

## **FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD-THE PARADIGM SHIFT**

### **Ana Cecilia Boa-Ventura**

Polytechnic Institute of Leiria

International Officer

[acecilia@ipleiria.pt](mailto:acecilia@ipleiria.pt)

### **José Manuel Silva**

Polytechnic Institute of Leiria

Vice- President

[jmsilva@ipleiria.pt](mailto:jmsilva@ipleiria.pt)

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### **Abstract**

The changing dynamics of the globalised world forces Universities to adapt to a brand new environment. This is an entirely new path for Universities who have doubts regarding their role in the future. The rapid evolution of cross-border activities beyond the European space, the university rankings, the business-university, the market, the feeling that national borders are blurred and sometimes don’t exist at all - globalization is changing the face of the European university.

The paradigm shift from cooperation to competition affects the university identity. Is the University an institution provider of knowledge and a “public good” or should we consider it as business company, profit oriented? In spite of the competition change, used in the open words of the 2020 European Strategy we have to preserve the thing that most define our European identity – the feeling of belonging to a Social Europe.

## Resumen

La dinámica actual de cambio del mundo globalizado, obliga a las Universidades a adaptarse a un nuevo ambiente. Éste es un nuevo camino que las Universidades tendrán que seguir , aunque crea dudas sobre su papel en el futuro. La rápida evolución de las actividades que transpasan las fronteras de la U.E, la Universidad-Empresa, el Mercado , la sensación de que las fronteras nacionales se desvanecen y ya no existen – la globalización está provocando una fase de cambio en la U.E.

Sustituido el paradigma de cooperación, por el de, competición se ve afectado el sector Universitario. Deberán las Universidades guiar a sus estudiantes para ser un “buen público” o deberán ser orientados para el mercado y el lucro. A pesar del cambio para la competitividad usada en la estrategia 2020. Tenemos que conservar lo que mejor identifica a la U.E – el sentimiento de pertenencia a una Europa Social.

## INTRODUCTION

**‘We have made Europe, now we have to make Europeans’**

**(Petra Huyst, 2008, 4:4)<sup>1</sup>**

As Bernie Taupin when we wrote the lyrics of Elton John’s song, sometime we have to think about the choices we make in life, even if we have the promise of a bright future In this particular song the main character step out of a shiny road and returns to his origins. So we really like that you think about your future following the pathway that is offer to you or rethink the choices .

Thomas Kuhn use of the terms “paradigm” and “paradigm shift” had a lasting impact on the language, twisting a term that had previously meant “model” or “example” so that it signified traditional structures of thought, which sometimes change in dramatic ways through gradual innovation or revolution. The agent and structures of thought are affected by relations of cooperation and competition that create a complex network of relations in continuous transformation with specific rules, changes of speech and exchanges that lead to more recent but not less important changes of discourse and paradigm, creating new fields of power (Bordieu,1996).

Our goal is threefold: analyze the changes that the University had since the very beginning and the dilemmas that face University in the XXI century. To analyze the role of each one of the main actors (institutions, Universities and EC) and finally the big politic lines that are part of the Metagovernance of the EU in this area.

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<sup>1</sup> Famous quote from Massimo d’Azeglio “We have made Italy now we have to make the Italians”

## EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

The University goes back to the medieval age in Europe, being Bologna the first one. It was followed by Oxford and Paris in XII century and Coimbra and Salamanca in XIII century. At the time the mobility was inter-regional, since there were no states, elitist, and had a common curricular programme - *studium generale* – the language was also common, the Latin. Ironically students had less problems doing their Mobility then a students of the XXI century, being the curricular programme and language the same throughout Europe. The medieval University was completely divorced from the society, and was closed in itself in the ecclesiastic upper class. Only in 1810, the University programme has changed and started the modern university history with the reforms of Wilhelm von Humboldt in Prussia. The change took place in the University of Berlin, in 1810 and the Humboldtian model was adopted in all Europe. Actually it was this University o shaped also the US research universities.

The Humboldtian University was the paradigm during the next 150 years until the growth of mass higher education in the late XX century. It had some characteristics of the pass and was influenced by some features - nationalism, the modern state, union of teaching and research, and the shift between aristocracy to the bourgeoisie.

The main goal of this University was to achieve knowledge through original and critical investigation - the university was a community of scholars and students engaged on a common task in which research has an important place. Research and teaching were developed together and it was only in the middle of twentieth century that research appear as main tool of society contributing to industrial progress and requiring collaborative efforts. However, many academics and others view the entrepreneurial paradigm as a threat to the traditional integrity of the university .

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war with the baby boom generation higher education started to change with the massification and democratization of HEI's. "Higher education" and "higher education system" became popular terms in the second half of the 20th century (Teichler, 1988, 2001). The last decades have witnessed both many top-down government policies to broaden access to higher education and to regulate the structure of the higher education system, side by side a wide range of new higher education providers, private for-profit establishments, various virtual-type institutions and corporate universities.

Institutional time is slower and different institutions have different levels of adaptation. With the changing University we have a particular tension between autonomy (leading to differentiation according to historical and cultural diversity), and responsibility (leading to a unified system of and accountability. Universities are also dealing with previous unity and future diversity, previous continuity and future change and previous protection and previous liberty, and “Foreign ministries, universities and cemeteries are notoriously hard to move – in part for the same reasons”.

The establishment of polytechnics in the United Kingdom, the *Institutes Universitaires de Technologie* in France and the *Fachhochschulen* in Germany initially supported the view that most European countries placed prime emphasis on institutional diversification, and that two-type or multi-type structures were likely to emerge in many countries.

In the 1980s, with policies on the part of the ECC that put emphasis on mobility and cooperation while calling for respect of the varied cultural backgrounds of higher education systems in the European countries (Teichler, 2004).

This paper argues that this shift arises from external influences on academic structures associated with the emergence of 'knowledge-based' innovation and life long learning policies. Entrepreneurial activities are undertaken with the objective of improving regional or national economic performance as well as the university's financial advantage. However, many academics view the entrepreneurial paradigm as a threat to the traditional university (Pelikan, 1992). Some believe that entrepreneurialism should be resisted (Brooks, 1993) or at least encapsulated in a special class of institutions of higher learning, fearing that an intensive pecuniary interest will cause the university to lose its role as independent critic of society this happens also with transdisciplinarity. This concept like the one of entrepreneurialism was imported from the US, the great provider of services in higher education. What it offers to students? Interdisciplinarity of thinking, better comprehension of the world, better communication, however this means big changes in the Humboldtian European University – a shift in curricular perspectives, to banish departments and the breakdown of “academic silos”. One thing it's for sure, the Universities have difficulty in adapting strategic choices to external demands, most of the time this happens because Universities most of the time suffer from “institutional sclerosis” are still managed rather in academic freedom, because that was the Humboldtian way, the leadership is not strong since power is spread out and each department is a world in itself, we can even notice that the University has low functional dependency between sub-unities.

The international environment brought the last thirty years other challenge: demographic changes, less young people, ageing population, growing feminine population that increase the number of people choosing social sciences, openness to society.

If our European University it's so different from the US University why we keep trying to do like the US way? this is made in the name of globalization, supra-national policies, bottom-up initiatives of private stakeholders, continuous cuts of higher education budgets by the European states, technologies of information and communication, transnational higher education and finally the international crisis.

Most of the time globalization is the scapegoat that justifies the paradigm shift. Nevertheless scholars have several definitions for the concept and some even consider it a fiction, a myth of the neo-liberal society. In fact being the education a "public good" we are witnessing an increasing user-pays basis, more tuition fees, less social dimension, deregulation of educational institutions and more and more higher education being a business. This is done in the name of internationalization and globalization, in the name of competition and in the name of profit.

Knight (2007: 297) defines internationalization as the process of integrating the international dimension into the research, teaching and services and is a systematic effort aimed at making higher education more responsive to the challenges of globalization. Globalization is considered as part of the environment of the international dimension and it's mostly related to the process of convergence and interdependence of economies and to the liberalization of markets.

Scott (1998:126) definition is centered on the Nation-State. Universities are institutions created to fulfill national purposes and globalization ignores and is actively hostile to the nation state, Marginson (2000:24) in a softer approach considers that globalization does not abolish the Nation-State but is changes the conditions in which the Nation- State operates.

In order to become internationally competitive, national policies in developing countries tend to use key projects to drive reform processes, establish priorities, and focus investment on a few universities. Mister Van Rompuy said recently "we are all bench markers now" but are we really benchmarking well? This economic standards has led to the tendency of overemphasise the market and technical value of Higher Education. Of course that one of the consequences is the natural tension between technological areas and those of basic theoretical enquiry, particularly humanities and arts.

This Open method of Coordination (OMC<sup>2</sup>) that relies in indicators and benchmarks also create It also creates institutional winners and losers, and a process of “faming, naming and shaming” (Teichler, U. 2004).

## **FROM BOLOGNA TO LISBON- A COMMON FRAMEWORK?**

The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998, was underpinned by the idea of adoption of a system of degrees that are easily readable and comparable, adoption of a system based on two cycles, establishments of a system of credits, quality assessment and European Higher Education Space, keeping the cultural dimension and diversity. Although the word “harmonization”, as such, does not appear in the Bologna Declaration, there is still a great deal of discussion and misunderstanding about this concept, but this seem to be one characteristics of the EU metagovernance, concepts like “Knowledge Society”, “Social Dimension” seem to originate misunderstanding because of the holistic meaning. Bologna kept the EU out of the agreement and nowadays has 47 undersigned countries, including Russia. It is an agreement at governmental level, the changes were meant to better coordinate and cooperate , the achieve quality assessment, flexibility, references and creativity.

With only the difference of two year the Lisbon treaty twisted the targets of Bologna , the difference however is that now we have the EC management, the EU countries, presently 27 countries, supranational level, competitiveness, excellence and R&D, employability, transdisciplinarity, convergence and rankings. We can observe that some of the main characteristics change quite radically: national level/supranational level, cooperation/competition, flexibility/convergence, quality /excellence, references/rankings. Further changes follow ahead, the Bologna follow-ups had always the presence of the EU, and strategy 2010, 2020 asked for more convergence and less founding by national states.

## **WHAT WE REALLY EXPECT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY?**

The University is in dire straits to achieve all that today’s society needs: to be more local, more European and more global, to increase mobility in Europe, to attract more students and teachers outside Europe, to have more academic quality and more transversal competencies, to be curricula compatible in all Europe, to keep the cultural diversity, to compete and cooperate, lifelong learning and social dimension, to keep the cultural diversity and to converge and do all this with considerable less founding and in a “frog leap”.

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<sup>2</sup> OMC- Governance method introduced after the Lisbon treaty- Soft Law

All this and much more is needed to the Lisbon treaty strategic goal for the next decade- Lisbon Treaty- [that of becoming] 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.” A very optimistic goal for a very optimistic EC.

## **THE METAGOVERNANCE**

Mobility in Higher Education was and still is one of the favourites subjects of the EC and the Erasmus programme undoubtedly the most successful EC programme since the very beginning. The idea was to send students to study abroad for short periods of time (one semester/one academic year) within an EU country. It was horizontal mobility and it contributes to the European integration and to open minds and end prejudices regarding another EU countries. This was in 1987, when the EU had no direct influence in the Education, since the very beginning was a sensitive question kept in the hand of national governments. For sure Erasmus has the pull effect for a more effective influence in Education by the EC, only a support role was not enough for the plans ahead. This was the right time to start a campaign with the right man to do it: Jacques Delors.

Jacques Delors had a tremendous influence in establishing the lifelong learning Programme in a time when, further the Erasmus, citizens from Europe were experiencing a certain European community fatigue. In the Maastricht treaty an article regarding Education was added and he started to spread a policy that apparently had nothing to be contested off, Europe faced a unemployment period and the figures increased every day.

With EC founding several higher education programmes were created, some with more success than others. Some within the EU, others with the external window, countries that the EU thought were important strategically like US, China, India, Canada, Japan, Australia, some improving the relationship with neighbour countries, like Tempus, and some improving vocational training and placements, like Leonardo da Vinci. Above all that programmes the Lifelong Programme.

The European project of Jacques Delors intend to create new conceptions of the “reasonable” and “responsible” lifelong learner, constructing an ideology that blamed individuals who are unable to take care of their “own life,” and their “own education.” In all European guidelines for improving employability, the emphasis was placed on education and training for young people, as well as on lifelong learning. In fact, the concept of employability was reinvented as a way to link employment and education, or to see unemployment as a problem of uneducated people. The main focus was and still is on the ability to become employed, rather than, necessarily, the state of employment itself.

As Nikolas Rose argues in Powers of Freedom, “The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self” (1999: 161).

Meanwhile the huge unemployment of that time increased 10 points. Let’s think about today’s young people facing the severe problems they have to achieve something that previous generations had for granted – can we honestly think they have a logic of linearity in their life or should we draw our attention to the yo-yo trajectories, today’s life cycle of specially many young people.

Two types of learner were identified within the White Paper of Growth, Competitiveness and Employment<sup>3</sup>: first, those with high knowledge-skills for higher education and information technologies and low knowledge-skilled, ‘disadvantaged’ person in ‘need of training’ where we can find the unemployed.

The concepts of exclusion and societal risk inherent in the threat of the ‘dual society’ were linked with differing degrees of knowledge and two types of learner: those that know (the high knowledge-skilled) (HKS) and those that do not know (the low knowledge-skilled) (LKS). Recent history show us that lifelong learning demotivates young people demanding of them more education, without being able to offer them an employment worthy of the individual investment in education. It creates the illusion that the “crisis of schooling” can be answered through a long life of education and training. Visions of an “inexorable future” should be replaced by the University as a common good, open to everyone regardless of the “disadvantaged background”

## **WHAT’S THE POINT OF BUILDING A EHEA IF IT IS NOT DIFFERENTIATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD?**

We must keep our uniqueness, our identification as Europeans our quality independent research, the University as a public good and the European social model, even if this model is something that belongs to our imaginary. There are at least three social models in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Continental and the Northern. At the cognitive level, the European social model is based on the recognition that social justice can contribute to economic efficiency and progress, social policy can reduce uncertainty, enhance the capacity to adjust and the readiness

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<sup>3</sup> EC -Bulletin of the European Communities Supplement 6/93

to accept change, bear more risks, acquire more specialised skills, and pursue investment opportunities.

We live in a world of path-dependent solutions, and radical change in Europe's welfare states is institutionally ruled out. The challenge is not so much to design, a completely new welfare architecture, but to rethink prevailing social and economic policy to make them more responsive to the new demands of our economies. Throughout the neo-liberal 1980s it proved difficult to launch a successful attack on the mature welfare states, especially in Western Europe. Strangely the Lisbon Treaty puts an emphasis on the social dimension without characterizing it. What we get is the different ways to deal of the social dimension and social cohesion, which one more different than the other. Socially the OMC doesn't help at all, it's such an open method that each country can approach it in a different way.

We need to provide a differentiated Education, with common European features, otherwise we will be run over by the business University: selling programmes and working for rankings and they are out there for quite a while.

In the next crossroad let's try another road... even if we don't know where it ends. Who knows if it lead us to our common identity?

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