



UiO : **Faculty of Educational Sciences**
University of Oslo

Transformation of Higher Education in the Context of Societal and Political Processes in Europe

“Ringseminar ZHAW europäisch”
Europa verstehen – Europa mitgestalten
ZWAH, Zürich
9 May, 2017

Professor Peter Maassen



- **Historic overview of three higher education transformations in Europe**
- **European integration and higher education**
- **Current transformation of higher education**

The University as “the Most Magnificent Form of Cultural Institution Created by the European Mind”



*“Wir brauchen den ‘gemeinsamen Markt der Intelligenzen’. Was entspricht mehr der Idee und der Tradition der Universität, die doch die großartigste Schöpfung des europäischen Geistes auf dem Gebiet der kulturellen Institutionen ist”
(Hallstein 1969: 258-59)*

The University as The Most Enduring European Institution

Clark Kerr in “The Uses of the University (1982)”:

- *“About 85 institutions in the Western world established by 1500 still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and unbroken histories, including the Catholic church, the Parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland, and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and 70 universities. Kings that rule, feudal lords with vassals, and guilds with monopolies are all gone. These seventy universities, however, are still in the same locations with some of the same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things, and with governance carried on in much the same ways.”*

- “An Enduring Institution is one that has changed and grown (transformed) in unswerving pursuit of success and relevance -- yet remained true through time to its founding principles.”

Institutional Perspective on the University



...the benefits of the university are not easily planned or predicted. To a large extent the university is a set of activities whose benefits have to be enjoyed after they are accomplished – in Maddox’s (1964: 159) words, as ripe fruit can be picket from a tree.

In contrast to an instrumental perspective, an institutional perspective also assumes that well-entrenched institutions reflect the historical experience of a community, that they take time to root and that they are difficult to change rapidly and radically, except under special circumstances such as widely agreed-upon performance crises.

(Maassen & Olsen 2007: 48)

How can the transformation of the University in Europe be interpreted?

“The Modern University: Its Three Transformations within its National Settings”

(Wittrock 1993)

1. The Foundation of the Modern University in Germany, 1780 – 1820s (esp. Halle, Göttingen and Berlin: Humboldt)
2. The Rise of the Specialized “Research University” (1870–1930s: Germany, UK and USA)
3. The Mass University (after 1945)

“The fourth transformation of the University in its global and supranational settings”

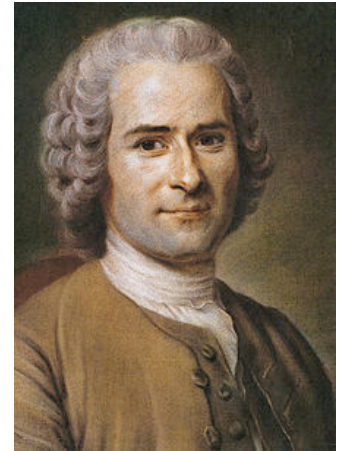
4. The Instrumental University?

Transformation 1

The Foundation of the Modern University

The modern university as a carrier of classic Enlightenment values, such as rationality and a scientific attitude.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau



‘Du contrat social ou principes du droit politiques’ (1762)

“Government should prioritize the interests of its people over its own interests; and the people should be willing to accept limited individual freedom for effective political order”

Universities’ Social Contract:

System Integration (Order & Control) vs (Limited) Institutional Autonomy

The modern university as a carrier of classic Enlightenment values, serving the common good.

- Aim: form individuals in academic-humanist attitudes and make them informed and responsible citizens
- Academic autonomy, freedom and authority must be protected against all arbitrary external interference.
- Enlightenment philosophers tend to have a great deal of confidence in humanity's intellectual powers
- Kant: “Enlightenment” is humankind's release from its self-incurred immaturity; “immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another.”

The Modern German University



- **German *Vormärz* Era (1815-1848):**
 - Strengthening of research-orientation within universities
 - Fundamental transformation of professorship
 - Humanistic disciplines provide models and values for growth of science and transformation of professorship
- **R. Steven Turner (1971) *The Growth of Professorial Research in Prussia, 1818 to 1848 – causes and context:***
 - “As humanists and philosophers came to dominate university affairs after 1810, they frequently challenged the sciences' status as *Wissenschaft*. They forced the sciences onto the defensive in a continuing struggle for prestige, students, and a voice in the counsels of the university.”
 - As a response: “Younger scientists emphasized ‘pure’ science and rejected any utilitarian approach, which they, like their colleagues in the humanities, condemned as ‘bread-study’ (*Brotstudium*)”.

Consequence: Professorship radically transformed

Traditional loyalty to the institution changed into dual loyalty to institution and discipline / community

- **What caused the radical transformation of the German university and the professorship?**
 1. Influence of new (Humboldtian) ideology which glorified *Wissenschaft* and creativity ('creation of new knowledge')
 2. Competition (and decentralization) within the German university system
 3. Key role of the state, amongst other things, in making professorial appointments

Transformation 2

The Rise of the Research University

Classical universities and professional colleges

Second transformation:

The Rise of the Research University, ca. 1870–1914

- Growing dominance of the German research university template
- German research university model is carrying the Enlightenment values into the 20th Century (incl. academic freedom)
(Peter Watson (2010) “The German Genius”)
- Innovations in the modern university organisational model, such as graduate education, liberal arts education, professional schools, and research centers of excellence

- Research universities continue to ‘refuse’ utilitarian approaches, despite growing urgency of ‘knowledge’ needs of rapidly industrializing and urbanizing societies
- Solution: Establishment of ‘specialized, application oriented higher education institutions, for example, Land-grant universities (USA), Agricultural colleges (European continent) and *Technische Hochschulen* (Germany)
- Gradually: Instead of universities become more ‘utilitarian’, integration of new institutions (‘Colleges’) into university sectors
- Until 1933: German/European HE globally dominant

Internal and external driving forces:

Internal:

- Specialization,
- Growth of the modern, experimental natural sciences,
- Rise of a “scientific world view” (evolutionism/positivism),
- Growth of laboratories and “laboratory life”.

External:

- *Second Industrial Revolution* (from workshop-based to science-based technology),
- High tide of European nationalism “University as part of national identity”.

Transformation 3

The Rise of Mass Higher Education

Parallel “massification” of both research and education

- After WWII: end of German/ European dominance in higher education; instead: US Higher Education «the envy of the world»
- Massification starts in USA with GI Bill (1950s); followed by Canada and North West Europe (1960s/1970s); Southern Europe, Australia, NZ, Japan, South Korea (1980s); CEE and China (1990s), rest of the world (2000s), with the exception of Africa and countries with civil unrest
- Massification leads to worries about costs and quality of higher education
- Solution: Establishment of profession oriented, non-university higher education sectors and institutions (*Polytechnics, Fachhochschulen, Hogescholen, Høyskoler, AMK, Colleges*)

Triumph of American HE & Science system after 1945

Thesis:

American system, to a much greater degree than European HE & Science systems, proved able to meet the demands of Big Science *and* mass education. Why?

- 1. Pluralism and a highly differentiated system,,: intensive competitiveness!**
- 2. Formally stratified HE systems**
- 3. The coexistence of German research university model, US graduate school, and “Anglo-Saxon” college system**
- 4. Pragmatism and an educational ideology of “learning by doing”**
- 5. Highly market-adaptive and “stretchable” university system...**
- 6. Internationalisation**
- 7. Entrepreneurial leadership**

- 8. GI Bill**
- 9. Federal funding of basic research (NSF and NIH)**

What about Continental Western Europe?

Challenges include:

1. Continuous state control (financially and regulatory)
2. Lacking division of labor between HE institutions.
3. (Limited) system diversity not through stratified HE systems, but the establishment of higher professional education institutions and systems
4. Lack of sufficient public (and private) funding for 'big science'
5. The deficit in strategic academic leadership. The democratization of internal university life and the redefinition of Humboldt's principles of academic freedom.
6. The maintenance of authoritarian structures and the psychology of dependence... (Germany!)

Transformation 4

The Rise of Instrumental Higher Education?

Higher Education and European Integration

**From classical enlightenment values
to an instrument for achieving political agendas?**

1990s

Tensions between

**EU's HE integration efforts
(supranational: Lisbon 2000 Agenda)**

and

**HE convergence agreements among nation states
(inter-governmental: Bologna Process)**

European crisis

Vision 1:

Higher Education as Part of Solution

EU'S instrumental view on university transformation

“After remaining a comparatively isolated universe for a very long period, both in relation to society and to the rest of the world, with funding guaranteed and a status protected by respect for their autonomy, European universities have gone through the second half of the 20th century without really calling into question the role or nature of what they should be **contributing to society.”**

The changes they are undergoing today and which have intensified over the past ten years prompt the fundamental question:

Can the European universities, as they are and are organized now, hope in the future to retain their place in society and in the world?”

(European Commission 2003: 22)

Urgency underlying need to transform HE in Europe

(Report of the Independent Expert Group on R&D and Innovation)

“A final word - The opportunity to implement the proposed actions will not be available for much longer. Europe and its citizens should realize that their way of life is under threat but also that the path to prosperity through research and innovation is open if large scale action is taken now by their leaders before it is too late”

(Aho et al.2006: 30).

The European HEI faces a crossroads.

One path leading to *despair* and utter *hopelessness*,
the other to *extinction*.

Let us pray that it has the knowledge to choose
correctly

(Free after Woody Allen)



University global reform script

Structural reform -
Focus on formal
university
autonomy and
professional
university
management



Autonomous
universities' ability
to act more
"responsive" and
strategic as
integrated
organisational
actor



Strengthened
university
"responsiveness",
that is, universities'
direct engagement
with societies'
needs improves

EU Modernisation Agenda for Universities (2006):

(“DELIVERING ON THE MODERNISATION AGENDA FOR UNIVERSITIES: EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION”)

“Modernisation of Europe’s universities, involving their interlinked roles of education, research and innovation, has been acknowledged not only as a core condition for the success of the broader Lisbon Strategy, but as part of the wider move towards an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy.”

“European universities are not currently in a position to achieve their potential in a number of important ways.”

EU Modernisation Agenda for Universities (2006):

Changes required according to European Commission include:

- **Ensure real autonomy and accountability for universities**
- **Provide incentives for structured partnerships with the business community**
- **Provide the right mix of skills and competencies for the labour market**
- **Enhance interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity**
- **Active knowledge through interaction with society**
- **Reward excellence at the highest level**

- **.... And what the Commission can and should do”**

EU Modernisation Agenda for Universities (2006):

- **Rejected as common agenda by member states' heads of state**
- **European Commission 'withdraws' from efforts to develop formal HE competences**

EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education (2011):

“The main responsibility for delivering reforms in higher education rests with Member States and education institutions themselves. In order to maximise the contribution of Europe's higher education systems to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, **reforms are needed in key areas:**

- Increase **the quantity** of higher education graduates at all levels
- Enhance **the quality and relevance** of human capital development in higher education
- Create **effective governance and funding** mechanisms in support of excellence;
- Strengthen **the knowledge triangle** between education, research and business.
- Further stimulate **the internationalisation** of HE

HE firmly 'back' as a national policy responsibility

- In the meantime a strong European perspective on higher education and higher education governance has become embedded in a variety of organized settings beyond the territorial state.
- There are trans-national, intergovernmental and supranational processes of cooperation and policy making and new actors, issues, solutions, resources and modes of governance have been introduced.
- Growing complexity of HE governance in Europe

US governance of higher education



Multilevel governance of European HE: “Marble cake federalism”

“No rigid delineation of which level of government held authority over which set of activities”

(Donahue 1996)



European crisis

Vision 2:

Higher Education as Part of Problem

New Political Cleavages:

‘Globalists’ versus ‘Nationalists’

Problem definition ‘nationalists’ includes:

- **Globalisation**
- **Political and economic ‘Elitism’**
- **Open societies**
- **Migration**
- **European integration**

This definition challenges HE’s role as key ‘knowledge institution’

HE as part of problem

Brexit/French presidential elections

Main differences between voters for 'globalist' versus 'national' political agendas along:

- 1. Level of income**
- 2. Rural versus urban background**
- 3. Level of education**

HE as part of problem

“HE reform documents give little attention to the possible role of HEIs in developing democratic citizens, a humanistic culture, social cohesion and solidarity, and a vivid public sphere.”

(Maassen & Olsen, 2007: 9)

Current Higher Education Transformation: Engaged and Useful?

From Enlightenment values to ‘usefulness’ as basic idea?

“We need a new model – we need something which can demonstrate to countries where university models still hark back to the days of Humboldt, that today there are additional ways of doing things”

(Figel 2006: 12)

Current Higher Education Transformation: Engaged and Inclusive?

From Enlightenment values to 'inclusive' as basic idea?

- **“HEIs and the migration crisis”**
- **MOOCs and other pedagogical uses of ICT aimed at non-traditional students**
- **Qualifications frameworks**
- **Lifelong learning**

Commission: carefully developing visions on a different EU/Europe

- **Various ideas and plans for a more social, inclusive Europe**
- **Comprehensive approach for limiting the damaging effects of globalization**

Current Higher Education Transformation: Enhancing inter- and intra-institutional diversity

From binary HE systems

(research universities – higher professional education
institutions)

to

Diversified HE systems

(variety in institutional missions and profiles)

Current Higher Education Transformation

The Instrumental University?

The Engaged University?



ExCID

Expert Cultures and
Institutional Dynamics

Thank you very much for your attention!

peter.maassen@iped.uio.no

Research Group:

Expert cultures and institutional dynamics:

Studies in higher education and work (ExCID)

(<https://www.uv.uio.no/english/research/groups/excid/>)