

Aims of the Research

- To examine the separate conceptions of higher education in both Britain and Germany.
- To measure the extent of commodification in both systems.
- To read and assess the Bologna documents and literature on the topic and analyse its impact upon the commodification in the systems of the two countries.
- To extend upon our skills basis and further our understanding of the subject.

Methodology

- Evaluation of the historic literature on higher education and the assessment of its meaning for the current debate.
- Analysis of both British and German academic perspectives on higher education reform over the past 30 years.
- Examination of key policy documents, including all the core Bologna documents, and some of the key national writings.

British Concepts

Three Phases in British Governmental Conceptions:

- 1850 ~ c.1970: A Public Conception.
Knowledge as its own aim
Beneficial to society and the member of society
- 1970 ~ c.1998: A Private Conception
Education for employability and for economic growth
A commodity to be bought, and left to the market
- 1998 ~ 2007: A Public/Private synthesis
Cooperation with business, but recognition of the good of education

German Concepts

- c.1948 ~ 1965: There was an attempt to rebuild the traditional German university. This meant a small elite Drive system, that gives much power and independence to senior researchers.
- c.1965 ~ 1980: Was a period of major expansion. New universities and Polytechnic Universities were founded and A spirit of egalitarianism and Social optimism seemed to rule the Zeitgeist.
- 1980s onwards: The political climate changed. In the 1982 general Election the Conservative party won and begun to transform higher education towards a more outcome based system.

The Bologna Process in Britain and Germany

Commodification of Education

The Bologna Documentation

Overview

- Starts with a sense of reconnecting with the historic roles of the university within society and serving society.
- Incorporates ideas of commodification early on, but only spreads these ideas of marketisation and commodification of management and administration in later documents.
- Can be viewed as a commodifying document.

- 1998 – Sorbonne:** Europe of culture to be preserved. Two-cycle system proposed. More Recognition advised.
- 1999 – Bologna:** Aims to establish the EHEA by 2010. Promotion of mobility and cooperation of QA mechanisms.
- 2001 – Prague:** Diversity is valuable and should be preserved. European content in degrees. Student involvement.
- 2003 – Berlin:** Acknowledges discussion of knowledge economy. Third Cycle incorporated. Economic and social duties of H.E. institutions noted, and so must balance competitiveness with social priorities.
- 2005 – Bergen:** Improvement of teaching should not harm research. Opening to world markets. Accessibility to those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- 2007 – London:** Mobility and employability key factors. Bologna will help Europe respond to Globalisation.

Conclusions

- Commodification can be seen to increase and evolve in the progression of British and German education systems as well as in the Bologna Process.
- British Commodification begins by creating a market for the practical aim of governing student numbers, but increases during the 1980s into a marketisation and commodification of the system itself, such as the management and funding processes.
- In Germany the apparent worth of education was changed from having its own intrinsic value towards one based on outcomes: from a qualitative towards a quantitative and commodified measure.
- Bologna can be seen to evolve from one centred on the social good of H.E. within Europe towards seeing the system in purely economic terms.

We would like to express our gratitude first and foremost to Ben Rosamond, who aided our application and helped us to complete the project. Also to the URSS team for giving us the opportunity to participate in the scheme.

Dan Davies (d.f.w.davies@warwick.ac.uk)
Maximilian Raane (m.j.raane@warwick.ac.uk)