession looses power as well as legitimacy with regard to defining the core content and processes of teaching in higher education. We elaborate on this in the next section.

Valuable Knowledge: From Disciplinary Content to Competences

Faculties (academics) in every educational program have always been engaged in debates about what is relevant and valuable knowledge. Such debates are crucial and central to different actors within the institution as they ensure a critical awareness of the dynamic and shifting nature of research and knowledge construction as well as elaborate on what counts as important knowledge within the different disciplines for educational purposes. However, as pointed to above, the increased expectations and engagement by external stakeholders with regard to what the student should learn are relatively new to universities (Karseth and Solbrekke 2010). As a result of new relations and expectations, universities are becoming more involved in instrumental goals (Delanty 2001). Knowledge, Delanty argues, is increasingly being tailored to use rather than being an end in itself.

As mentioned in the introduction, the disciplines have traditionally served as the means of legitimating what counts as valuable knowledge in the university, and the specific skills relevant for a specific profession or occupation constituted the important content of the curriculum of vocational education. As we will show below, the rationale underpinning the strong emphasis on learning outcomes in the Bologna Process is closer to a vocational curriculum model, but the way it is linked to employability moves beyond the traditional vocational curriculum emphasizing specific skills (Karseth 2006). Generic and transformative skills are, as we address below, central in the curriculum discourse of Bologna.

Learning Outcomes as the Core Navigator in Curriculum Planning

Originally, learning outcome statements were characterized by the use of active verbs, expressing categories as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (see Bloom et al. 1956). Although the taxonomies and the emphasis on behavioral objectives have been heavily criticized (ibid.), Bloom's taxonomy is used as a reference point in the Bologna text (Karseth 2008).

Learning outcomes were not mentioned in the original Bologna Declaration from 1999 nor in the Prague Communiqué of 2001. However, beginning with the Berlin Communiqué 2003 until the latest Bucharest Communiqué of 2012, they have appeared regularly. According to Adam (2008), one of the Bologna experts and architects of the European higher education area, European countries are increasingly referring to learning outcomes when setting overall objectives for their education and training systems and when defining and describing qualifications. There is a strong move from focusing on input factors like the duration, location and pedagogical content underpinning a qualification, toward what a learner knows and is actually able to do at the end of a learning process. As a result, "the humble learning outcome has moved from being a peripheral tool to a central device to achieve radical educational reform of European higher education" (ibid., p. 5).

One important initiative to follow up the learning outcomes approach is the so-called Tuning project entitled *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe*. The project, supported by the European Commission, started in 2000 as a project to link the political objectives of the Bologna Process and at a later stage the Lisbon Strategy to the higher educational sector. The Tuning project (2008) was introduced and described with no intention of developing any sort of unified and prescriptive European curricula; rather, it emphasizes the "tuning of educational structures and programs on the basis of diversity and autonomy" (p. 13). Still, the types of knowledge put forward by the project indicate what knowledge is counted valuable and what is measured as important with regard to learning outcomes for the European student in the twenty-first century.

The Belief in Prescriptions as a Means in Curriculum Management

Tuning offers a model for designing, implementing and delivering curricula where definition of learning outcomes/competences is the core navigator for planning. Learning outcomes are prescribed descriptions of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of learning. They may refer to a single course unit, module or period of studies (Tuning 2008, p. 16). Furthermore, competences are distinguished between subject-specific and generic ones. The Tuning project acknowledges subject-specific knowledge and skills, but makes the point that "time and attention should also be devoted to the development of generic competences or transferable skills" (ibid., p. 17). Furthermore, being responsive to the interests and needs of external stakeholders is highlighted. A checklist is also provided with references to competences for curriculum evaluation focusing on the educational process, the educational outcome and the means and facilities required for program delivery (p. 141). Despite the fact that national and institutional diversity and autonomy is emphasized in the text, the checklist appears to turn the Tuning project into a narrow and instrumental tool rather than one that maintains the "independency of academic and subject specialists" (p. 6).

The "new architecture" of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is based on building blocks such as learning outcomes, qualifications frameworks, cycles, quality assurance, credits, recognition and lifelong learning (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Framework 2005) and seen as the main engine in modernization of higher education in Europe. It also legitimates new forms of curriculum management and initiatives like the Tuning project. With this, values and visions that challenge an academic content-driven curriculum are introduced. There seems to be an implicit critique of the traditional disciplinary-based curriculum based on the introjective orientation as this is seen to have limited relevance to students' interests and the requirements of the labor market. A central argument is that new demands of the knowledge-based economy call for significant transformation in higher education, ensuring projective oriented curricula with clearly prescribed learning outcomes. And, as will be illustrated below, these tendencies are embraced by some scholars while others are critical about the changes.

Protagonists' and Antagonists' Views

Etzkowitz and colleagues (2012) see the ongoing Bologna Process as a stepping-stone in the transition from an industrial society to a knowledge society. While highly specialized curricula were appropriate in the industrial society, the knowledge society requires curricula that foster entrepreneurial and inter-cultural capabilities. The authors propose an approach to higher education curriculum design inspired by Cambridge University's Tripos degree and the medieval *Trivium* of grammar, rhetoric and dialectics (logic). The innovative design is labeled the *Novum Trivium* and according to the authors:

> It is intended as an undergraduate curriculum for the Entrepreneurial University and may be an initial step in the transition to an entrepreneurial academic paradigm, by better aligning the university's teaching, research and socio-economic development missions. (p. 146)

According to this new way for higher education, and in order to fulfill the objective of the Bologna Process, Etzkowitz and colleagues argue for a curriculum reform that brings together disciplinary education, entrepreneurship and innovation, and language and culture studies.

However, how knowledge is considered in the European educational policy and what should count as valuable knowledge within such orientation is met by critique. One argument is presented by Tomusk (2007), who reasons that the ongoing process of creating a European Higher Education Area seems to take on an anti-intellectual shape with little space left for the critical intellectuals. The Bologna Process and its Tuning project, Tomusk argues, are "trying to lower existing institutions by reducing higher education qualifications to a laundry list of skills and competencies" (ibid., p. 286). The role of knowledge in these days, Tomusk argues, is to solve our practical problems. Tomusk refers to Bernstein (2000) and his argument that "knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit. Indeed knowledge is not like money, it *is* money…. Knowledge, after nearly a

thousand years is divorced from inwardness and literally dehumanised" (Bernstein 2000, p. 86).

Other sociologists of education offer the critique that, in today's higher education policy, knowledge in the curriculum has been subordinated to learning outcomes (Allais et al. 2009). Consequently, the importance of different kinds of knowledge is ignored. According to Shay (2013), there is a great pressure globally to respond to other agendas than simply those of the disciplines. Shay uses the term "contextual turn" to capture how knowledge is transformed to meet these agendas – a transformation that opens space for strong voices representing stakeholders outside academia.

When reading the policy documents, it becomes certainly clear that knowledge is an important political issue; however, we may question whether the pursuit of a new "architecture" of higher education in Europe should disconnect itself from the discussion of knowledge on the institutional level where the distinctiveness of the educational fields traditionally constitutes the important markers for curriculum development in higher education.

Below we will elaborate how the "architecture" and the European policy effort to ensure access to educational structures and the labor market seem not only to transform knowledge, but also the teaching-learning dimension of curriculum with a specific focus on how students are situated and defined.

The Notion of a Student

How students are viewed and positioned within European higher education institutions has shifted over time (Tight 2013). Moreover, as the notion of a student is contingent on structural, financial and cultural factors, it is difficult to talk about *one* notion of a European student. Acknowledging cultural variations, we will nevertheless argue that there are general tendencies in the EU policy and the Bologna Process that move the notion of a student in specific directions, even though they may be dubious notions or better described as a notion in the nexus of several metaphors, as for example in the nexus between "child", "apprentice," "consumer," "co-producer," "employer," "learner" or "pawn". While Tight demonstrates how transnational policy texts embody more than one clear notion of the student in current higher education, dependent from which level it is viewed, we will look particularly at what notions may be identified in discourses related to curriculum construction at the EU policy and Bologna Process level.

The Student: "Flexible Learner" or "Pawn"?

As demonstrated above, a great ambition of the political involvement as represented by the new EU policy and the Bologna Process has been not only to prescribe *what* students are supposed to learn, but also *how* learning should occur, and the need to

empower the individual learner as exemplified in the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué of 2009:

> We reassert the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes. Student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles. (pp. 3–4)

In order to fulfill this goal, rather detailed guidelines for implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) have been developed (ECTS Users' Guide 2009/2013). These guidelines not only put new commitments on universities, faculties and students, but also regulate the relations between students, teachers and content in new ways:

> Learner-centred learning puts learning at the heart of curriculum design and delivery, and gives learners more choice in content, mode, pace and place of learning. In such a learner-centred approach, institutions have the role of facilitating and supporting learners in shaping their own learning pathways and helping them to build on their individual learning styles and experiences. (p. 9)

In this quotation we find a notion of the student as an *active learner* who is given *great freedom* to define what and how to study while also being supported by faculties. A close interaction with teachers is also indicated in Ministers' Bucharest Communiqué 2012 and the emphasis on "innovative methods of teaching that involve students as active participants in their own learning" (p. 2). Here a notion of a *co-producer* of curriculum is envisioned and we may identify some of the ideals as embedded in a "Humboldtian" shared inquiry approach. Clearly, there are formulations in the text that can be placed within a learning discourse where the autonomy of the individual is essential, resembling the Humboldtian discourse on "Lernfreiheit" as well as its emphasis on critical thinking.

The ECTS User Guide at an overall level additionally supports the idea of freedom to choose when it comes to content, mode, pace and place of learning (p. 13). The strong rhetoric on the learner-centered approach, and the role of institutions and teachers are "to facilitate and support learners in shaping their own learning pathways and helping them to build on their individual learning styles and experiences" (ibid.).

On the other hand, when reading more carefully, the Guide prescribes detailed guidelines on how institutions shall manage students' diverse, flexible and mobile learning paths (e.g. by developing course catalogues, student application forms, learning agreements and transcripts of records, p. 27). Even though other documents, like the Tuning project (2008, pp. 149–150), underline that students (i.e. learners) "can use the credit accumulation system to transfer or 'cash in' credits achieved from work-based learning/different programs within and between educational institutions," the restrictions in the ECTS User Guide prescribes a less flexible system by providing detailed guidelines for how an academic year should be managed and organized around an explicit set of predefined learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and specified number of ECTS credits (p. 28). Embedded here

seems to be a strong belief that the ability to deliver well in advance is a success criterion in the new regime, and that students can do better with better management (c.f. Ramirez 2006).

The question then is whether the policy actually manages to position students as proactive learners, or if they turn them into more passive learners or even worse--as pawns. Even though the policy and discourses open up several notions of a student, we are inclined to agree with Tight (2013) who suggests the notion of the student as a pawn, "someone who is being used for another's purposes" (p. 292), is appropriate from a European perspective. When student- and learner-centered education is used in tandem with learning outcomes within the climate of market-liberal knowledge regimes, and with an increased concern with the immediate usefulness of work, the outcome of the students' learning is measured primarily for its value in the employment market. Since a core ambition in the European policy is to transform Europe into 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 (European Commission 2000), and the dominant rhetoric on the benefit for society is in terms of economic strengthening of societies, this orientation (or new way) indicates a very instrumental purpose of the development of students. The goal is to develop graduates that are flexible and employable, able to enter the arena of work at many points; in this view, the metaphor of students as pawns seems relevant. If this discourse remains predominant, it seems reasonable to argue that the overall purpose of the Bologna Process and the new management system of European curriculum constructions is not to strengthen the Humboldtian ideas, but to make universities more effective in providing society with flexible workers.

European Policy of Higher Education: Creating Hopes and Managing Risks

However, as part of the policy rhetoric we also find a concern with the social dimension of higher education. It may be seen as an integral part of the Bologna Process (Bergen Communiqué 2005) and, as reinforced in the London Communiqué (2007): "…we share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" (p. 5). Nevertheless, the rhetoric has remained on a rather abstract level (Holford 2014), and in line with other researchers' findings (c.f. Tight 2013), the social dimension seems to be ruled out by the employability discourse in the first decade of the Bologna Process. However, in the wake of the European economic crisis, with widening levels of inequality and a sharp rise in youth unemployment, we recognize a shift in the rhetoric, in which a greater emphasis is put on the importance of higher education as a vehicle for fostering social mobility and cohesion (Riddell and Weedon 2014). This is exemplified in the Joint Report from the Council of the Europeans Union and the Commission (2012) where reducing the risk of

drop-outs in higher education is emphasized -- an important purpose followed up in the Bologna Process.

At the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest on 26–27 April 2012, all Ministers agreed to widen the overall access to higher education to increase social inclusion for all European citizens. The text maintains that universities must play a significant role in the solution of the current financial crisis and its damaging societal effects, particularly youth unemployment (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, p. 1). Inclusion of underrepresented groups should be paid increased attention, as shown in the following statement; "…the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, p. 1). Simultaneously, the strong emphasis on a "utilitarian ethos" (cf. Brint 1994) and employability remains, as, for example, the following quotation demonstrates:

> Europe's economic recovery and drive for sustainable growth, including through enhanced research and innovation, are increasingly dependent on its capacity to develop the skills of all its citizens, demonstrating the interdependence of social and economic objectives. In parallel with efforts to improve skills through vocational education and training, high-quality higher education and lifelong learning also have a crucial role to play in enhancing employability and increasing competitiveness, while at the same time promoting the personal and professional development of students and graduates, and stimulating social solidarity and civic engagement. (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, p. 3)

Taken together, both the EU policy and the Bologna Process manage to keep two parallel discourses going – one including a hope for the future and one indicating a way of managing risks related with youth unemployment. Thus the discourse on social inclusion and coherence legitimizes the discourse on immediate utility of higher education for the work market and Europe's competitiveness, because this is understood as the solution to Europe's financial and social crisis. Education for all is the salvation, yet also it appears as a means to regulate teaching and learning approaches as well as curriculum construction in European higher education. It is reason also to ask whether or how the "new architecture" offers the "right" solution for the "untraditional" youth student.

Within the current European higher education policy we have identified contesting discourses moving students toward different roles. Being strongly regulated at the one hand, the student is simultaneously directed more towards the self as a flexible learner who is able to manoeuvre between different contexts of learning, yet also being able to manage time and organise an academic year. In a recent article, Barnett (2011) uses the expression of students as "learning nomads", a conceptualisation that underlines the independency and weak bounds between the student and the higher education institution or programme. Mobility, flexibility, employability as well as strong beliefs in learning rather than education, are at the fore. Whether this is the right "medicine" for managing the risk and diminishing youth unemployment, remains to be seen. We will need empirical studies in the future to see the effect of the current policy. We therefore turn back to what our analysis may indicate with regard to shifting university ideals.

A New Language of Curriculum: Toward the Final Demise of the Humboldtian University Ideas?

The analysis in this chapter displays changes in the European policy of higher education and in particular universities that stand in sharp contrast to the ideas and principles of the Humboldtian tradition. Based on our analysis and discussion of the three curriculum themes – educational purposes, educational knowledge and the notion of students – we ask whether European universities are heading toward the final demise of this tradition.

According to Stavros Moutsios (2013), the answer is clear: academic autonomy, as a European creation, is being dissolved under the Bologna Process with regard to defining the purpose, the content and the pedagogic mode of higher education and institutional self-governance. However, other authors conclude otherwise and suggest that there are several possible links to be found between the ideas underpinning Humboldt and Bologna (Dysthe and Webler 2010, p. 23; Serrano-Velarde and Stensaker 2010).

Our analysis takes the curriculum policy as the point of departure and shows that the policy of today's Europe differs radically from the characteristics of the Humboldtian principles presented at the beginning of this chapter. First, the curriculum discourse advocated in the policy documents represents a *language* that sees higher education as a motor for economic growth. Universities should demonstrate their direct contribution to the national economy by offering educational programs that enhance learning outcomes in employment-related skills and competences. In order to meet these demands, the European policy advocates a shift from a content-based approach to a learning outcome approach because the former is seen as outmoded and with limited relevance to students' interests and the requirements of the labor market.

Secondly, the building blocks of the European Higher Education Area such as qualifications frameworks and measurable learning outcomes introduce *planning procedures* and turn toward an instrumental curriculum approach based on a strong utilitarian ethos. There is a demand for a curriculum design that promotes permeability, flexibility and transparent progression routes, in particular from vocational education and training and from non-formal and informal learning. In order to offer such programs, the curriculum outline needs to be built up in small units with a clear time schedule. On one hand, the program should be designed in a flexible way so the elements can be taken separately and combined with qualifications acquired from other learning sites. On the other hand, the courses need to be prescribed and planned in a very detailed way to show what is expected. Hence, the managerial features of curriculum-making are evident.

Thirdly, the curriculum reform initiatives embedded in the new architecture lead to a *governing structure* which implies more direct control over curriculum content and assessment. Despite the lack of hard governance in the form of legally binding laws, the EU and the Bologna Process represent powerful driving forces for the processes of national decision-making through coordination procedures (e.g. meetings

and recommendations), benchmarking and monitoring activities (e.g. reviews, reports and scorecards) and guidelines (e.g. procedures, templates and checklists). These are typical examples of soft laws providing clear advice to national governments and higher education institution (Karseth and Solbrekke 2010). Despite the principle of subsidiarity and the autonomy of higher education institutions, the EU provides clear advice concerning core questions about curricular issues (see for instance Council of the European Union 2013) that normally have been left to the academics. Such advice might be impossible to ignore if one wants to play the Bologna game. The EU policy rhetoric opens the door for agents to develop guidelines and best practices examples that are difficult to escape at national or institutional levels (Veiga and Amaral 2012).

Taken together, the approach of reading European policy texts with curriculum elements in mind has helped us see how development of the pedagogy can never be understood isolated from the overall policy. Universities are no 'ivory towers' in which faculties and students operate in isolation from global trends and policies. As we have demonstrated, in the current policy climate the Bologna Process has influenced higher education governance in ways that are fundamentally different from the idea of academic and the individual freedom. With reference to Slaughter's argument as indicated in the beginning of the chapter, academics need to become more aware of the implications of policy priorities and employment market needs. It is timely to discuss critically which values and purposes to fight for and how academics may increase a collective awareness of how these ideas may be realised within the current circumstances. This calls us, among other questions, to investigate critically what we mean by academic freedom in current HE institutions, and not least critically interrogate the relationship between educational purposes, content and students.

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