

From Bologna to Bologna and beyond

Universities as embedded multi-layered institutions

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The Guild
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Agenda

1. Acknowledgements
2. Introduction
3. 1st part: Historical vignettes
4. 2nd part: The great reform of the 21st century
5. Quo Vadis universitas?

Universities are...

Multi-layered institutions simultaneously embedded in different contexts of space and time, the “national” is not simply “inside” and the “international” is not simply “outside”.

Universities are complex interrelationship networks – Interrelationsgefüge (Schriewer, 1994) especially when it comes to teaching.



Historical vignettes: Bologna University in the 11th century

- University of Bologna, the European alma mater studiorum?
- 1000 years ago Europe was a space where students and teachers moved around freely.
- Language was not an abstacle.
- Students contributed significantly to university governance.
- Organizational structure by **nationes** in the original Bologna university.
- 11th century Bologna was more European than the Bologna Process today.



The nations and their universities

- Most important development of universities can be identified as their embedding in nation states.
- Since the 18th century nation-states and notions of modernity go together.
- Modern societies are dynamic and changeable; they emphasize progress and individual perfectibility.
- The nation-state is itself a pedagogical progress-oriented institution building up human capital.
- Universities came to be considered the keystone of the education system because of their double mission of teaching and research.



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Example of current „look“ of the natural sciences in Tuebingen



Ideas and institutions: The Ninteen Sixties

- 1960s were a period of great expansion for higher education.
- Higher education has met great expectations and optimism.
- Political will to investment in universities as harbinger of a brighter future.
- Jill Pellew & Miles Taylor: „A Global History of the New Campuses of the 1960s“:
 - The international commitment to build new institutions to absorb the growing demand for tertiary education
 - Conviction that universities would be societies' driving engines.



„It was a moment of modernity, of which the often brutalist architecture was the outward sign“ (Conekin/Mort 1999)



Manfred Kettner, 1984 Universitätsarchiv Bielefeld, F05

University of Warwick



Humanities Building – An Artists impression (bulding finished 1974)
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/applyingtostudy/currentstudents/thenandnow/artandarchitecture/architectureatwarwick/>

The great reform of the 21st century: The European Higher Education Area

- The Bologna Process and the design of a European Higher Education Area is the most important reform project in our context.
- Bologna is discussed in all parts of the globe.
- Visions for 2050: Javier M. Valle Lopez (University of Bucharest): „Eurological Universities“
- Strong discursive and institutional realm: OECD, UNESCO & WTO.



The great reform of the 21st century: The European Higher Education Area

- Jungblut, Maassen & Elken:
 - EHEA creating more coherence & compatibility.
 - Core values: academic freedom, institutional autonomy, freedom of expression, independent student unions & free movement.
 - Institutionalization and normalization like the knowledge-based economy or knowledge society are mutually reinforcing at all policy levels
→ they appear as without having an alternative.



Traditions of European Universities: Ideas and values

- Stefan Collini (2017):
„for about 150 years after universities started to assume something like their modern form in the early 19th century, the fact that they represented in some sense an alternative ethic or antidote to the commerical world was precisely one of the justifications for their existence“.
- Sheldon Rothblatt (2006):
„Modern University and its discontents: The Fate of Newman’s Legacies in Britain and America“
- Dieter Lenzen (2014):
„Bildung instead of Bologna“

*„That what societies have wanted from their universities has been historically variable, internally contradictory, and only ever partly attainable“
(Collini 2017).*

The Bologna Process



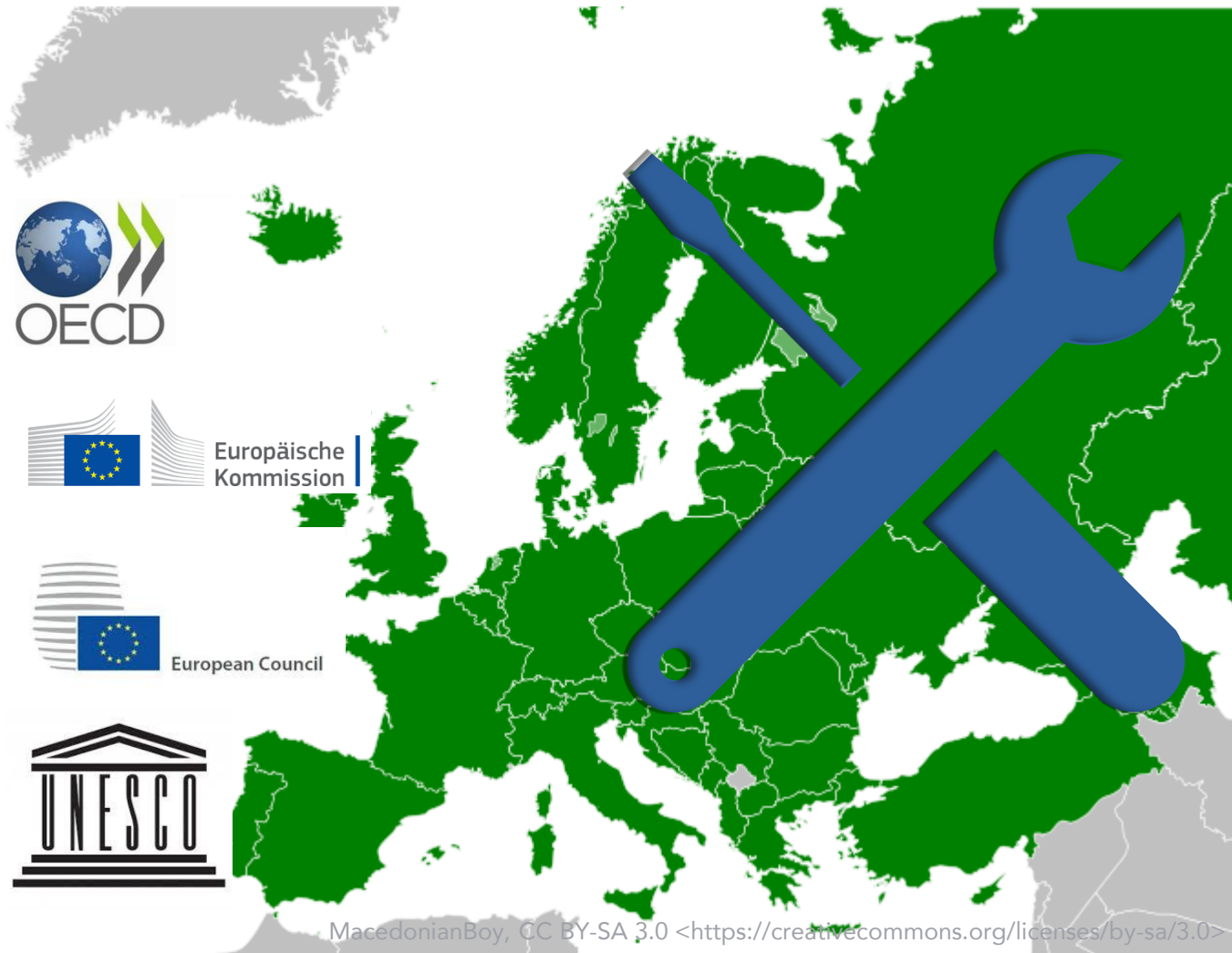
- Background of common values of the European University as stated in the Treaty of the EU.
- Variation in the idea of the university and national specificities in structure, administration, tradition & modes of teaching.



Ideational Streams in European Higher Education Polity

- Blättler & Imhof (2016/2019): „Bologna Emeritus“
- Dialectical interaction between economic context, communicative action through ideas & institutional structures
- Ideational streams present in the Bologna Process:
 1. Political projects
 2. Democratic purpose of its own
 3. Marketable service

European Higher Education Area – „Bologna as a construction site“ (Blätter/Imhof)



- 49 individual building owners
- National ministries as general contractor responsible für remodeling/constructing buildings.
- Additional building plans, supervising teams, coordinating institutions
- Cross-departmental institutions
- Stakeholder institutions like rectors' conferences, administrative staff, students, quality assurance agencies, business & industry representatives

Main Themes of the Bologna Process

Main themes of complex self-regulation (Blättler/Imhof 2016: 49):

- *Mobility*
- *Recognition*
- *Qualification frameworks*
- *Lifelong learning*
- *Student participation*
- *Student-centeredness*
- *Supportive environments*
- *Employability*
- *Transparency*

Viewed from a different angle:

The construction site appears to be a solid landscape with everything in full operation.

The European Higher Education Area is like a flip-flop picture where structure meets process, solidity meets airiness.



Quo Vadis universitas?

- The complex rebuilding of the European Higher Education Area occurs in a period of undeniable disruption.
- Universities embrace the challenge and assume responsibilities in the task of the moment.
- This process is multidirectional and open.
- Emphasis on technical dimensions are a result of finding common denominators between the ideational variations of the member states.
- When these technical dimensions become overwhelming, we will not be able to make significant contributions for our students and for the European society at large.



Personal comment

1. We need a mindset conducive to disjunctive thinking.
2. We should engage in discussions about our traditions and values to create awareness for our differences.
3. We should aid young people in their exploring, discovering and becoming as a part of our core mission.
4. We need to thoroughly rethink our teaching formats between tensions.
5. We should focus on how our graduates contribute to developing employment sectors rather than expecting them to seek employment anywhere in Europe.
6. We should actively participate in the discussion about our visions.



Thank you for your attention!



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Radboud University

