

**LYDIA MARIA ARANTES
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CURIOSITY AND COMMITMENT

**Perspectives on the Transformation
of European Universities**

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Lydia Maria Arantes, Katharina Eisch-Angus, Burkhard Pöttler, Johann Verhovsek (eds.)

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*Dedicated to our colleague Helmut Eberhart
for his curiosity and commitment towards a EUROPEAN Ethnology*

*Gewidmet unserem Kollegen Helmut Eberhart
für seine Neugierde und sein Engagement im Sinne einer EUROPÄISCHEN Ethnologie*

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Preface

This book seems both contemporary and out of time. By enquiring into the situation of cultural studies and ethnological work at European universities, and comparing ways of experiencing academic cultures after Bologna, it addresses political and bureaucratic dynamics that have long since become an unquestionable matter of course. Bologna? Was there something? The bilingual symposium at the University of Graz, which brought together colleagues from Ireland and Scotland, Finland, Germany, Austria, Croatia and Turkey for the lectures published here, seems rather dated, and not just because of the year 2018. Thatcher's dictum that there is no alternative to neoliberal economics has – as it seems – also left the universities of western and south-eastern Europe speechless and without alternatives.

This is precisely why this small volume is needed: It historicises a development which, after the fall of the East-West divide in Europe, was even expected to announce the end of (university) history as such. It localises the experiences of researchers and teachers in different university contexts in Europe and reflects on them from different disciplinary perspectives. Our aim is to make diversity conceivable, to subject well-trodden paths to critique without generalising.

It is hardly a coincidence that this book, which has now returned to the University of Graz in open access, has had a circuitous rollercoaster ride. It has repeatedly thrown us back to contemporary academic publishing conditions, and thus to the subject matter of the book. That the book could now successfully happen we thank Hanna Wäger, Florian Rumpl, Manuela Lovrec and Barbara Reichsöllner-Frischling with their work on the texts, and Judith Laister's initiative in the conference and its publication. We would like to thank the authors for their participation and patience, Caroline Gatt for her insightful updating as a European cultural-anthropological border crosser, and finally the University of Graz with the new Graz University Library Publishing.

Lydia Arantes, Katharina Eisch-Angus, Burkhard Pöttler, Johann Verhovsek

Vorwort

Zeitgemäß und zugleich aus der der Zeit gefallen scheint dieses Buch. Indem es nach der Situation kulturwissenschaftlichen und ethnologischen Arbeitens an europäischen Universitäten fragt und Erlebensweisen akademischer Kulturen nach Bologna vergleicht, spricht es politische und bürokratische Dynamiken an, die doch längst zur unhinterfragbaren Selbstverständlichkeit geworden sind. Bologna? War da was? Das zweisprachige Symposium an der Uni Graz, das Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus Irland und Schottland, Finnland, Deutschland, Österreich, Kroatien und der Türkei zu den hier veröffentlichten Vorträgen zusammenholte, erscheint nicht nur durch die Jahreszahl 2018 ziemlich gestrig. Das Thatcher'sche Diktum, es gäbe keine Alternative zur neoliberalen Ökonomie, hat – scheinbar – auch die Universitäten des westlichen bis südöstlichen Europa sprachlos und alternativlos werden lassen.

Eben deshalb braucht es den kleinen Band: Er historisiert eine Entwicklung, die nach dem Fall der Ost-West-Trennung Europas auch gleich das Ende der (Universitäts-)Geschichte einläuten sollte. Es verortet die Erfahrungen von Forschenden und Lehrenden in unterschiedlichen universitären Kontexten in Europa und reflektiert sie aus unterschiedlichen disziplinären Perspektiven. Verschiedenheit denkbar zu machen, eingefahrene Wege der Kritik zu unterziehen ohne zu pauschalisieren, ist unser Ziel.

Wohl nicht zufällig hat dieses Buch, das nun im Open Access an die Uni Graz zurückgekehrt ist, eine umwegige Achterbahnfahrt sich. Sie hat uns immer wieder auf die akademischen Publikationsbedingungen der Gegenwart, und damit auf die Thematik des Buches, zurückgeworfen. Dafür, dass diese Veröffentlichung nun dennoch gelungen ist, danken wir Hanna Wäger, Florian Rumpl, Manuela Lovrec und Barbara Reichsöllner-Frischling für ihre Arbeit an den Texten und Judith Lais-ter als Initiativkraft der Tagung und des Tagungsbandes. Wir danken den Autorinnen und Autoren fürs Mitmachen und ihre Geduld, Caroline Gatt für ihre aufschlussreiche Aktualisierung als europäisch-kulturanthropologische Grenzgängerin und schließlich der Uni Graz mit dem neuen Verlag Graz University Library Publishing.

Lydia Arantes, Katharina Eisch-Angus, Burkhard Pöttler, Johann Verhovsek

Katharina Eisch-Angus, Lydia Maria Arantes

Exploring the Neoliberal Transformation of European Universities

An Anthropological Roller-coaster Journey

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Figure 1: Invitation flyer

‘NEUGIER UND AUFTRAG’ was the message in faded typescript on the invitation flyers (Figure 1) announcing our official symposium for Helmut Eberhart, our colleague and the long-standing Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Humanities upon his retirement in the autumn of 2018. The background had been designed to resemble a working paper from the 1970s or 80s that had been run through the duplicator, right down to the white reinforcement washers. Furthermore, as one could gather from the German announcement typed in blue, we claimed to address ‘political transformations within universities and their influence on academic everyday spaces, working strategies and research motives from the 1970s to the present day’ and promised ‘an exploration into the heterogeneous university landscape of Europe with insights into local as well as superregional challenges in the context of “Maastricht”, “Bologna” and the discussions about the neoliberalisation of European universities.’ The message that was proclaimed here so ponderously and in shaky lettering was contrasted in red, edgily and without a hint of antiquatedness, by the English translation with its slogan ‘Curiosity and Commitment’ – which could certainly have derived from neoliberal newspeak.

This ambiguous impression was intentional, although in the meantime the social sciences research into the governing mentality in German-speaking academia had also accepted the ‘[c]riticism of the cannibalistic activities of the “academic cannibalism”’¹ (Hark and Hofbauer 2018b: 19) as part of university politics. Only recently the volumes *Ambivalenzraum Universität* (Lind and Pany 2016) and *Vermessene Räume, gespannte Beziehungen* (cf. Hark and Hofbauer 2018a) had opened up long-overdue discussions in the German-speaking region that were critical of domination and feminist in tone in their aims for change in the university of today. They expressed an enlightened, humanistic ethos on the one hand, but on the other, the expertise of those subjects which qua social-sciences methodology are close to quantifying and measuring, ‘the penetration of ever more areas of life with data- and indicator-based forms of assessment and control’ (ibid., 10). By contrast, in English-speaking science, the neoliberal reconstruction of the university, especially for scholars in the departments of cultural and social anthropology, has long since passed the pain threshold and led to a lively ethnographical reflection and political articulation of their own position (cf. Sparkes 2007; Canaan and Shumar 2008; Gill 2010; Shore et al. 2011; Shore and Wright 2015). A high point with far-reaching effects here was the angry campaign of the social anthropologist Tim Ingold demanding to ‘Reclaim the University of Aberdeen’:

1 All translations of quotes from German to English in this introduction are by Jane Michael.

We have watched in anger and dismay as fundamental principles of trust, professionalism and freedom of expression on which academic life depends have been crushed under an avalanche of mindless bullet points, dehumanising and dysfunctional IT systems, arbitrary directives and sham consultations (Ingold 2016a).

Ingold's statements were disseminated via blogs, Facebook pages and guest postings, which stated nothing less than the end of an enlightened humanism: 'Like it or not, however, the Enlightenment programme has more or less collapsed, along with the powers that sustained it' (Ingold 2016b). The aim of the movement was the formulation of a manifesto as a model for the development of a fundamental reform programme (cf. RoU 2016); it came to a temporary end following its rejection by the Senate of the University of Aberdeen (cf. RoU 2018). Paragraph 19 of the manifesto invokes an approach to research driven by curiosity against the regulatives of the 'Audit Culture':

Under the current framework of evaluation, the meaning of research has been corrupted beyond recognition. It has become a game, in which universities and their academic personnel are players. [...] In our university, however, research will be driven neither by market demand nor by the expectation of novelty. It will be driven by curiosity – by the burning desire to find things out (RoU 2018, 5).

These are all portentous words. At first sight they seem somewhat out of place in the Austrian university system which (as of 2018) is comparatively well provided-for by the welfare state and the collective agreement, in whose deliberate bureaucratic acts of confusion the spirit of the Habsburg monarchy still seems to have a hand. In similar fashion, our Institute in Graz still radiates the leisurely atmosphere of the old university, occupying as it does high-ceilinged rooms across two floors of a nineteenth-century building on the edge of the university campus, with spacious rooms for teaching and studying, including a reference library and reading room specialising in ethnology and cultural analysis². However, a dual approach is expressed here even in the name it bore from 1999 until 2017, *Institut für Volkskunde und Kulturanthropologie* (Department of Folklore Studies and Cultural Anthropology). Here, it is first and foremost the name of Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch that is associated with the progressive approach of a socio-critical cultural anthropology

2 With these tentative English denominations, we try to capture the Germanophone Post-Volkskunde disciplines. *Volkskunde*, equalling folklore studies, refers to the precursing discipline of European ethnology (also renamed, amongst other labels, as *Empirische Kulturwissenschaft* – Empirical Cultural Analysis – or *Kulturanthropologie* – cultural anthropology) in German-speaking countries. The renaming of previous departments and institutions of Volkskunde, from 1971 to the present, is accompanied by lively discussions of disciplinary self-reflection between anti-traditionalist critique and the need for modernisation in the specific circumstances of recent German and Austrian history.

of intervention. Following in the footsteps of Pierre Bourdieu, from the 1980s she gave the Graz Institute a distinguished profile as a scientific centre for a versatile and ethno-psychoanalytically sensitive cultural analysis of neo-liberalism (cf. Katschnig-Fasch and Malli 2003). By way of contrast, Helmut Eberhart, a contemporary of Katschnig-Fasch at the same Institute for more than forty years, also represented the balancing act between a cultural analysis based on arguments from sociology and ethnology and a liberal-minded *Volkskunde*. He saw the latter in terms of a European ethnology, which he prescribed for the Institute during the winter semester 2008 as the name of its study programmes and a third subject name, and which with regard to the European dimension should certainly be taken literally. It was not for nothing that the symposium was initiated by Judith Laister, Eberhart's successor in the *COIMBRA Working Group Social Sciences and Humanities*, for which as an enthusiastic traveller and networker he had acted for many years as a vital link. Thus, our event was able to follow on from the COIMBRA conference in 2007 in Graz, at which scholars from ten European countries had exchanged views on the subject of *Networking across borders and frontiers. Demarcation and Connectedness in European Culture and Society* (Barkhoff and Eberhart 2009). For us our colleague and university politician Helmut Eberhart embodied a European diversity of perspective, but also represented a constant crossing of the border between a light-hearted creative drive with an Austrian social-democratic accent and its governmental monopolisation.

In her words of greeting at the beginning of the two-day symposium, Katharina Eisch-Angus described the slow deliberation and tenacity of an ethnological pragmatist who during the course of his career had rolled countless yellowish-blue faded sheets reeking of methylated spirits through the duplicating machine, as a symbol of a practical 'doing university'. In a university in which accelerated social change has become an end in itself, she saw this 'old way of thinking' not simply as an indicator of backward-looking salvaging and preservation; for her it also stood for the potential of an inquisitive courage, of meaningful world understanding and critical responsibility:

Today, in the university slalom between competitive indicators and target values, quantification targets for research output and continuous performance improvement, there is little room for the open spaces in which to think. Substantiated teaching and training in the traditional sense are not necessarily in accord with a university which sells itself as a service provider. The standardised project forms of academic careers increasingly compromise research founded on scientific curiosity, which is supported by professional friendships, content-based debates and shared academic and social concerns. And at the same time, the bold affirmation of the university to

'promote a critical basic attitude' in the younger academic generation contradicts the vanishing scope of teachers and researchers in a bureaucratic university (Eisch-Angus 2018).

This statement, although it seemed both naive and generalising, provoked a violent and very personal protest from the following speaker, representative of the host university. What was proclaimed here as the golden age of the past was seen as a kick in the teeth for the creative people who were endeavouring to develop a university fit for the future. The criticism cannot be dismissed out of hand.

[T]he nostalgic glorification of the university, of the Humboldtian ideal of education and its autonomous, responsible and independent subjects, linked with a generous portion of forgetfulness, allows the talk about 'the' university to rapidly turn into a lament about the increasing difficulty, or even impossibility, of free and independent research under the dictate of progressive economization, efficiency and usefulness (Finzi 2016, 41).

So, had we once more been taken in by the Western thought in mutually exclusive binarities, which with ivory-tower cultural pessimism makes 'Neoliberalism' together with 'Bologna' and 'Maastricht' the villain of the piece? Here too, Gerald Lind, urges us to take seriously Derrida's idea of the *absolute university*³: 'It is up to us to polarise positively the university as an ambiguous space which is in an unhappy love affair with the sciences and the university' (Lind 2016, 28). Nothing could illustrate the productivity of this thought better than the lectures, discussions and conversations of 18–19 October 2018, which, with the simultaneous translations back and forth between English and German by the students and teachers of the Department of Translation Studies, exchanged the experiential perspectives as casually as they changed languages.

We realised that the cultivation and toleration of ambivalences nonetheless fell short strategically, when we set about sharing the lectures with the specialised and university public in a conference publication – in other words, doing exactly what seems to be implied in the requirements of 'impact', 'performance', 'internationality' and 'societal relevance'. It was a process that would take six years, prolonged not only by the pandemic and staff shortages at our Institute, but also marked by frustrating negotiations regarding financing and publication procedures. The idea that initially suggested itself was to create a subject volume for a specialist journal and, in doing so, to deliberately continue the open exchange of the conference as autonomous editorial work in the two languages. Here, however, we had to

3 See also Schönberger's contribution to this volume.

acknowledge that this idea was out of the question from the start, if only because of the requirements of *double-blind peer reviewing* (for example, we opposed a homogenising academic English for all contributions).

Our own university together with the socio-scientific publishing house which we next approached demonstrated to us the way in which the systemic dysfunctionality of governmental (academic) bureaucracy not only takes over critical content but also excludes it (in other words, what Mark Fisher diagnoses as ‘reflexive impotence’, Fisher 2009: 21). In the meantime, in fact, the publication service of the University of Graz had been repositioned exclusively to encourage Open Access. The decisive factor was no longer the best support available from the publishing house but the least expensive offer for ‘Golden Open Access’. In a prolonged ‘publication roller-coaster ride’⁴, which extended over a large part of 2021, we were first accepted into the German programme of an academic publishing house with a worldwide operation. Then we suddenly received formalised demands from the group’s London publishing office, that we should apply as an English-language publication under completely new conditions. Whilst we were able to discuss with our German editor the bureaucratisation and neoliberalisation of the structures of publishers and universities, neither she nor we succeeded in persuading both institutions to agree on common Open-Access procedures, although they complemented each other so well in their rhetoric of maximising societal impact and outreach. We eventually gave up, and it was only in the prospect of publishing the book on a traditional unionist platform and, in doing so, freeing ourselves from the demands regarding topicality and impact that we were (temporarily) able to see our chance.

In the meantime, a great deal has happened. The cooperation within the COIMBRA Working Group Social Sciences & Humanities which had been built up over the years was terminated by the University of Graz. Between 2020 and 2023, in one of the countless committee meetings imposed on the Faculty of Humanities as part of a strategy process, frequently contradictory professional statements and outline concepts were used to cut back our subjects and institutes to ‘societal relevance’ and ‘visibility’ – with the aim of thus balancing a supposed economic deficit through the acquisition of external funds and the number of students actively and verifiably fulfilling the predetermined number of credit points.

In this way, the faculty is to be strengthened and made sustainable for the future; in future the voice of the humanities should increasingly be heard within society, and the social relevance of the humanities should become considerably more visible.

4 From an e-mail from Lydia Arantes dated 26.3.2021.

The Faculty of Humanities will represent a unit and develop a distinctive profile. In order to make it sustainable in future, the current (diverse) structure of the faculty must therefore also generate a representable added value in research and teaching (Polaschek 2020).

In 2021, largely unnoticed by the public and also by the younger scholars who were affected by it, the revision of the Austrian law governing universities resulted in further massive restrictions to non-professorial academic university careers. Moreover, in a statement issued by the representative organisation of the Austrian ex-Volkskunde university departments⁵, our colleagues saw the wide-ranging progressive potential further eroded, which could be found in particular ‘in the (hitherto small) social science and cultural analysis subjects’:

They convey and develop critical thinking and make available the historical basis for the knowledge, skills, values, experience and significance which constitute culture and society. These are frequently chosen as complementary study subjects and promote interdisciplinary and independent thinking. [...] These subjects continue to make an extremely important contribution to the formation of the profile and structure of the universities as well as to the development of a sustainable, values-based and open-minded society, not least through their competence in interdisciplinary co-operation and international intercommunication (GVEKW 2021).

At the same time the discipline of cultural analysis, European ethnology, cultural anthropology etc. in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, organised within the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv)*,⁶ also raised its voice in a lively self-understanding. In 2021, the jubilee year of the notable renaming of the former University Institute for German Ethnology in Tübingen in 1971, the venerable parent organisation was to follow suit. It was by no means simply a question of navel-gazing or splitting hairs over names but was a matter above all of the very specific potential of a subject and its methods, which would now be judged by its ability to combine *curiosity* with *social commitment*. By way of example, I should like to quote the comment by Beate Binder from the recording of the (online) podium discussion on 25 March 2021 prior to the planned re-naming of the dgv. In it, Beate Binder and other representatives of the subject spoke up in favour of retaining the specialist term ‘European ethnology’ alongside ‘empirical cultural analysis’. Here it is by no means

5 The *Generalversammlung der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft in Österreich (GVEKW)*, translating as the General Assembly of Empirical Cultural Analysis.

6 Since September 2021 renamed as *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft* (English: German Society for Cultural Analysis | European Ethnology).

a question of continuing the naming disputes from the past together with the occasionally painful polarisation. However, on the one hand the energetic demands to include ethnography seem relevant in this context

as a specific form of knowledge and knowledge production, in which reflexivity plays a major role, in which the fundamentals of normative criticism play a major role, and a specific nexus of empirical theory plays a role (dgv 2021).

And on the other hand, the European relations should also be kept open intentionally – and this specifically ‘not in the sense of area studies or some strangely limited responsibilities’, but as a particular competence of this subject, with a post-colonial perspective of

focusing on Europe in its global interconnections, the European [region] as an area of knowledge, as a region which is also naturally involved in many developments [...], [in order to] decentre it at the same time to some extent (dgv 2021).

From here we have arrived at the programme of the volume which has been published at last and which derives its relevance as regards university politics and the specifics of the cultural sciences from a triangular relationship. The contributions assemble, firstly, European perspectives, which have arisen over many years in a friendly exchange and which focus on the present transformations of university living and working conditions from in some cases widely differing academic traditions and political constellations from Turkey to Finland, and from Britain and Ireland to Germany and Austria.

Secondly, they take as a starting point the (inter-)disciplinary self-awareness of a committed cultural anthropology, applied cultural analysis and reflexive ethnography, in line with the arguments brought by Boone W. Shear and Susan Brin Hyatt

that ethnography, with its emphasis on lived experience, can be a particularly effective tool with which to explore both the slippage, discontinuity and surprise between the global and the local, between structure and agency and between theory and practice (Shear and White 2017: 3).

And thirdly, we join the authors referred to above to the effect that, despite all the criticism and nebulously clichéd use, we shall retain the term neoliberalism as an umbrella term for an experience-based questioning of the political transformations within universities:

Appearing once as heterogenous in its manifestations yet coherent as a project, neoliberalism can operate as a sort of master signifier that gathers together a motley

mix of social processes and deleterious conditions in the social field (Shear and White 2017: 4).

The application of neoliberal principles to university research and education brings with it a great power of interpretation for figures, ‘metric power’ (Beer 2016). This is reflected, for example, in the imperative to publish, also known under the motto ‘publish or perish’.

Metric power, as an outgrowth of neoliberal ideology, holds sway over academic livelihoods in other ways. Perhaps most pernicious are the pressures and attendant metrics of publication. In the UK, the familiar ‘publish or perish’ motto has been re-written. It is no longer enough just to publish; one must publish in the ‘right’ formats, with the ‘right’ presses, in the ‘right’ journals and in the ‘right’ timeframes (Feldman and Sandoval 2018: 221).

There is virtually no time and leisure to allow publications to mature. The machine must be kept running. The original aim, to publish this volume without delay, is no exception. And yet, the publishing roller-coaster ride described above on the one hand and the Covid-19 pandemic on the other brought about a temporary lull in the publishing endeavour. *Curiosity* and *commitment* could not automatically be kept on the move. The obstacles which blocked the path of our project seemed too paralysing for us to be able to pursue the publication imperative. So, what should we do? Abandon it entirely? Because the texts are old?

Revisiting the texts, however, quickly revealed that they have by no means lost their validity. Ultimately, the enforced necessity of taking our time and letting them rest has shown clearly that the texts do not represent a short-lived snapshot, but rather afford an insight into changes which continue to have profound effects on research and teaching.

Overview of Contributions

The contributions featured in this edited volume cover a range of case studies from different European countries, each showcasing different challenges as well as opportunities in light of the transformation of European universities and the shifting demands in the tertiary education sector. While Klaus Schönberger and, more explicitly, Johannes Moser unravel developments within the Austrian and German academic landscape based on their own experience as professors of cultural anthropology/European ethnology, dean or members of university boards etc., Britta Kalkreuter, a design researcher, and Jürgen Barkhoff, a German studies scholar,

give cautiously optimistic insights into UK and Irish contexts. Furthermore, Güldem Baykal Büyüksaraç uncovers her ‘response-abilities’ as an anthropologist and action researcher working with local communities in Turkey. Sanja Potkonjak and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević reflect on the changing role of the university within the neoliberal economies of knowledge based on two Croatian research projects. Finally, the folklore researcher Ulrika Wolf-Knuts uses the *Åbo Akademi University* in Finland as case study in order to carve out various differences between before and after the University Act of 2009 which transformed universities into enterprises.

Applied Cultural Anthropology

The question of what applied anthropology is and what kinds of needs and whose needs it satisfies, is particularly dealt with in Büyüksaraç’s and Schönberger’s contributions. Büyüksaraç advocates for an applied anthropology that is community-engaged and thus transforms the researcher into a mediator between policy makers and local communities. In her cross-disciplinary work at the intersection of communities, local government, state bureaucracy, archaeological and environmental expertise, as well as heritage tourism, she does not only raise public awareness about the immediate concern of her research participants (e.g., access to natural resources, land-use, and property rights) but also contributes to the communities’ well-being. Reflecting on her own role as researcher and advocate, she therefore also addresses the so-called anthropological debt: the ‘obligation of “giving back” to the communities we intrude into and desire to mingle with as we conduct our research’. However, she also warns of the pitfalls going along with this kind of applied anthropology, namely the dilemma of paternalising those we want to make heard.

Schönberger’s take on applied cultural anthropology takes a different route. As professor for cultural anthropology at the University of Klagenfurt/Austria, he is involved in developing and teaching (within) the only *applied* study program offered at Austrian departments of cultural anthropology/European ethnology/cultural analysis. Schönberger is on the one hand critical of the marketisation of the university and the notions of applicable research it has been bringing with it. On the other hand, he suggests a pro-active approach which involves a closer look at what applied anthropology is and could be. Instead of playing theory off against practice – as comes out in his students’ criticism towards theory as irrelevant for their future professional practice –, he argues in favour of theory as a fundamental part of *and* unquestionable requirement for practice.

Both, Schönberger and Wolf-Knuts, mention other dilemmas apart from paternalism that applied anthropology might entail, i.e. serving nationalist agendas. Wolf-

Knuts sees the temptation in some countries to carry out nationalistic research in the fact that – in times of the autonomous university's need to acquire external funding – it is income-yielding and wonders: 'Can we shape the study of culture in such a way that it works as a counter-weight to nationalism?' Schönberger points to the case of Carinthia, itself tangled up in eras where folkloristic knowledge was instrumentalised in various ways, such as the 1930ies, the Haider-era as well as commodification of folk culture in the context of tourism. Tourism being one of the sectors where students of Applied Cultural Studies⁷ will find jobs, he asks us to rethink which knowledge about folk culture and invented traditions we ought to pass on. His pragmatic suggestion is to convey knowledge that makes students fit for the job market and renders them critical of folklorism as well as of the widespread dichotomy between authenticity and commercialisation.

Neoliberalisation of Academic Research and Higher Education

Neoliberal university reform is another topical complex illustrated, at least in passing, by most authors and contributions in this volume. Johannes Moser in particular identifies and discusses two decisive changes within the academic landscape in Germany in this regard: the so-called Bologna-reform of Higher Education – turning students into clients of a service enterprise – and the strong focus on third-party funding. The former has led to financial means increasingly being allocated to the administration, management, and evaluation of universities, whereas these means would serve the improvement of teaching and research conditions much better, as he laments. The latter not only entails the tailoring of research ideas to the duration of research projects and funding possibilities but also has ramifications towards further precarisation of research staff.

Based on two projects carried out under their supervision at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in Zagreb, Potkonjak and Škrbić Alempijević draw attention to the contradictory demands that cultural anthropology is faced with in Croatia. The first project involved a labour market analysis as well as a survey among alumni and sought to uncover the skills and knowledge students need to acquire in order to be fit for the market. In contrast, the second one, beautifully entitled *Images of Utopia*, grasped ethnographically what university might be able to contribute to students becoming 'active citizens'. Their paper points us directly to the delicate balancing act of disciplines such as Anthropology/Ethnology in its various shapes and sizes: at once conforming to labour market logics and at the

⁷ The original German denomination of the study program is 'Angewandte Empirische Kulturwissenschaft'.

same time educating students into critically and socially engaged members of society.

In her comparative portrait of the Finnish *Åbo Akademi University*, Wolf-Knuts takes a glance at differences before and after the Finnish Universities Act 2009 taking effect. In a brisk survey of several facets of the university as an institution – financial matters, university politics and administration, students, research, teaching, research profiles and projects etc. – she carves out differences between the time before and after the reform. She further argues that free and experimental research (also due to the peer review process) has become rare. Finally, she maintains that according to the Act the so-called third mission has gained such currency that university staff and students are called on to ‘serve their country and humanity at large’.

Societal Relevance

Wolf-Knuts and Potkonjak and Škrbić Alempijević both raise an issue which is also central in other contributions, i.e. that of societal relevance or societal impact respectively. Interestingly, both contributions referring to the UK context develop a positive reading of impact-driven research. Impact is, as Barkhoff shows, a concept the Humanities rather try to shy away from – unnecessarily, as he affirms at the same time. Being versed in the so-called REF (Research Excellence Framework) which regularly audits UK universities also in terms of societal impact, he holds that Humanities have a lot to gain from an engaged and encouraged approach and showcases two particular projects from Anthropology and Religious Studies that illustrate how social engagement and societal impact can be conveyed as such to funding agencies and other stakeholders alike. For this reason, Barkhoff encourages us to ‘develop a culture of research design that always includes a dimension beyond academia’.

In her text situated at the crossroads of design research and education as well as questions of making a sustainable future, Britta Kalkreuter asks how the University discipline of design currently meets global challenges. Finding itself at the heart of many a political debate, design is seen as the ‘main driver for overconsumption’ and at the same time recognised as a cure-all for going green, as she argues. Therefore, she argues in favour of design research and education as ‘enriching community and society by presenting ideas for preferable futures rather than offering solutions for (often individual) economic growth in the short term’.

While Wolf-Knuts is hesitant to affirm that the situation for the Humanities and Arts has improved in the last decade, most of the authors would at least agree that ‘back

then' everything was not really better than today. With this careful but hopeful optimism, we wish to have sparked an interest in these contributions that – while pointing to delicate balancing acts the neoliberal university reform has brought with it – make a strong case that Anthropology has much to give and to contribute to a better future for all of us.

Postscript: Shortly after the introduction was first drafted, another colleague joined us at the Institute, Caroline Gatt, who is currently involved in research and teaching on similar topics. We have therefore spontaneously invited her to write a concluding commentary that takes the contributions further, in terms of content, disciplinary background and perspective. *Neoliberalism and Coloniality are Two Sides of the Same Coin* is the title of her commentary, referring to the interconnectedness of these global developments, both of which are permeated by 'globalizing knowledge capitalism'. Referring to studies by Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars, she argues that a critique of the neoliberalisation of Higher Education and academic research must necessarily also include a critique of epistemic coloniality.

Translated by Jane Michael (pp. 13–20)

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Katharina Eisch-Angus, Lydia Maria Arantes

Den neoliberalen Umbau europäischer Universitäten erforschen

Eine kulturanthropologische Achterbahnfahrt

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Abb. 1: Einladungsflyer

„NEUGIER UND AUFTRAG“ stand in verwaschenen Schreibmaschinenlettern auf den Einladungsflyern (Abb. 1), die im Herbst 2018 unser Festsymposium für Helmut Eberhart, den scheidenden Kollegen und langjährigen Studiendekan der geisteswissenschaftlichen Fakultät ankündigten. Der Hintergrund war als ein durch den Matrizendrucker gezogenes Arbeitspapier aus den 1970er oder -80er Jahren gestaltet, dem selbst die weißen Lochverstärkungsringe nicht fehlten. Weiters, so war der blau getippten, deutschsprachigen Ankündigung zu entnehmen, wollten wir uns „universitätspolitischen Transformationen und deren Einfluss auf akademische Alltagsräume, Arbeitsstrategien und Forschungsmotive von den 1970er Jahren bis zur Gegenwart“ widmen, versprachen wir „Streifzüge durch die heterogene Universitätslandschaft Europas mit Einsichten sowohl in lokalspezifische wie auch überregionale Herausforderungen im Kontext von ‚Maastricht‘, ‚Bologna‘ und den Diskussionen um die Neoliberalisierung europäischer Universitäten.“ Was hier so umständlich wie optisch wackelig daherkam, wurde in Rot, kantig und gar nicht altbacken, konterkariert von der englischen Übersetzung unter den Schlagworten „Curiosity and Commitment“ – die durchaus auch neoliberaler Newspeak entstammen konnten.

Diese zwiespältige Anmutung war Programm. Zwar hatte sich die gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Gouvernamentalitätsforschung in der deutschsprachigen Academia inzwischen auch der universitätspolitischen „Kritik am kannibalisch agierenden ‚akademischen Kannibalismus‘“ angenommen (Hark und Hofbauer 2018b: 19). Erst kürzlich hatten die Bände *Ambivalenzraum Universität* (Lind und Pany 2016) und *Vermessene Räume, gespannte Beziehungen* (vgl. Hark und Hofbauer 2018a) im deutschsprachigen Raum längst überfällige, herrschaftskritische und feministische Diskussionen zum Wandel der gegenwärtigen Universität eröffnet. Dabei kam einerseits ein aufgeklärt-geisteswissenschaftlicher Ethos zum Ausdruck, und andererseits die Expertise derjenigen Fächer, die qua sozialwissenschaftlicher Methodik dem Quantifizieren und Vermessen, „der Durchdringung von immer mehr Lebensbereichen mit daten- und indikatorenbasierten Formen der Bewertung und Kontrolle“ nahestehen (ebd., 10). Demgegenüber hatte in der englischsprachigen Wissenschaft der neoliberale Umbau der Universität gerade auch für Forscher:innen an den kultur- und sozialanthropologischen Departments längst die Schmerzgrenze überschritten und sie zur lebhaften ethnografischen Reflexion und politischen Artikulation der eigenen Lage geführt (vgl. Sparkes 2007; Canaan und Shumar 2008; Gill 2010; Shore et al. 2011; Shore und Wright 2015). Ein Höhepunkt mit weitreichender Wirkung war hier die wütende Kampagne des Sozialanthropologen Tim Ingold „Reclaim the University of Aberdeen“:

We have watched in anger and dismay as fundamental principles of trust, professionalism and freedom of expression on which academic life depends have been crushed under an avalanche of mindless bullet points, dehumanising and dysfunctional IT systems, arbitrary directives and sham consultations (Ingold 2016a).

Über Blogs, Facebookseiten und *guest postings* verbreiteten sich Ingolds Statements, die nichts weniger als das Zuendekommen eines aufgeklärten Humanismus konstatierten: „Like it or not, however, the Enlightenment programme has more or less collapsed, along with the powers that sustained it“ (Ingold 2016b). Ziel der Bewegung war die Formulierung eines Manifests als Vorlage zur Erarbeitung eines grundlegenden Reformprogramms (vgl. RoU 2016), ihr vorläufiges Ende war dessen Abschmettern durch den Senat der Universität von Aberdeen (vgl. RoU 2018). Paragraf 19 des Manifests beschwört gegen die Regulative der ‚Audit-Kultur‘ eine von Neugier getriebene Forschung:

Under the current framework of evaluation, the meaning of research has been corrupted beyond recognition. It has become a game, in which universities and their academic personnel are players. [...] In our university, however, research will be driven neither by market demand nor by the expectation of novelty. It will be driven by curiosity – by the burning desire to find things out (RoU 2018, 5).

All dies sind große Worte. Im (auf dem Stand von 2018) wohlfahrtsstaatlich und kollektivvertraglich vergleichsweise gut abgesicherten Universitätssystem Österreichs, an dessen bürokratischen Verwirrspielen noch der Geist der Habsburgermonarchie mitzustricken scheint, wirken sie auf den ersten Blick eher deplatziert. Ebenso strahlt auch unser Grazer Institut noch die Gemächlichkeit der alten Universität aus, so wie es am Rande des Uni-Campus auf zwei Stockwerken die hohen Räume eines Gründerzeitbaus mit großzügigen Lehr- und Arbeitsräumen, einschließlich einer volkskundlich-kulturwissenschaftlichen Präsenzbibliothek mit Leseraum belegt. Allerdings drückt sich bereits in der von 1999 bis 2017 geführten Bezeichnung *Institut für Volkskunde und Kulturanthropologie* eine doppelte Gangart aus. Hier verbindet sich mit dem progressiven Ansatz einer gesellschaftskritisch eingreifenden Kulturanthropologie zuvorderst der Name Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch, die das Grazer Institut seit den 1980er Jahren in den Spuren von Pierre Bourdieu als fachliches Zentrum einer kulturanalytisch versierten und ethnopsychanalytisch sensiblen Neoliberalismusforschung profilierte (vgl. Katschnig-Fasch und Malli 2003). Demgegenüber mag Helmut Eberhart, Weggefährte Katschnig-Faschs am selben Institut über mehr als vier Jahrzehnte, auch für den Spagat zwischen einer soziologisch und ethnologisch argumentierenden Kulturwissenschaft und einer weltoffenen Volkskunde stehen – dies im Sinne einer Europäischen Ethnologie,

die er dem Institut im Wintersemester 2008 als Studiengangsbezeichnung und dritten Fachnamen verordnete und bei der die europäische Dimension durchaus wörtlich zu nehmen ist. Das Symposium war nicht umsonst von Judith Laister als Eberharts Nachfolgerin in der *COIMBRA Working Group Social Sciences and Humanities* angestoßen worden, für welche der passionierte Reisende und Netzwerker jahrelang als Bindeglied gewirkt hatte. Dabei konnte unsere Veranstaltung an die COIMBRA-Konferenz 2007 in Graz anschließen, zu der sich Forschende aus zehn europäischen Ländern zum Thema *Networking across borders and frontiers. Demarcation and Connectedness in European Culture and Society* ausgetauscht hatten (Barkhoff und Eberhart 2009). Der Kollege und Universitätspolitiker Helmut Eberhart verkörperte für uns europäische Perspektivenvielfalt, stand aber auch für den ständigen Grenzgang zwischen einem spielerischen Gestaltungswillen österreichisch-sozialdemokratischer Prägung und dessen gouvernementaler Vereinnahmung.

In ihrer Begrüßung zu Beginn des zweitägigen Symposiums bemühte Katharina Eisch-Angus die Langsamkeit und Beharrlichkeit eines volkskundlichen Praktikers, der in seiner Karriere wohl unzählige gelb-blau verwaschene, nach Spiritus riechende Blätter durch Matrizendrucker gedreht hatte, als Sinnbild eines handwerklichen ‚doing university‘. In einer Universität, in der der beschleunigte gesellschaftliche Wandel zum Selbstzweck geworden ist, sei dieses ‚alte Denken‘ nicht nur ein Indiz für rückwärtsgewandtes Retten und Bewahren, sondern stehe auch für Potentiale einer neugierigen Courage, von sinnhaftem Weltverstehen und kritischer Verantwortlichkeit:

Heute ist es im universitären Slalom zwischen Wettbewerbsindikatoren und Zielwerten, Quantifizierungsvorgaben des Forschungs-Outputs und fortlaufender Leistungs-optimierung eng geworden für die Freiräume des Denkens. Fundierte Lehre und Ausbildung im alten Sinne deckt sich nicht unbedingt mit einer Universität, die sich als Serviceeinrichtung verkauft. Die normierte Projektförmigkeit akademischer Karrieren beeinträchtigt zunehmend das Forschen aus wissenschaftlicher Neugier, das von fachlichen Freundschaften, inhaltlichen Debatten und gemeinsamen akademischen und gesellschaftlichen Anliegen getragen wird. Dabei gerät das plakative Bekenntnis der Universität zur „Förderung einer kritischen Grundhaltung“ des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses in Widerspruch zu den schwindenden Spielräumen der Lehrenden und Forschenden einer durchadministrierten Universität (Eisch-Angus 2018).

Dieses Statement, so naiv und pauschalisierend es daherkam, löste einen heftigen, und dabei sehr persönlichen Protest beim nachfolgenden Grußredner und gastgebenden Universitätsvertreter aus. Was hier als goldenes Zeitalter der Vergangenheit proklamiert werde, sei ein Schlag ins Gesicht der kreativen Menschen, die sich

um eine zukunftsfähige Universität bemühen. Die Kritik ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen –

lässt doch, gepaart mit einer ordentlichen Portion Vergesslichkeit, die nostalgische Verklärung der Universität, des Humboldt'schen Bildungsideals sowie ihrer autonomen, mündigen und selbstbestimmten Subjekte das Reden über ‚die‘ Universität schnell in ein Lamento über die zunehmende Schwierigkeit, wenn nicht Unmöglichkeit freier und unabhängiger Forschung unter dem Diktat fortschreitender Ökonomisierung, Effizienz und Nützlichkeit umschlagen (Finzi 2016, 41).

Waren wir also einmal mehr dem abendländischen Denken in einander ausschließenden Binaritäten aufgesessen, das mit weltfremdem Kulturpessimismus ‚den Neoliberalismus‘ mit ‚Bologna‘, ‚Maastricht‘ zum bösen Buben macht? Hier rät Gerald Lind, auch praktischen Ernst zu machen mit der Derrida'schen Idee der *unbedingten Universität*:¹ „Es liegt an uns, den unglücklich in Wissenschaft und Universität Verliebten, den Ambivalenzraum Universität positiv zu polen“ (Lind 2016, 28). Nichts könnte besser die Produktivität dieses Gedankens illustrieren, als die Vorträge, Diskussionen und Gespräche des 18. und 19. Oktober 2018, die, von Studierenden und Lehrenden des translationswissenschaftlichen Instituts simultan zwischen Englisch und Deutsch hin- und herübersetzt, mit den Sprachen auch zwanglos die Erfahrungsperspektiven wechselten.

Dass das Pflegen und Aushalten von Ambivalenzen strategisch dennoch zu kurz griff, merkten wir, als wir daran gingen, die Vorträge in einem Tagungsband mit der fachlichen und universitären Öffentlichkeit zu teilen – also genau das zu tun, was doch auch in den Anforderungen von ‚Impact‘, ‚Performance‘, ‚Internationalität‘ und ‚Gesellschaftsrelevanz‘ impliziert zu sein scheint. Es wurde ein sechs Jahre währender Prozess, der nicht nur durch die Pandemie sowie personelle Engpässe an unserem Institut in die Länge gezogen wurde, sondern auch von frustrierenden Aushandlungen um Finanzierung und Publikationsmodalitäten geprägt war. Zunächst lag es nahe, einen Themenband eines Fachjournals zu gestalten und dabei den offenen Austausch der Tagung als autonome Redaktionsarbeit in bewusster Zweisprachigkeit fortzuführen. Hier nun mussten wir zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass diese Vorstellung allein schon wegen der Vorgaben des *double-blind peer reviewing*, das ein homogenisierendes Wissenschaftsenglisch voraussetzte, gar nicht erst diskutierbar war.

Wie die systemische Dysfunktionalität gouvernementaler (Wissenschafts-)Bürokratien kritische Inhalte zugleich vereinnahmt und aushebelt (also das, was Mark

1 Vgl. Beitrag von Klaus Schönberger in diesem Sammelband.

Fisher als „reflexive Impotence“ diagnostiziert, Fisher 2009: 21), führte uns schließlich die eigene Universität im Zusammenspiel mit dem sozialwissenschaftlichen Verlag vor Augen, den wir als nächstes anvisierten. Zwischenzeitlich nämlich war der Publikationsservice der Uni Graz auf die ausschließliche Förderung von Open Access umgestellt worden. Nicht mehr die beste Verlagsbetreuung, sondern das preisgünstigste Angebot für ‚Golden Open Access‘ hatte den Ausschlag zu geben. In einer umfänglichen „Publikationsachterbahnfahrt“², die sich über einen Gutteil des Jahres 2021 zog, wurden wir zunächst ins deutsche Programm eines global agierenden Wissenschaftsverlags aufgenommen. Dann plötzlich erreichten uns formalisierte Aufforderungen des Londoner Verlagsbüros der Gruppe, uns unter ganz neuen Konditionen als englischsprachige Publikation zu bewerben. Zwar konnten wir uns mit unserer deutschen Lektorin über die Bürokratisierung und Neoliberalisierung von Verlags- und Universitätsstrukturen austauschen. Allerdings gelang es ihr so wenig wie uns, beide Institutionen – die sich doch in ihrer Rhetorik der Maximierung von gesellschaftlichem impact und outreach so gut ergänzten –, zu einer Verständigung auf gemeinsame Open-Access-Modalitäten zu bewegen. Schließlich gaben wir auf, erst die Aussicht, das Buch auf einer traditionellen gewerkschaftlichen Plattform zu veröffentlichen und uns dabei von Aktualitäts- wie Impactsanforderungen zu lösen, ließ uns (vorübergehend) Morgenluft wittern.

Zwischenzeitlich ist viel passiert. Die über Jahre hinweg aufgebaute Zusammenarbeit innerhalb der COIMBRA Working Group Social Sciences & Humanities wurde seitens der Uni Graz eingestellt. Von 2020 bis 2023 wurden in einem der geisteswissenschaftlichen Fakultät auferlegten Strategieprozess ungezählte Gremiensitzungen, fachliche Stellungnahmen und Konzeptentwürfe im durchaus widersprüchlichen Ansinnen aufgewendet, unsere Fächer und Institute auf ‚Gesellschaftsrelevanz‘ und ‚Sichtbarkeit‘ zu trimmen – mit dem Ziel, so ein unterstelltes ökonomisches Defizit in der Akquise von Drittmitteln und prüfungsaktiven Studierenden auszugleichen.

Die Fakultät soll dadurch gestärkt und zukunftsfähig ausgerichtet werden, die Stimme der Geisteswissenschaften soll in Zukunft in der Gesellschaft mehr Gehör finden, und die gesellschaftliche Relevanz der Geisteswissenschaften deutlich sichtbarer werden.

Die Geisteswissenschaftliche Fakultät soll eine Einheit darstellen und ein unverwechselbares Profil entwickeln. Die derzeitige (vielfältige) Struktur der Fakultät muss daher auch, um die Zukunftsfähigkeit sicher zu stellen, einen darstellbaren Mehrwert in Forschung und Lehre generieren (Polaschek 2020).

2 Aus einer Email von Lydia Arantes vom 26.3.2021.

2021 sorgte die Novellierung des österreichischen Universitätsgesetzes, von der Öffentlichkeit, aber auch den betroffenen Nachwuchswissenschaftler:innen selbst fast unbemerkt, für weitere massive Einschränkungen nicht-professoraler wissenschaftlicher Universitätskarrieren. Darüber hinaus sahen die Kolleg:innen in einer Stellungnahme der Generalversammlung der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft in Österreich die vielfältigen progressiven Potenziale weiter ausgehöhlt, die besonders „in den (bisweilen kleinen) sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Fächern“ zu finden seien:

Sie vermitteln und entwickeln kritisches Denken und stellen historische Grundlagen von Wissen, Kenntnissen, Werten, Erfahrung und Bedeutung zur Verfügung, die Kultur und Gesellschaft ausmachen. Diese werden häufig als komplementäre Studienfächer gewählt und fördern interdisziplinäres und eigenständiges Denken. [...] Nach wie vor leisten diese Fächer, nicht zuletzt durch ihre Kompetenzen in der interdisziplinären Zusammenarbeit und internationalen Vernetzung, einen eminent wichtigen Beitrag zur Profil- und Strukturbildung der Universitäten ebenso wie zur Entwicklung einer zukunftsorientierten, wertebasierten und aufgeschlossenen Gesellschaft (GVEKW 2021).

Zeitgleich meldete sich auch die in der *Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv)*³ organisierte Empirische Kulturwissenschaft, Europäische Ethnologie, Kulturanthropologie etc. in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz in einer lebhaften Selbstverständigung zu Wort. 2021, im Jubiläumsjahr der denkwürdigen Umbenennung des vormaligen Tübinger Universitätsinstituts für Deutsche Volkskunde von 1971 sollte der altehrwürdige Dachverband nachziehen. Dabei aber ging es längst nicht mehr nur um Nabel- und Namensschau, sondern vor allem um die ganz spezifischen Potenziale eines Faches und seiner Methoden, die nun an ihrer Fähigkeit gemessen wurden, *curiosity* mit gesellschaftlichem *commitment* zu verbinden. Stellvertretend möchte ich die Stellungnahme von Beate Binder aus der Aufzeichnung der (online abgehaltenen) Podiumsdiskussion am 25. März 2021 im Vorfeld der geplanten Umbenennung der dgv zitieren. Dabei plädierten Beate Binder und weitere Fachvertreter:innen dafür, neben ‚Empirische Kulturwissenschaft‘ auch die Fachbezeichnung ‚Europäische Ethnologie‘ beizubehalten. Nun soll es hier keinesfalls darum gehen, vergangene Namensdispute und teils schmerzliche Polarisierungen weiterzutragen. Relevant scheint in diesem Zusammenhang jedoch einerseits der vehement geforderte Einbezug des Ethnografischen

3 Seit September 2021 *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft* (Englisch: *German Society for Cultural Analysis | European Ethnology*).

als spezifische Form der Erkenntnis und der Wissensproduktion, in der die Reflexivität eine ganz große Rolle spielt, in der die normativitätskritischen Grundlagen eine ganz große Rolle spielen, und ein spezifischer Empirie-Theorie-Nexus eine Rolle spielt (dgv 2021).

Zum anderen sollten bewusst auch europäische Bezüge offengehalten werden – und dies gerade „nicht im Sinne von area studies oder irgendwelchen seltsam begrenzten Zuständigkeiten“, sondern als besondere Kompetenz des Faches, mit postkolonialer Perspektivierung

Europa in seinen globalen Verflechtungen in den Blick zu nehmen, das Europäische als ein Wissensraum, als ein Raum, der natürlich auch an vielen Entwicklungen [...] beteiligt ist, [um] das gleichzeitig auch ein Stück weit zu dezentrieren (dgv 2021).

Von hier aus gelangen wir zum Programm des endlich vorliegenden Bandes, das seine universitätspolitische Relevanz und kulturwissenschaftliche Spezifik aus einem Dreiecksverhältnis erhält: Die Beiträge versammeln, erstens, europäische Perspektiven, die in einem langjährigen freundschaftlichen Austausch entstammen und die gegenwärtige Transformationen universitärer Lebens- und Arbeitsbedingungen aus teils sehr unterschiedlichen Wissenschaftstraditionen und politischen Konstellationen von der Türkei über Finnland, Großbritannien und Irland bis Deutschland und Österreich in Blick nehmen.

Sie nehmen, zweitens, das (inter-)disziplinäre Selbstbewusstsein einer engagierten Kulturanthropologie, angewandten Kulturwissenschaft und reflexiven Ethnografie als Ausgangspunkt, ganz im Sinne der Argumentation von Boone W. Shear und Susan Brin Hyatt

that ethnography, with its emphasis on lived experience, can be a particularly effective tool with which to explore both the slippage, discontinuity and surprise between the global and the local, between structure and agency and between theory and practice (Shear und White 2017: 3).

Drittens schließen wir uns den vorgenannten Autor:innen dahingehend an, als wir bei aller Kritik und schwammiger Abgegriffenheit den Begriff des Neoliberalismus als Klammer einer erfahrungsbasierten Befragung universitätspolitischer Transformationen beibehalten:

Appearing once as heterogenous in its manifestations yet coherent as a project, neoliberalism can operate as a sort of master signifier that gathers together a motley mix of social processes and deleterious conditions in the social field (Shear und White 2017: 4).

Die Anwendung neoliberaler Prinzipien auf universitäre Forschung und Bildung bringt eine große Deutungsmacht für Zahlen mit sich, „metric power“ (Beer 2016). Diese schlägt sich beispielsweise im Publikationsimperativ, welcher auch unter dem Motto „publish or perish“ läuft, nieder.

Metric power, as an outgrowth of neoliberal ideology, holds sway over academic livelihoods in other ways. Perhaps most pernicious are the pressures and attendant metrics of publication. In the UK, the familiar ‘publish or perish’ motto has been re-written. It is no longer enough just to publish; one must publish in the ‘right’ formats, with the ‘right’ presses, in the ‘right’ journals and in the ‘right’ timeframes (Feldman und Sandoval 2018: 221).

Zeit und Muße, um Publikationen reifen zu lassen, gibt es kaum. Die Maschine muss laufen. Davon ist auch das ursprüngliche Bestreben, diesen Band rasch zu publizieren nicht ausgenommen. Jedoch brachten einerseits die beschriebene Publikationsachterbahnfahrt sowie andererseits die Corona-Pandemie eine zeitweilige Beruhigung des Publikationsbestrebens mit sich. *Curiosity* und *commitment* ließen sich nicht ohne Weiteres am Laufen halten. Zu lähmend schienen die Widrigkeiten, die sich dem Vorhaben in den Weg stellten, um dem Publikationsimperativ Folge zu leisten. Was tun? Sein lassen? Weil die Texte alt sind?

Ein abermaliger Blick auf die Texte verrät rasch, dass sie immer noch kaum an Gültigkeit verloren haben. Das uns aufgezwungene Zeit-Lassen und Ruhen-Lassen hat letztlich deutlich gemacht, dass die Texte keine kurzlebigen Momentaufnahmen darstellen, sondern Einblicke in Veränderungen geben, die immer noch gravierende Auswirkungen auf Forschung und Lehre haben.

Überblick über die Beiträge

Die in diesem Sammelband versammelten Beiträge umfassen eine Reihe von Fallstudien aus verschiedenen europäischen Ländern, die jeweils unterschiedliche Herausforderungen, aber auch Chancen im Hinblick auf den Wandel europäischer Universitäten und die sich verändernden Anforderungen im tertiären Bildungssektor aufzeigen. Während Klaus Schönberger und, expliziter, Johannes Moser die Entwicklungen in der österreichischen und deutschen Hochschullandschaft anhand ihrer eigenen Erfahrungen als Professoren für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie, Dekane oder Mitglieder von Hochschulgremien etc. aufschlüsseln, geben die Designforscherin Britta Kalkreuter und der Germanist Jürgen Barkhoff vorsichtig optimistische Einblicke in britische und irische Kontexte. Darüber hinaus legt Güldem Baykal Büyüksaraç ihre „response-abilities“ als Anthropologin

und Aktionsforscherin offen, die mit lokalen Gemeinschaften in der Türkei arbeitet. Sanja Potkonjak und Nevena Škrbić Alempijević reflektieren anhand zweier kroatischer Forschungsprojekte über die sich wandelnde Rolle der Universität innerhalb neoliberaler Wissensökonomien. Schließlich nutzt die Folkloristin Ulrika Wolf-Knuts die *Åbo Akademi Universitet* in Finnland als Fallstudie, um diverse Unterschiede zwischen der Zeit vor und nach dem Universitätsgesetz von 2009 herauszuarbeiten, im Zuge dessen Universitäten in Unternehmen transformiert wurden.

Angewandte Kulturanthropologie

Die Frage, was angewandte Anthropologie ist und welche und wessen Bedürfnisse sie befriedigt, wird insbesondere in den Beiträgen von Büyüksaraç und Schönberger behandelt. Büyüksaraç plädiert für eine angewandte Anthropologie, die sich als politisch engagiert versteht und insofern Forschende zu Vermittelnden zwischen politischen Entscheidungsträger:innen und lokalen Communities macht. Mit ihrer interdisziplinären Arbeit an der Schnittstelle von lokalen Gemeinschaften, Kommunalverwaltungen, staatlicher Bürokratie, archäologischem und ökologischem Fachwissen sowie Kultur(erbe)tourismus schärft sie nicht nur das öffentliche Bewusstsein für die unmittelbaren Anliegen ihrer Forschungsteilnehmenden (z. B. Zugang zu natürlichen Ressourcen, Landnutzung und Eigentumsrechte), sondern trägt auch zum Wohlbefinden der Communities bei. Indem sie über ihre eigene Rolle als Forscherin und Anwältin nachdenkt, spricht sie daher auch die so genannte ‚anthropological debt‘ an: „the obligation of ‘giving back’ to the communities we intrude into and desire to mingle with as we conduct our research“. Sie warnt aber auch vor den Fallstricken, die mit dieser Art von angewandter Anthropologie einhergehen, nämlich dem Dilemma der Bevormundung derer, denen wir Gehör verschaffen wollen.

Schönbergers Konzeptualisierung einer angewandten Kulturanthropologie geht in eine andere Richtung. Als Professor für Kulturanthropologie an der Universität Klagenfurt/Österreich ist er an der Entwicklung und Lehre (im Rahmen) des einzigen, auch in der Kursbezeichnung als angewandt ausgewiesenen Studienprogramms beteiligt, das an österreichischen Fakultäten für Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie/Kulturanalyse angeboten wird. Schönberger kritisiert einerseits die Vermarktlichung der Universität und die damit einhergehenden Vorstellungen von anwendungsorientierter Forschung. Andererseits schlägt er einen proaktiven Ansatz vor, der eine genauere Betrachtung dessen beinhaltet, was angewandte Anthropologie ist und sein könnte. Anstatt Theorie gegen Praxis auszuspielen – wie es in der Kritik seiner Studierenden an der Theorie als irrelevant für ihre zukünftige

Berufspraxis zum Ausdruck kommt –, plädiert er für Theorie als grundlegenden Bestandteil und unabdingbare Voraussetzung für Praxis.

Sowohl Schönberger als auch Wolf-Knuts erwähnen neben dem bereits erwähnten Paternalismus weitere Dilemmata, die eine als angewandt begriffene Anthropologie mit sich bringen kann, nämlich die Bedienung nationalistischer Agenden. Wolf-Knuts sieht die Versuchung in einigen Ländern, nationalistische Forschung zu betreiben, darin, dass sie – in Zeiten, in denen die autonome Universität Drittmittel einwerben muss – finanziell einträglich ist, und fragt sich: „Can we shape the study of culture in such a way that it works as a counter-weight to nationalism?“ Schönberger verweist auf das Beispiel Kärntens, das immer noch in die Nachwehen von Zeiten verstrickt ist, in denen volkskundliches Wissen auf unterschiedliche Weise instrumentalisiert wurde, wie etwa in den 1930er Jahren, in der Haider-Ära sowie in der Kommerzialisierung von Volkskultur im Kontext von Kärnten als Tourismusland. Da Tourismus einer jener Sektoren ist, in dem Studierende der Angewandten Kulturwissenschaften Arbeit finden werden, fordert er uns dazu auf, zu überdenken, welches Wissen über „Volkskultur“, über erfundene Traditionen etc. wir weitergeben wollen. Sein pragmatischer Vorschlag lautet, Wissen zu vermitteln, das die Studierenden fit für den Arbeitsmarkt macht *und* sie gleichzeitig kritisch gegenüber Folklorismus sowie der verbreiteten Dichotomie zwischen Authentizität und Kommerzialisierung macht.

Neoliberalisierung universitärer Bildung und Forschung

Die Neoliberalisierung der Universität ist ein weiterer Themenkomplex, der von den meisten Autor:innen und Beiträgen dieses Bandes zumindest am Rande beleuchtet wird. Insbesondere Johannes Moser identifiziert und diskutiert in diesem Zusammenhang zwei entscheidende Veränderungen innerhalb der Hochschullandschaft in Deutschland: die sogenannte Bologna-Reform der universitären Bildung – welche Studierende in Kund:innen eines Dienstleistungsunternehmens umdefiniert – und die starke Ausrichtung auf Drittmittel. Ersteres hat dazu geführt, dass finanzielle Mittel zunehmend für die Verwaltung, Steuerung und Evaluierung von Universitäten eingesetzt werden, während diese Mittel der Verbesserung von Lehr- und Forschungsbedingungen viel besser dienen würden, wie er beklagt. Letzteres führt nicht nur dazu, dass Forschungsideen auf die Dauer von Forschungsprojekten und Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten zugeschnitten werden, sondern hat auch Auswirkungen auf die weitere Prekarisierung des wissenschaftlichen Personals.

Anhand von zwei Projekten, die unter ihrer Leitung am Institut für Ethnologie und Kulturanthropologie in Zagreb durchgeführt wurden, machen Potkonjak und

Škrbić Alempijević auf die widersprüchlichen Anforderungen aufmerksam, denen die Kulturanthropologie in Kroatien ausgesetzt ist. Das erste Projekt umfasste eine Arbeitsmarktanalyse sowie eine Umfrage unter Absolvent:innen und versuchte herauszufinden, welche Fähigkeiten und Kenntnisse Studierende erwerben müssen, um fit für den Markt zu sein. Das zweite Projekt mit dem schönen Titel *Images of Utopia* hingegen war ethnographisch angelegt und fragte danach, was eine Universität dazu beitragen kann, aus Studierenden aktive Bürger:innen zu machen. Ihr Beitrag verweist auf die heikle und vielfältig ausgestaltete Gratwanderung von Disziplinen wie Kulturanthropologie/Ethnologie: sich gleichzeitig den Logiken des Arbeitsmarktes anzupassen und die Studierenden zu kritischen und sozial engagierten Mitgliedern der Gesellschaft zu heranzubilden.

In ihrem vergleichenden Zugang auf die finnische *Åbo Akademi Universität* wirft Wolf-Knuts einen Blick auf die Unterschiede vor und nach Inkrafttreten des in Finnland erlassenen *Universities Act* 2009. In einem Streifzug durch diverse Facetten der Institution Universität – finanzielle Angelegenheiten, Hochschulpolitik und -verwaltung, Studierender, Forschung, Lehre, Forschungsprofile und -projekte usw. – arbeitet sie die Differenzen zwischen der Zeit vor und nach der Reform heraus. Des Weiteren zeigt sie auf, dass freie und experimentelle Forschung (u.a. auch aufgrund des Peer Review-Prozesses) selten geworden sei. Zuguterletzt habe die so genannte Third Mission derart an Bedeutung gewonnen, dass die Universitäten bzw. wissenschaftliches Personal und Studierende sich laut des finnischen *Universities Act* buchstäblich dazu aufgefordert sehen „[to] serve their country and humanity at large“.

Gesellschaftliche Relevanz

Sowohl Wolf-Knuts als auch Potkonjak und Škrbić Alempijević werfen eine Frage auf, die auch in anderen Beiträgen eine zentrale Rolle spielt, nämlich die der gesellschaftlichen Relevanz bzw. der gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen. Interessanterweise wird in beiden Beiträgen, die sich auf den britischen Kontext beziehen, eine positive Lesart von *impact-driven research* entwickelt. Impact ist, wie Barkhoff zeigt, ein Begriff, den die Geisteswissenschaften eher scheuen – unnötigerweise, wie er gleichzeitig feststellt. Als Kenner des so genannten REF (Research Excellence Framework), das britische Universitäten regelmäßig auch im Hinblick auf *societal impact* prüft, ist er der Meinung, dass die Geisteswissenschaften von einem engagierten und animierten Ansatz viel zu gewinnen haben, und stellt zwei besondere Projekte aus der Anthropologie und der Religionswissenschaft vor, die veranschaulichen, wie soziales Engagement und *societal impact* als solche an Förderorganisationen und andere Interessengruppen vermittelt werden können. Aus diesem Grund

ermutigt uns Barkhoff, „[to] develop a culture of research design that always includes a dimension beyond academia“.

In ihrem Text an der Schnittstelle von Designforschung und -ausbildung sowie Fragen nach der Gestaltung einer nachhaltigen Zukunft wirft Britta Kalkreuter einen Blick darauf, wie Designforschung und -ausbildung den globalen Herausforderungen begegnet. Design steht ihr zufolge im Zentrum vieler politischer Debatten und wird als „main driver for overconsumption“ und gleichzeitig als Allheilmittel für eine ökologische Wende wahrgenommen. Daher plädiert sie für Designforschung und -ausbildung als gesellschaftliche Bereicherung, welche Ideen für eine wünschenswerte Zukunft präsentiert anstatt Lösungen für ein (oft individuelles) kurzfristiges Wirtschaftswachstum anzubieten.

Während Wolf-Knuts mit der Behauptung zögert, dass sich die Situation für die Geisteswissenschaften und Künste im letzten Jahrzehnt verbessert hat, würden die meisten Autor:innen in diesem Band zumindest zustimmen, dass „damals“ nicht wirklich alles besser war als heute. Mit diesem vorsichtigen, aber hoffnungsvollen Optimismus möchten wir das Interesse an diesen Beiträgen wecken, die – während sie auf heikle Balanceakte hinweisen, die die neoliberale Universitätsreform mit sich gebracht hat – ein starkes Argument dafür liefern, dass die Kulturanthropologie viel zu einer besseren Zukunft für uns alle beizutragen hat.

Postskript: Seit diese Einleitung in Entwurfsversion vorliegt, ist eine weitere Kollegin zu uns ans Institut gestoßen, Caroline Gatt, welche sich derzeit in Forschung und Lehre in ähnlichen Themenkreisen bewegt. Wir haben sie deshalb spontan eingeladen, einen abschließenden Kommentar zu schreiben, welcher die Beiträge weiterdenkt, inhaltlich, fachlich, zeitlich. Mit *Neoliberalism and Coloniality are Two Sides of the Same Coin* betitelt sie ihren Kommentar und verweist damit auf die Verwobenheit dieser globalen Entwicklungen, die beiderseits durchdrungen sind vom „globalizing knowledge capitalism“. Bezugnehmend auf Studien von „Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars“ argumentiert sie folglich, dass eine Kritik an der Neoliberalisierung universitärer Forschung und Bildung unbedingt auch eine Kritik epistemischer Kolonialität beinhalten muss.

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Acting with the Community

Applied Anthropology in a New Perspective

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Zusammenfassung

Die angewandte Anthropologie hat eine lange, umstrittene Geschichte, die in der Regel auf die kolonialistischen und imperialistischen Macht- und Herrschaftsstrukturen zurückgeführt wird. Andererseits hat in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten das Interesse an engagierter Forschung in der Wissenschaft zugenommen. Vor diesem Hintergrund lädt das Papier dazu ein, über das nachzudenken, was man als „anthropologische Schuld“ bezeichnen könnte: die Verpflichtung, den menschlichen und nicht-menschlichen Wesen, mit denen wir arbeiten, den Gemeinschaften, mit denen wir zusammenarbeiten wollen, und den Orten, in die wir zu Forschungszwecken eindringen, „etwas zurückzugeben“. Wie ist es möglich, Forschung mit Parteilergreifen und engagiertem Handeln zu vereinbaren, ohne neue Formen von Asymmetrien zwischen Forschenden und Beforschten zu reproduzieren und zu schaffen? Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Frage erörtert dieser Beitrag die Legitimität und Effektivität der angewandten Anthropologie in der Auseinandersetzung mit der gegenwärtigen gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit, indem er die ethisch-politischen Herausforderungen dieser Teildisziplin hervorhebt und über mögliche Lösungen nachdenkt.

Schlagwörter: angewandte Anthropologie, aktivistische Forschung, Kulturkritik, Engagement

Abstract

Applied anthropology has a long controversial history, usually traced back to the colonialist and imperialist structures of power and domination. On the other hand, over the past two decades, there has been increased interest in community-engaged research in academia. Against this backdrop, the paper invites to reflect on what can be called ‘anthropological debt’: the obligation of ‘giving back’ to the human and non-human beings we work on, to the communities we desire to mingle with, to the places we intrude into for research purposes. How is it possible to reconcile research with advocacy and action, without reproducing and creating new forms of asymmetries between the researcher and the researched? With this question in mind, the paper discusses the legitimacy and effectiveness of applied anthropology in engaging with the current social reality, by accentuating the ethico-political issues involved in this sub-discipline and reflecting on probable solutions.

Keywords: applied anthropology, activist research, cultural critique, advocacy

Over the past two decades, there has been an increased interest in community-engaged research¹ in social sciences, particularly in fields such as community archaeology, indigenous geography, studies in social well-being and sustainable development.² Concurrently, a growing number of projects in these and cognate fields are carried out by multi-disciplinary teams that often include anthropologists to contribute to the design and implementation of the research. Anthropology, and its ethnographic methods, is being re-discovered in a fresh light and revalued in the broader spectrum of social research that seeks to translate scientific findings into effective and ethical action. This new moment of scholarly reflexivity and participatory activism provides a backdrop against which we can re-consider the significance of applied research in social science disciplines and particularly in anthropology today.

Many critics strictly differentiate applied and non-applied research. As they view it, applied anthropology is ‘a stepchild of colonialism, [which] came of age during the Cold War [only] to find itself maturing into a partisan of neoliberal globalization in the name of a kinder, gentler cultural sensitivity and sometimes more openly as cost-effective market-based research’ (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgeois 2004: 7–8). As a matter of fact, applied research is coeval with the general discipline:³ ‘Within the history of anthropology, application came first, serving as the impetus for some of the earliest academic departments, which were obviously shaped by colonial imperative but also motivated by a desire for systemic reforms’ (Ervin 2000: 14; cited in Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006: 179).

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- 1 Here is a widely circulated definition: ‘Community engaged research (CEnR) is a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. CEnR identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process. Advocates assert that it promotes better research and translation of findings. Other benefits of CEnR include development of research that is responsive to community need, increased capacity built through partnerships, expanded funding opportunities and greater opportunities to translate findings into practice [adapted from the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching and Centers of Disease Control and Prevention].’ See <https://community.vcu.edu/faculty-support/-cenr-support-at-vcu/what-is-community-engaged-research/> (accessed 10 August 2022).
- 2 See, for example, Atalay 2007; Derry and Malloy 2003; Hall et al. 2016; Larsen and Johnson 2016; McNaughton and Rock 2004; Merriman 2004; Murton 2012; Watson and Waterton 2008; Rosenzweig and Dissard 2013; Stroulia 2018; Sutter et al. 2016.
- 3 It is usually argued that applied work climaxed during the moments of crisis and conflict such as World War II or the Vietnam War. Examples include anthropologists’ participation in Japanese American relocation camps as ‘community analysts’ or their involvement in military propaganda work (Price 1998; Wax 1971; cited in Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006: 180).

The relationship between anthropology and advocacy goes back to the early twentieth century. Remember how Franz Boas, who as a German Jewish intellectual had ended up in the U.S. for political reasons, waged war against the scientific racism of Victorian ethnology. Consider how Margaret Mead, following in Boas' footsteps, believed that anthropology should play a part in social change. 'Never doubt,' she asserted, 'that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.'⁴ There are anthropology departments in the United States today that proudly proclaim this statement of Margaret Mead as their maxim and directly pursue it.⁵ Furthermore, as early as the fifties, action-oriented research began to incorporate participatory methods, where the researched individual would change status 'from object to be known to a subject that can control [the research process]' (Van Willigen 2002: 43). This method has been mostly adopted by the proponents of community-directed development and self-determination (Dobyns et al. 1971; Dougherty 1987; Holmberg 1958; Tax 1958; 1960).⁶

It is, after all, not a seamless disciplinary history but rather full of tensions and embargoes on certain research activities, especially those engaged with the pressing socio-political issues of their time. Applied social scientists have rarely found their niche in academic institutions, which were organized from 1880s onwards based on a Tayloristic division of labour that imposed hard boundaries between disciplinary areas (Greenwood 2008). Some reformers have been denied tenureship, some expelled from universities, while the rest of the academia has largely internalized 'the lesson that they should focus on building theory, being "objective", writing mainly for each other in a language of their own creation, building professional associations, and staying away from political controversies' (Greenwood 2008: 321). Society for Applied Anthropology was established in 1941 'as a reaction to the disdain for applied anthropology demonstrated by the 'pure' anthropologists who ruled the American Anthropological Association' (ibid.).

While activist research was never warmly welcomed by the North American academia, a somewhat nuanced version of it, referred to as 'action research',⁷ managed to find a foothold in the European institutions such as the Tavistock Institute for

4 <https://culturalanthropology.duke.edu/about/anthropology-activism> (accessed 10 August 2022).

5 See, for example, the website of the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke <https://culturalanthropology.duke.edu/about/anthropology-activism> (accessed 10 August 2022).

6 There are impressive examples of such research from the fifties onwards, and those interested in this topic can browse through *Human Organization*, the journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology. For examples of collaborative research published in other venues and for related discussions, see Greenwood and Levin 1998; J. Schensul and S. Schensul 1992; Weidman 1976.

7 American anthropology would become familiar with action research largely through Sol Tax's studies about a native American people, the Meskwaki, and particularly through the Fox Project. See Tax 1958; 1960. See also Footnote 13.

Human Relations (1946) based in London. Action research soon became a highly esteemed practice in the United Kingdom as well as in Scandinavia, particularly thanks to studies in organizational development, human resource management, environmental sciences and adult education. Nonetheless, significant researchers like Eric Trist and Einar Thorsrud, who are widely referred to as the leading figures of organizational development, had ‘no anchor in the higher education system’ (Greenwood 2008: 322).

Despite all the challenges so far posed by the political economy of research in the United States and Europe, applied social science finds its way through the cracks of the higher education system, proving while it *does not have to be* bounded by state- or market-oriented perspectives. As a matter of fact, all the endeavours to combine theory and practise in the reformist fields have confirmed that applied anthropology does not necessarily involve working with power holders at the expense of local stakeholders. Applied anthropology can be redefined as ‘anthropology for change’ rather than ‘anthropology in use’ which means we need to dispense with conventional notions of application. Anthropology-in-use entails the application of the disciplinary theories, concepts, and methods ‘to confront human problems that often contribute to profound social suffering’ (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006: 179). Anthropology-for-change, on the other hand, implies doing research to make a difference, by putting knowledge into the service not only of those who try to cope with difficulties (oppression, social inequality etc.) but also of those who resist and act against whatever causes such difficulties. The issue at stake is whether we can carry out anthropology as a discipline with transformative, if not revolutionary, potential. This leads us to the key questions that underlie the discussion here: How can we reconcile anthropological research with advocacy and action? And, how can we manage to do it without reproducing, and creating new forms of, asymmetries between the researcher and the researched?

Spirit of the Barbados Declaration

Anthropology took form within and became an instrument of colonial domination, openly or surreptitiously; it has often rationalised and justified in scientific language the domination of some people by others. The discipline has continued to supply information and methods of action useful for maintaining, reaffirming, and disguising social relations of a colonial nature. Latin America has been and is no exception, and with growing frequency we note nefarious Indian action programmes and the dissemination of stereotypes and myths distorting and masking the Indian situation – all pretending to have their basis in alleged scientific anthropological research. The Declaration of Barbados: For the Liberation of the Indians (30 January 1971)

The anthropology now required in Latin America is not that which relates to Indians as objects of study, but rather that which perceives the colonial situation and commits itself to the struggle for liberation. In this context we see anthropology providing the colonized people with the data and interpretations both about themselves and their colonizers useful for their own fight for freedom (Dostal 1972: 380; cited in Hale 2006: 99).

The Declaration of Barbados I quote above appeared at a time when American anthropology had already been engaged in a self-reflexive critique of its colonial roots. It was the time for anthropology to confront with its own complicity in the white man's project to educate and civilize the non-white, and to reflect on the political and ethical consequences of the knowledge it had so far produced about those peoples dehumanised by the colonialist and imperialist structures of power and domination. The last straw for many academics was perhaps Project Camelot in the mid-sixties, where the U.S. Defence Department attempted to commission a group of social scientists to conduct empirical research overseas on the social dynamics of conflict and change. The project had been planned to cover twenty-one countries to give priority to places with a higher risk of insurgency and civil war. Camelot was unearthed while an anthropologist (Hugo Nutini, a naturalised U.S. citizen born in Chile) was planning a preliminary research trip to Chile with the funding granted by the project office. This is how the Chilean left launched a sensationalist media campaign to portray Camelot as part of a larger conspiracy to overthrow the Allende government. The project was halted because of the increasing reactions against aggressive U.S. interventionism and eventually passed into the history of social sciences as an evil plot 'akin to "the Fall of Man" in Christian theology' (Wax 1978: 400).

Once publicly noticed, Camelot was vehemently denounced by many anthropologists from within and outside the United States. There already was growing awareness, and concern, about anthropology's supposed role as a conspirator in imperial projects and its ambiguous position vis-à-vis the state power.⁸ It was mainly this concern that paved the way for a more systematic approach to research ethics to be embodied in a statement, entitled 'Principles of Professional Responsibility.'⁹ The principles were proclaimed by the Council of American Anthropological Association (AAA) in May 1971 as a statement of professional responsibilities to multiple

8 For a foundational critique of the colonial roots of anthropology, see Asad 1973; Gough 1968; Hymes 1974.

9 For the full text, visit: <http://www.americananthro.org/ParticipateAndAdvocate/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=1656> (accessed 10 August 2022).

parties, namely, the people studied, society at large, the discipline of anthropology, students, research sponsors, and governments.¹⁰

At around the same time, briefly before the AAA's declaration, the World Council of Churches invited a group of academics from the University of Bern (Switzerland) to organize a meeting as part of the Program to Combat Racism.¹¹ This is how eleven anthropologists of the Americas (one from Europe) came together in Barbados for the Symposium on Inter-Ethnic Conflict in South America (January 25–30, 1971). At the end of the symposium, a declaration was issued, largely informed by the reports of tribal populations' situation in Central America. The statement indicated a call for

the termination of colonial relationships, internal and external; the breaking down of the class system of human exploitation and ethnic domination; a displacement of economic and political power from a limited group or an oligarchic minority to the popular majority; the creation of a truly multi-ethnic state in which each ethnic group possesses the right to self-determination and the free selection of available social and cultural alternatives (Current Anthropology, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Jun. 1973): 268).

This was a call on national governments, religious missions, and social scientists, anthropologists in particular, to take actions necessary to 'halt [the colonial] aggression and contribute significantly to the process of Indian liberation' (ibid.). The statement did not have a considerable impact on the mainstream anthropology, largely because of 'poor understanding of the analyses presented, or failure of anthropologists to recognize the historic role of indigenous peoples in the formation of their own future' (Wright 1988: 375). For many, including myself, however, the Declaration of Barbados marks a threshold in self-reflexive anthropology. The statement is particularly relevant to the present discussion as it indicates an attitude change with respect to applied research in anthropology. The very historical context, in which this statement emerged, implies how hollow the idea of value-free social science is, also reminds us how difficult it is to make a sharp distinction between (disengaged) theory and practice.

This was a pivotal moment that changed the course of applied anthropology towards an activist tradition focused on the question of self-determination. Prior to

10 Since its foundation in 1902, the AAA has issued five statements and resolutions other than the one dated 1971 (amended in November 1986): Resolution on Freedom of Publication (December 1948), Statement on Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics (March 1967), Code of Ethics approved in June 1998, Code of Ethics approved in February 2009, Principles of Professional Responsibility updated in November 2012. Statements are available at <http://www.americananthro.org/ParticipateAndAdvocate/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=1656> (accessed 10 August 2022).

11 The rest of this section has largely been informed by Wright 1988.

Barbados, applied anthropology had taken several forms: policy-oriented practices where the anthropologist played the role of ‘technical specialist in the colonial process’; non-interventionist studies that undertook community-improvement programs; action research such as the Fox Project;¹² ethnohistory that sought to decolonise Native American histories; and ‘urgent anthropology’ which was concerned more with “data in the process of extinction” than with the well-being of the people studied’ (Wright 1988: 370–371). Interestingly enough, in none of these versions of applied research did anthropologists seriously consider their own commitment to the peoples they worked on and question their privileged positions. While some adamantly maintained neutrality and technical rigour (e.g. Firth 1961; Foster 1969; cited in Wright 1988), those engaged in liberation movements, like the indigenists in Mexico, acted as the ‘redeemers’ of native peoples, trying to dominate the public sphere at the expense of local voices (Wright 1988: 370).

The Declaration of Barbados was the harbinger of a new era of advocacy for indigenous rights. It inspired a young generation of anthropologists who would establish an organic bond with the rising Indian movement of the Americas, a process that led in the seventies to an unprecedented thriving of indigenous and advocacy organizations across the world. Many indigenous activists found the chance to meet with academics at the Second Barbados Conference held in 1977 and to discuss with them not only their own concerns and ambitions but also broader questions of emancipatory politics, such as ‘the possibilities of alliances with other ethnic groups, classes, political organizations, labour unions’ in other geographies (Wright 1988: 377).

With its refreshed notions of colonialism and ethnicity,¹³ anthropological insight, which had proven to be vital for indigenous movements by the mid-seventies, greatly contributed to public debates on development and dependency, as well. The culturalist theories of the past had sought to explain the ‘backwardness’ of native peoples in terms of traditionalism or cultural deficiency, masking the history of colonial domination and indigenous subordination. A critical perspective was already

12 The Fox Project was led by Sol Tax in the late 1940’s in the United States among the Mesquakies, an indigenous community in Central Iowa commonly known as Fox Indians. The purpose of the project was helping the community make changes that they wished through actions such as the endorsement of local cooperative initiatives and scholarship programs for youngsters. The project is widely appreciated for having inspired many indigenist studies and advocacy campaigns of the seventies (Wright 1988: 370–371).

13 This new perspective was largely shaped by Fredrik Barth’s studies that opened a new era in the literature on ethnicity. Barth’s research was also essential to the development of critical approaches to the culturalist perspective of classical anthropology, and the idea of acculturation in particular, which had ‘directly served the interest of colonial penetration’ (Wright 1988: 369).

in place by the late seventies to demonstrate the problematic nature of earlier explanations and to define ‘underdevelopment’ as a result of relations of dependency between industrial centres (colonising powers) and peripheral areas (colonised peoples). This critique paved the way for the formulation of alternative models of development planning that would prioritise the concerns of native peoples and engage the local stakeholders in the projects.

Critical Theory, Activist Research, and the Question of Representation

Contemporary anthropology has developed its self-reflexive capacity mainly thanks to the critical moves of the seventies and eighties, particularly to the path-breaking interdisciplinary forum known as *cultural critique*.¹⁴ A common issue raised in this genre is ‘the crisis of representation’ as it is called, which is, anthropology’s ability to represent other peoples as the objects of its study. The expression of ‘crisis’ does not only imply the discipline’s capacity for speaking the truth, but also challenges both objectivity and validity of the knowledge produced. It indicates a moment of revelation, so to speak, about the hierarchical relations and power dynamics built into the research process and suggests increased alertness to the tendency of anthropological writing to obscure these relations and to bolster the ethnographer’s authority. Furthermore, cultural critique takes issue with power-laden categories widely employed by mainstream anthropology as portraying social and cultural phenomena. Its political thrust resides in its ‘enthusiasm for deconstruction of the powerful to find “the fissures” in dominant categories of “knowledge production”, and to open space for “self-doubt and uncertainty”’ (Hale 2006: 102).

Cultural critics are progressive scholars in multiple senses. They are methodologically innovative in the first place, if we consider George Marcus’s proposal for ‘multi-sited ethnography’ (Marcus 1995, 1998), or ‘collaborative’ methods suggested by George Marcus and Michael Fischer for getting informants actively involved in research (Marcus and Fischer 1986). Secondly, they offer to ‘repatriate’ anthropology to home societies, encouraging it to look back at the West, to explore modernity. They approach topics that are otherwise studied by sociologists, such as mod-

14 Cultural critique was inspired and informed by various theoretical and methodological approaches, including the early Frankfurt school, interpretive anthropology, feminism (e.g. Donna Haraway’s idea of ‘situated knowledge’), cultural studies, and the epistemological criticisms of analytic reason and science. The most influential figures who almost led the discourse include George Marcus, Michael Fischer, and James Clifford. See Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus 1998; Marcus and Fischer 1986.

ern medicine, technology, urbanization, or kinship in the West (ibid.). And whatever they intend to study, the impression is that they would never lose the claim to produce ‘emancipatory’ knowledge. Marcus, for example, is particularly sensible to the political implications of cultural critique. As a distinct form of disciplinary criticism, cultural critique ‘clears conceptual ground, denaturalizes powerful ideas and institutions, and helps the reader think through the political possibilities and strategies for subordinate actors’ (Hale 2006: 103).

Cultural critique indeed stands ‘on the verge of activism’ as Marcus (1998) has put it. However, we know that it has serious issues with activist research, and perhaps with good reasons. Cultural critics’ main objection about activist anthropology is that it tends to prioritise political engagement and advocacy in a way that undermines the research process. While cultural critique strives for complex and sophisticated theory, activist research is often blamed for politically induced analytical closure. The criticism is ‘not that activist research lacks objectivity or that it has become politicized but that it is simplistic, unproblematized, and undertheorized’ (ibid.: 101). On the other hand, cultural critique is itself being criticized for having failed to pose a serious challenge to ‘the material relations of anthropological knowledge production’, and to develop new methods that will radically change the unequal relations embedded in the research process (ibid.).

Nonetheless, cultural critique and activist anthropology have lots of theoretical insight and research experience to exchange with each other. In their preface to *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Marcus and Fischer open their discussion with ‘the problem of representing social reality in a *rapidly changing world*’ (Marcus and Fischer 1986: vii, my emphasis). The issue here, as I see it, is not only a matter of representation but also of responding to a social event or phenomenon in a timely manner.¹⁵ Activist anthropology today strives to provide lucid accounts of the pressing issues of our time, while responding to these issues as promptly as possible. One good example is Charles Hale’s research on indigenous land rights in Nicaragua, during which he personally attended the Awas Tingni trial (November 2000; see Hale 1994; 2002; 2004). It is amazing to see how ethnographers like Hale provide the communities under question with the knowledge that would directly contribute to

15 This was a concern for me especially when I worked in the past on minority politics and diasporic nationalism in the Middle East. Even if we do not remain silent about the unfolding events, I had realized, most of our work respond very slowly to the current developments. The cost of this can be heavier than thought. Other voices fill the void, bringing along with them worn frameworks of understanding that lie near-at-hand. In the absence of anthropological insight, people usually end up with essentialist analyses of social difference, or primordialist understandings of identity that disregard historical processes (Büyüksaraç and Glasser 2017).

their struggles.¹⁶ Hale's testimony, purely based on his own research, served to 'close off the government's objections' to Awas Tingni's claims, by demonstrating that these claims reflected the traditional patterns of indigenous land tenure. I am quoting below Hale's comments on the dual political commitments of activist research (ibid.: 104–105):

Activist anthropologists attempt to be loyal both to the space of critical scholarly production and to the principles and practices of people who struggle outside the academic setting. These dual political commitments transform our research methods directly: from the formulation of the research topic to the dissemination of results, they require collaboration, dialogue, and standards of accountability that conventional methods can, and regularly do, leave out of the equation. [...] Activist research involves commitments that are not accountable to arbitration, evaluation, or regulation from within academia. Instead, it requires constant mediation between these two spaces, insisting that one need not choose between them nor collapse one into the other.

When viewed in this way, activist research does not fall too far from critical theory,¹⁷ for the very fact that the latter likewise indicates 'an orientation to the world that combines the effort to understand why it is as it is (the more conventional domain of science) and how it could be otherwise (the more conventional domain of action)' (Calhoun 2008: 25). And activist scholarship necessarily involves critique, because it purports to participate in 'a project of producing new knowledge, of integrating more abstract and universal sorts of knowledge, and of keeping action and its possibilities at the centre of attentions' (ibid.).

What seems to me the most pressing ethico-political issue for activist anthropology, as well as for the critical thought, concerns representation, first, as a matter of making truth claims about social phenomena, and second as a matter of entitlement to speak or act for a social entity (individual or group of persons), especially in an authoritative capacity. I believe taking heed of this issue is also a prerequisite for developing more egalitarian and participatory ethnographic approaches, and at this

16 Hale gives the backdrop of the trial in a more recent piece: 'Broad questions of indigenous land rights lie at the heart of the trial. Since the early 1990s, Awas Tingni community members had experienced increasing incursions into areas they consider to be theirs, most dramatically in the form of a government concession of logging rights to a multinational company. They pursued remedies inside Nicaragua to no avail and eventually turned to the Organization of American States (OAS) Human Rights Commission. After two years of unsuccessful efforts of mediation, the commission filed a petition on behalf of Awas Tingni against the Nicaraguan government in the Inter-American Human Rights Court' (Hale 2006).

17 For a parallel argument, see Hamm 2015.

point we need to think more thoroughly about the idea of engagement in social research.

Participant observers claim to be ‘authentically present’ in the field, “‘engaged” with their subjects’ and yet reject ‘any formal responsibility for the consequences of their engagement other than following norms of confidentiality and informed consent’ (Greenwood 2008: 324). Activist research assigns a totally different role to the ethnographer, as briefly discussed above. However, we cannot always imagine how local people will get actively involved in research carried out about themselves. We lack imagination because we still largely rely on the conventional research schemes that privilege theory over practical knowledge, or scientific expertise over local wisdom. While theory stands for the knowledge of universal truths, practical knowledge implies having a grasp of the particulars. Good examples of action research today teach us how to unlearn the conventional research schemes and how to acknowledge experience-based ‘non-expert’ knowledge (Eikeland 2006; Greenwood 2008). As Craig Calhoun (2008: 24) notes,

To be committed to action is to be committed to acting in a world of particulars. One may learn of these particulars from experience as well as from books or conversations with others. As Bourdieu has emphasized, also drawing on Aristotle, one’s knowledge of these particulars and how to act may be tacit rather than explicit, embodied rather than discursive, a matter of habitus rather than propositions. But practical actors may also be articulate. And practical action may be informed by discursive, propositional knowledge as well as experiential learning.

The most relevant type of knowledge for action research is *phrónêsis*, which is usually translated as ‘prudence’ or ‘practical wisdom’, in the sense of ‘knowledge and skills that are directed towards understanding and acting in accordance with requirements of the concrete situations we find ourselves in’ (Eikeland 2006: 6). *Phrónêsis* is distinct from *epistêmê*, which is scientific knowledge, or disinterested understanding of the generalities that lie beyond the particularities, also from *tékhne*, which is action oriented instrumental knowledge.¹⁸ However, *phrónêsis* is not posited against either of these two types of knowing (see Greenwood 2008). *Phrónêsis*-based research makes use of both *epistêmê* and *tékhne*, but the real trick of the trade lies in collaborating with local stakeholders at every step of the research process, from designing the project to evaluating the effectiveness of actions implemented in the light of the research results.

18 On the Aristotelian distinctions between the three ways of knowing, *epistêmê*, *tékhne*, and *phrónêsis*, see also Eikeland 2006, 2007; Greenwood 2008; Flyvberg 2001; Toulmin and Gustavsen 1994.

Face-to-face conversation is essential to all collaborative action research projects. Conversing with research participants is not merely communicating knowledge (one's expertise or research results) to a non-specialist, and it also exceeds the more-established mode of 'giving voice to' (usually through a spokesperson). Conversation primarily implies a mutual, non-hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched. The action researcher is usually a collective subject instead of an individual researcher, composed of both 'experts' and 'non-experts' (i.e. local stakeholders including activists and laypeople). Greenwood (2008: 330), a leading figure in the field, describes the action researcher as 'a skilled process facilitator capable of assisting in the construction of a democratically functioning group in which differences are treated as assets rather than obstacles to be overcome.' What makes action research distinct from other versions of applied social science is this strong commitment to the virtue of participatory methods, as well as to the idea of fairer and inclusive representation.

Reconciling Research with Action and Advocacy: Challenges and Opportunities

As combining research with action and advocacy, we should be prepared for a great deal of scepticism of our critics, as well as for serious challenges, some of which we might have not factored in. One major problem concerns the paternalism inherent to the activist researcher persona. How do we 'give voice' to the community we align with? Even if the colonized/the indigenous/the subaltern is given chance to speak through our anthropological writings, do we let them use their own words, as Gayatri Spivak (1988) once asked? Or do we rather impose our own concepts and frameworks that are usually branded as 'universal'? This is, again, a question of representation, this time aimed at destabilizing the expertise and authority of the activist researcher.

Although activist research is usually assumed to entail political alignment with a social movement or a group identity, research and action can be imagined together in various other ways. I am currently experimenting with this approach in my own current project, where I am directly engaged with rural communities living in conservation areas in Southwest Turkey. This project aims to contribute to local community development and well-being in three major ways: by raising public awareness about the problems that are of immediate concern to these people, including access to natural resources, land-use, and property rights; acting as a mediator between policy makers and local communities; and giving the people with low education the opportunity to learn more about the conservation policies of the Turkish state, and how to negotiate the related laws and regulations. I am also developing

techniques for involving the local stakeholders in my research, and yet I understand this is not an easy task.

Apart from our own scientific prejudices, we are working within the limits of an academic system that is inimical to action research committed to collaborating with non-academic stakeholders. We feel trapped in university campuses, crushed under teaching loads and administrative duties (faculty meetings, long office hours and so on), which makes it impossible to be flexibly available to our research participants (external stakeholders) and maintain a regular relationship with them (Greenwood 2008: 333–334). But it is again this same system that urges us to demonstrate what we are doing is meaningful to the public, and thus worthy of support. As universities try to survive under heavy fiscal pressures and act like corporates, social scientists are increasingly forced into action research (*ibid.*). More and more scholars have begun to collaborate with non-academic experts in their projects as a requirement imposed by the funding agency. In international collaborations, external stakeholders usually include the members of a non-governmental organization based in a non-European partner country.

The current system premised on public accountability and quality assurance relentlessly seeks to quantify our academic labour through screening processes like Research Assessment Exercise in the UK institutions or the Bologna Process in continental Europe. Any work that is not quantifiable is discarded as an index of under-performance, as unjustifiable, pointless work. To quote Greenwood (*ibid.*: 336),

[t]his is clearly a neoliberal move in which conservatives demand that all units of public universities justify themselves in terms of the value for educational dollar spent. The accountability scheme sets up the accounting agencies as defenders of the 'public interest' through these coercive schemes.

Nonetheless, as an activist researcher, Greenwood encourages us to look at the bright side, and I will conclude with his inspiring remarks (*ibid.*: 337):

[T]hese could be interesting times for strategically minded activist researchers. Action research that mobilizes the social science and other expertise of universities collaboratively with external stakeholders for their mutual benefit may as well be a viable response to these accountability pressures. While it is a dangerous game to take reforms created by conservative activism and attempt to turn them into significant support for social reform, it is a game that action researchers could play effectively while subverting the conservative purposes that gave rise to the accountability system in the first place. [P]erhaps the time will be right to attempt again to convert individual activism into institutional activism.

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Klaus Schönberger

Kulturwissenschaft zwischen Ausbildungs- anforderung und „unbedingter Universität“

Fragen an eine Angewandte
Kulturwissenschaft zwischen
Kreativwirtschaft und kritischer
Kulturanalyse

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Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag diskutiert die Herausforderungen und Entwicklungen der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft im Kontext von Hochschulbildung und neoliberaler Ökonomisierung. Er thematisiert die Spannungen zwischen den hegemonialen Ausbildungsanforderungen und der Vorstellung einer „unbedingten Universität“ (Derrida), die als Ort der freien Wissenschaft und des kritischen Denkens fungieren sollte. Es stehen sich dabei Erwartung an die Universität als verlängerte Werkbank und die einer Kulturwissenschaft als Ort gesellschaftlicher Beobachtung gegenüber. Die Bologna-Reform erschwere paradoxerweise die geforderte Praxisnähe. Der Beitrag argumentiert für eine Rückbesinnung auf die grundlegenden Werte der Wissenschaft und für eine stärkere Integration von Theorie und Praxis, um den Studierenden eine realistische Vision ihres Studiums und ihrer zukünftigen beruflichen Möglichkeiten zu vermitteln.

Schlagwörter: Empirische Kulturwissenschaft, Angewandte Kulturwissenschaft, Theorie und Praxis, Bologna, Unbedingte Universität

Abstract

The article discusses the challenges and developments of Empirical Cultural Studies in the context of higher education and neoliberal economisation. It addresses the tensions between hegemonic educational requirements and the idea of an “unconditional university” (Derrida), which should function as a place of free academic research and critical thinking. Expectations of the university as an extended workbench and that of cultural studies as a place of social observation are juxtaposed. Paradoxically, the Bologna reform makes the required practical relevance more difficult. The article argues in favour of a return to the fundamental values of science and a stronger integration of theory and practice in order to provide students with a realistic vision of their studies and their future career opportunities.

Keywords: empirical cultural analysis, applied cultural analysis, theory and practice, Bologna, unconditional university

Die Beschäftigung mit den Entwicklungen an den Universitäten im Zuge der Bologna-Reform münden allzu häufig im billig zu habenden Studierenden-„Bashing“ oder in Wehklagen über das Ende der Humboldt’schen Universität. Dabei wird allzu gern vergessen, dass die Bedingungen und „die“ Praxis des Studierens vor der Reform auch nicht befriedigend waren. Allerdings beruhen die Forderungen von Teilen der Politik und Wirtschaft, aber auch seitens eines Teils der Studierenden nach einem unmittelbar verwertbaren (angewandten) Studium auf einem Missverständnis über Zweck und Sinn der Universität. Aber auch wenn wir diese Forderung zurückweisen, können wir uns der Frage, in welcher Form und für was ein Universitätsstudium gut sein soll, nicht entziehen.

Ich werde im Folgenden meine Überlegungen zur gegenwärtigen Lage „der“ Universität und meine Fragen zur Möglichkeit der Angewandtheit in einer Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft angesichts der allgemeinen Rahmenbedingungen sowie der genannten Forderungen in vier Schritten entwickeln.

Erstens möchte ich einleitend versuchen, den gesellschaftlichen Rahmen unter der Bedingung der neoliberalen Ökonomisierung der Universität zu skizzieren, die die Forderung einer unmittelbaren Verwertbarkeit von akademischem Wissen allgegenwärtig hat werden lassen. Zweitens werde ich die Beobachtung diskutieren, dass in der Folge auch Studierende immer häufiger eine unmittelbare Verwertbarkeit von Wissen in der Universität einfordern. Drittens frage ich, ob es Sinn macht, die Curricula des Studiums an den Anforderungen an künftige Wissenschaftler:innen zu orientieren.

Viertens geht es mir um Überlegungen zu einem Verständnis von Angewandtheit, die nicht theoriefeindlich agiert, sondern im Gegenteil, Theorie für eine bessere Berufspraxis zu mobilisieren weiß.

1. Ökonomisierung und Bürokratisierung der Universität

Der Bildungsbereich sieht sich einem großen Druck ausgesetzt. Dieser Druck ist einerseits die Konsequenz einer Ideologie, die mit der Tendenz einer umfassenden Ökonomisierung aller Lebensbereiche verbunden ist. Diese Entwicklung begann Mitte der 1990er Jahre und wirkt ungeachtet der Finanzkrise von 2007 bis heute fort (Müller 2018). Die Konsequenzen sind vielleicht heute erst richtig sichtbar. Auf welcher Ebene wir auch schauen, die Dominanz der neoliberalen Ideologie sowie der Ruf nach unmittelbarer ökonomischer Verwertbarkeit von universitärem wie schulischem Wissen ist nicht zu überhören und wird in Hochschulen konkret umgesetzt. Der Begriff der „unternehmerischen Universität“ mag zwar ein Mythos gewe-

sen sein (vgl. Kuehl 2012), aber tatsächlich finden sich doch immer wieder Elemente in den sogenannten „Zielvereinbarungen“ mit den Ministerien, die die Universitäten anhalten, wie Unternehmen zu agieren (dabei werden neben sinnvollen Vorhaben wie die Verbesserung der Betreuungsrelationen auch Vorgaben in Bezug auf Drittmittelwerbung, Prüfungsaktivität von Studierenden oder die zu erreichenden Studierendenzahlen definiert). Auf der Ebene der Arbeitsverträge des wissenschaftlichen Personals, dem Mittelbau, hat darüber hinaus eine Radikalisierung von Prekarisierung stattgefunden, die ihresgleichen sucht. Es geht mir nicht darum, dass die Universitätslaufbahn ohne Risiko sein wird. Es gibt insbesondere in Deutschland inzwischen aber Arbeitsverhältnisse, die schlicht unmoralisch sind. Wir haben es in vielen Fällen mit einer „unendlichen Befristung“ zu tun, in der sich gut ausgebildete Wissenschaftler:innen von einem befristeten zum nächsten befristeten Vertrag hangeln müssen (Schermund 2019). An der sogenannten Exzellenz-Universität Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München beispielsweise treibt dieser Zustand besondere Blüten: Aufgrund fehlender Promotionsstellen können Promovierende in einigen Instituten nur als geprüfte Hilfskräfte mit Einjahresverträgen beschäftigt werden. Auf diese Weise wird der Nachwuchs mittels befristeter Verträge ausgebeutet und unter oder entgegen seiner Qualifikation beschäftigt.

Die Einrichtung von sogenannten Universitätsräten hat darüber hinaus sachfremde ökonomische Logiken an hochschulpolitisch zentralen Positionen implementiert. Der Wettbewerb um die Exzellenz-Initiative in Deutschland führt zu einer massiven Vergeudung von Arbeitskraft-Ressourcen, die bei all den Erfolgsmeldungen gerne unter den Tisch fallengelassen wird. Das Gleiche gilt im Übrigen auch für die zahlreichen Bemühungen um FWF- oder DFG-Drittmittel-Gelder. Obwohl die Mehrzahl von Drittmittel-Anträgen nicht zum Zuge kommt, stellt niemand die (ökonomische, sic!) Sinnhaftigkeit dieser Verfahren in Frage. Fragwürdige Rankings werden nicht nur in Österreich als belastbare Aussagen über die Qualität von Universitäten fraglos übernommen und als Indikatoren für Qualitätssicherung missverstanden. Diese Rankings simulieren eine Wissensproduktion über eine Imagination der Leistungsfähigkeit von Universitäten. Die verwendeten Indikatoren stammen aus jener quantifizierenden Forschung, die die Qualität von Wissensproduktion und gar von Lehre nicht sinnvoll zu messen vermag. Spätestens nachdem ein Studienabbrecher in Österreich Bundeskanzler werden konnte, könnte einmal über den gesamtgesellschaftlichen Nutzen eines Studiums ohne Abschluss ernsthaft nachgedacht werden. Die Fetischisierung formaler Bildungsabschlüsse bildete das Einfallstor einer quantifizierenden Lesart von Bologna, obwohl doch gerade die Verfechter:innen der neoliberalen Ideologie gerne betonen, wie wichtig deregulierte und unortho-

doxe Lebensbedingungen angeblich sein sollen. Doch seit die Anhänger:innen eines neoliberalen Denkens in der Universität das Sagen haben, findet genau das Gegenteil statt. Ein formalisiertes ökonomisches Denken mündet in bürokratisierten Arbeitsvollzügen.

Diese Tendenz stellt aber nur scheinbar einen Widerspruch dar. Wir erleben diese Entwicklung als Fortschreiten einer umfassenden Bürokratisierung, die sich beispielsweise als Evaluation oder in Gestalt von hoch formalisierten Peer-Review-Verfahren (vgl. die vernichtende Kritik von Mieke Bal, 2018) maskiert. Hochschul-lehrer:innen werden einem Druck ausgesetzt, der jedes Maß einer sinnvollen und legitimen Leistungskontrolle übersteigt. Inzwischen müssen die Universitätsinstitute sich permanent Evaluationsprozessen unterziehen, die genau das verhindern, wofür man eigentlich bezahlt wird: Seine Zeit und Kraft für Forschung und Lehre einzusetzen. Das sind nur wenige Hinweise auf eine aus dem Ruder gelaufenen Entwicklung.

In den Universitäten sind sowohl Forschung und Lehre unter Druck geraten, der von verschiedenen Seiten ausgeübt wird. Dieser Druck erfolgt seitens wissenschaftlicher Förderungsinstanzen, von Teilen der Wirtschaft und ihrer Verbände, seitens der Universitätsverwaltungen selbst sowie von Studierenden.

Die Vergabe von Forschungsgeldern auf EU-Ebene ist beispielsweise explizit damit verbunden, im Vorhinein anzugeben, wie viele neue Arbeitsplätze erwartbar seien, welche marktfähigen Produkte entwickelt werden und wie sie zur Wirtschafts- und Standortförderung beitragen.

Das Universitätsstudium wie die öffentlichen Forschungsgelder werden aus Mitteln aller Steuerzahler:innen finanziert. In Bezug auf die Universitäten versuchen privatwirtschaftlichen Akteure allgemeine Ressourcen wie die Wissensproduktion der Universitäten für sich zu reklamieren und zu verbrauchen. Die Forderung nach mehr „Praxis“ meint eine Subjektivierung von Studierenden, die diese vor allem für die partikularen wirtschaftlichen Zwecke privater Akteure gefügig machen sollen. Diese Forderung zielt auf die Zur-Verfügung-Stellung von Arbeitskräften, die für privatwirtschaftliche Zwecke und ihre partikularen Interessen unmittelbar konsumiert werden können. Zentral ist dabei das „Unmittelbare“, denn die Verwertungszyklen in einer finanzmarktgetriebenen Ökonomie fallen immer kürzer aus. In der gegenwärtigen Version von kapitalistischer Ökonomie finden wir immer weniger Akteure, die über den unmittelbaren Shareholder-Value hinausdenken und -planen können oder wollen.

Diese Ökonomisierung ist kein österreichisches Phänomen und bleibt auch nicht auf die Universität beschränkt, sondern erfasst das gesamte Bildungswesen. Es beginnt schon vor dem Studium in den Schulen und sogar noch früher. In Deutschland, wo die Maturitätsprüfung einst neun Jahre dauerte, wurde das Drängen der neoliberalen Ideologie erhört. Zwischen 2012 und 2015 wurde das sogenannte G8 auf Initiative der Bertelsmann-Stiftung fast flächendeckend eingeführt. Das bedeutete eine um ein Jahr verkürzte Gymnasialzeit. Das Apriori dieser Entwicklung lautete: Schüler:innen müssen schneller auf den Arbeitsmarkt. Das Projekt ist inzwischen auf grandiose Weise gescheitert. In immer mehr Bundesländern ist man wieder zu den ursprünglichen neun Jahren zurückgekehrt. Was aber in diesem Prozess gelungen ist, ist die Subjektivierung der kommenden und gegenwärtigen Studierendengeneration entsprechend voranzutreiben.

Was wäre ein anderes Credo? Ich kann hier nur für mich sprechen, aber ich habe dazu bisher noch keinen Widerspruch gehört. Es geht mir darum in der universitären Lehre zur Vermittlung der Kritikfähigkeit beizutragen. Das Ziel muss sein, Universitätsabsolvent:innen in die Lage zu versetzen, unter komplexen Bedingungen zu nachhaltigen, ökologischen, sozialen demokratischen Entscheidungen beizutragen. Das meint Probleme identifizieren und analysieren zu können sowie Lösungsmöglichkeiten zu finden. Hierzu bedarf es eines breiten Methoden- sowie Orientierungswissens, das nicht sofort eins zu eins im Prozess einer marktkonformen Verwertung nutzbar gemacht werden kann.

Hier geht es um ein konzeptionelles Denken, das sich über die Konsequenzen des eigenen Tuns Klarheit verschaffen will. Eng damit verknüpft ist auch Kritikfähigkeit, womit nicht „Dagegen-Sein“ gemeint ist, sondern zu fragen und zu hinterfragen sowie gelegentlich die Blickrichtung zu wechseln.

Ich möchte weder jammern noch Studierenden-„Bashing“ betreiben. Es geht mir vor allem darum zu diskutieren, wie wir in unserem Fach und in unseren Studiengängen mit diesen Rahmenbedingungen produktiv umgehen können.

Es spricht nichts dagegen, dass auch Professor:innen über ihre Tätigkeit einen Nachweis abliefern müssen, aber es spricht einiges dagegen, wenn sie durch immer neue bürokratische Nachweispflichten kaum mehr Zeit dafür finden, das zu tun, was eigentlich ihr Kerngeschäft ist. Wenn ich eine Möglichkeit sehe, dann die, dass wir gemeinsam Anstrengungen entwickeln, diese Form der Studierenden-Subjektivierung zu unterlaufen und so weit wie möglich gegenzusteuern. Ein Problem besteht aber darin, dass es sich hierbei um eine *Doppelte Subjektivierung* handelt, die nicht allein vom „System“ zu verantworten ist, sondern von den Studierenden und den Universitätsangehörigen selbst mit vorangetrieben wird.

2. Lernen versus studieren?

Ich werde mich im Folgendem vor allem auf Formen der Artikulation dieser Ökonomisierung im Begehren der Forderung nach „Ausbildung“ konzentrieren. Wenn ich in diesem Kontext von „den“ Studierenden spreche, ist mir klar, dass sich diese in ihrer Gesamtheit selbstverständlich heterogener verhalten. Ich fürchte, dass das, was ich im Folgenden vorbringe, als Studierenden-„Bashing“ missverstanden wird. Es geht mir demgegenüber darum, das beobachtbare studentische Begehren, das im Kern nachvollziehbar ist, im Sinne einer „Unbedingten Universität“, wie sie von Jacques Derrida (2002) gefordert wurde, produktiv zu machen.

Eine zentrale Rahmenbedingung ist das Bologna-System mit seiner Unterteilung des Studiums in Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge. Inwiefern das Bologna-System dafür verantwortlich ist, dass sich unter einem nicht unerheblichen Teil der Studierenden eine Schmalspurperspektive Bahn bricht, kann ich hier nicht diskutieren. Ich möchte nicht ausschließen, dass diese Perspektive auch schon zuvor existiert hat, der Unterschied besteht vielleicht darin, dass sie inzwischen hegemonial geworden ist. Ich gehe davon aus, dass sich das Bologna-System in einer anderen Weise hätte implementieren lassen können als es dann schließlich geschehen ist. Und es ist auch klar, dass diese Tendenz teilweise auch mit einer reinen ökonomischen Notwendigkeit einhergeht. Dennoch behaupte ich, dass „Bologna“ diesen Tunnelblick begünstigt. Frappierend ist die insbesondere von einem Teil der Studierenden erhobene Forderung nach einer unmittelbaren Verwertbarkeit von Studieninhalten. In ihrer Terminologie ist das die Forderung nach mehr Praxis und eine implizierte Überflüssigkeit von sogenannter Theorie. Hier passiert dasselbe wie in Bezug auf eine nicht zielgerichtete Grundlagenforschung, der an den Universitäten das Wasser bis zum Hals steht. Wir sehen uns zunehmend mit einem Verständnis von Universität konfrontiert, das davon ausgeht, dass das Studium eine Berufsausbildung sei. Immer wieder hören wir in den Evaluationen, dass noch mehr Praxis erforderlich sei und dass wir die Studierenden viel zu sehr mit angeblich unnützem theoretischem Wissen traktieren würden.

Im besten Fall hängt eine solche Einschätzung mit Annahmen über angebliche Anforderungen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt zusammen. In Gesprächen der Studienberatungen dominiert die Frage, welche konkreten Job- bzw. Berufsaussichten mit einem Studium verbunden seien. Das Kriterium „interessiert mich“ als Studienentscheidung gerät ins Hintertreffen. Darüber hinaus will ich nicht unterschlagen, dass die Nutzung der Freiheiten des Humboldt'schen Studiums sozial vermittelt waren, diese Freiheiten einen, zumindest bildungsbürgerlich (ererbten), Habitus zur Voraussetzung haben und diese Freiheiten nie von allen genutzt werden konnten.

Ein zweiter Aspekt dieser Haltung ist die Tendenz, das Studium nach dem Bachelor ohne Masterabschluss zu beenden. Das ist der Tatsache geschuldet, dass ein in Bachelor und Master unterteiltes Studium nicht mehr automatisch der Heranbildung von sogenannten Führungskräften dient, von denen ein weiterer Horizont und eine bestimmte Auffassungsgabe gefordert wird. Die Folge ist eine Low-Budget-Akademisierung von immer mehr Tätigkeiten, die allerdings mit entsprechenden Anforderungen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt verbunden sind. Die langfristige Folge davon wird ein Wandel des Habitus von akademischen Absolvent:innen sein. In meinem Verständnis von Studium ist die Fähigkeit zur Konzeptentwicklung zentral. Dem steht ein Verständnis gegenüber, das überwiegend repetitive Fähigkeiten einfordert.

Dabei bricht sich eine Auffassung von Studium als schulischem Lernort Bahn. Immer häufiger sehen wir uns mit der Anforderung konfrontiert, einen Text erklären zu sollen, ohne dass derselbe zuvor selbständig studiert und ergründet wurde. Einen komplexen kulturtheoretischen Text kann man aber nicht „lernen“, sondern er muss in mehrfachen Anläufen erarbeitet werden. Die Texte in der „Dialektik der Aufklärung“ von Adorno und Horkheimer lassen sich auf Anhieb kaum verstehen. Doch selbst wenn man dem kulturpessimistischen Duktus ihres Denkens widersprechen möchte, bedeutet eine systematische Erschließung dieser Texte einen großen persönlichen Gewinn. „Lernen“ lassen sich solche Texte nicht. Wir können nur vermitteln, wie sich solche Texte aneignen und entschlüsseln lassen.

Das korrespondiert mit einer Beobachtung des Jenenser Kollegen Friedemann Schmoll (2016), der die Abneigung gegen das Unterrichtsformat Vorlesung mit einer Tendenz in Zusammenhang bringt, dass Studierende auch in der Empirischen Kulturwissenschaft versuchen, einen fixen Lernstoff zu reklamieren. Aus seiner Sicht begünstige die Vorlesung in den Kulturwissenschaften die Möglichkeit des Abschweifens, des Widerspruchs und des Einschlagens von Umwegen. Die Vorlesung liefere ein Wissen, das nicht einfach konsumierbar oder für Prüfungszwecke zugerichtet werden könne.

In diesem Zusammenhang gehört auch erwähnt, dass nicht wenige Studierende regelrecht entsetzt sind, wenn man in Klausuren keine Wissensfragen stellt, sondern prüfen möchte, ob sie den Stoff tatsächlich anwenden können. Aber genau diese Fähigkeit ist eine Form von Angewandtheit, die ich in Erinnerung bringen möchte. Diese Version einer angewandten Kulturwissenschaft meint die Fähigkeit, theoretische Kontexte für sehr unterschiedliche Handlungsfelder zu erschließen. Hierzu muss ein Universitätsstudium befähigen. Theorie ist für mich nicht Selbstzweck, sondern um mit Stuart Hall (1994) zu sprechen „immer ein Umweg auf dem Weg zu etwas Wichtigerem“. Die Befähigung, sich systematisch Kontexte zu erschließen,

ist keine „nutzlose Theorie“, sondern liefert ein Orientierungs- und Methodenwissen, durch das berufliches Handeln überhaupt erst gut werden kann. Insofern ist darauf zu bestehen, dass gutes berufliches Handeln ohne Theorie nicht zu haben ist beziehungsweise, dass man ohne Theorie auch kein guter Praktiker sein wird. Daher müssen Universitäten dafür einstehen, dass eine gute berufliche Praxis in dem hier zur Diskussion stehenden kulturellen Feld ein theoriegeleitetes Studium benötigt. Andernfalls schaffen die Universitäten sich ab und degradieren sich zu Ausbildungsstätten, die allein repetitive Fähigkeiten vermitteln und das systematische, konzeptionelle und kritische Denken zum Verschwinden bringen.

3. Notwendige Korrekturen

Insofern der Bachelor von seinen Schöpfer:innen selbst als „unmittelbar berufsqualifizierend“ angepriesen wird, muss sich niemand wundern, dass Studierende in großer Zahl immer häufiger die Praxiskomponente einfordern. Auf der Webseite „studieren.at“ lesen wir:

Während das Bachelorstudium an Universitäten eher theoretisch ausgerichtet ist, ist der Praxisanteil an Fachhochschulen deutlich höher. (...) Wer erfolgreich das Bachelorstudium durchlaufen hat, kann entweder in den Beruf einsteigen oder sich für einen weiterführenden Master bewerben.

Ähnliches findet sich bei „studis-online.de“: „Der Bachelor soll – so jedenfalls die Idee – in einem Kurzstudiengang insbesondere für einen Beruf außerhalb der Hochschule qualifizieren, also ‚praxisnah‘ sein.“ Und auch die unvermeidliche Wikipedia verwendet den Terminus „berufsqualifizierend“: „Der Bachelor ist der erste akademische Grad und berufsqualifizierende Abschluss eines mehrstufigen Studienmodells.“ Der Begriff „berufsqualifizierend“, der auch in den offiziellen Dokumenten auftaucht, verbindet sich mit der irreführenden Annahme der Erwerbbarkeit einer unmittelbaren Handlungskompetenz in einem Berufsfeld. Solche Darstellungen unterstützen den Eindruck, dass die Studierenden die Universität immer mehr als einen Ausbildungsort ansehen. Ein Effekt ist, dass die Universität als eine verlängerte Werkbank gedacht wird. Es werden Erwartungen produziert, die überhaupt nicht erfüllbar sind und meiner Ansicht nach auch nicht erfüllt werden sollten. Damit ist aber auch eine Unzufriedenheit vorprogrammiert. Sowohl auf Seiten der Studierenden als auch auf Seiten der Lehrenden, die zunehmend mit Anforderungen konfrontiert werden, für die sie nicht qualifiziert sind. Es ist neben der Selbsterkenntnis, dass das BA-Studium ohne Master ein Schmalspurstudium ist, auch die häufigste Kritik seitens der Studierenden, dass die behauptete berufsqualifizierende Praxisorientierung an den Universitäten nicht stattfinden würde. Wie

sollte dies auch erfolgen, muss man fragen. Hochschullehrer:innen sind in ihrer Mehrheit hierfür nicht qualifiziert. Das ist nicht problematisch, denn ihre Aufgaben liegen woanders und ihre Qualität ergibt sich aus den oben beschriebenen Anforderungen.

Einerseits könnte man sagen, offenbar werden zahlreiche Erwartungen nicht erfüllt und Bologna hat nicht wirklich stattgefunden, weil Universität eben etwas anderes ist und sein soll als das, was unter der Hegemonie des Neoliberalismus aus der Bologna-Reform gemacht wurde und was wohl auch intendiert war. Andererseits wäre in der Tat zu fragen, ob beim bisherigen (dem Humboldt'schen Ideal nachempfundenen) Typus des Universitätsstudiums tatsächlich alles besser war oder ist. Es ist nämlich keineswegs so, dass in den Universitäten vor Bologna alles bestens gewesen ist. Bologna kann als eine Antwort auf die Bildungsreform der 1970er Jahren interpretiert werden. Bologna konnte jedoch zahlreiche Ziele nicht erreichen. Es gibt keineswegs weniger Studienabbrecher:innen oder eine bessere Angleichung bei den Abschlüssen und so weiter. Insofern muss ein dritter Weg gefunden werden. Denn es steht tatsächlich die Frage Raum, wie sinnvoll es ist, im Curriculum so zu tun, als ob am Ende eines Universitätsstudiums alle Absolvierenden Wissenschaftler:innen oder Forscher:innen werden, oder so getan wird, dass sie es werden sollen.

Ich kann hier nur für meine Disziplin sprechen, in die ich einen Einblick habe. Mitunter ist der Vergleich zum Medizinstudium erhellend. Niemand erwartet von den Absolvent:innen des Medizinstudiums, dass sie unmittelbar nach dem Abschluss als Ärzt:innen hinreichend qualifiziert sind. Hier gibt es ein ausgeklügeltes System an Zwischenschritten und niemand würde in Frage stellen, dass das sinnvoll beziehungsweise nicht selbstverständlich sei. Die Vorstellung, im Studium unmittelbar praktisches Handlungswissen zu erwerben, um sich für das kulturelle Feld zu qualifizieren, verkennt die Spezifik dieses Arbeitsmarktes als auch die Irrelevanz eines solch eingeforderten Wissens.

In diesem Zusammenhang erscheint mir der Glaube an die Magie betriebswirtschaftlicher Kenntnisse kaum aufklärbar. Das kulturelle Feld ist divers und wir haben es mit sehr spezifischen Ökonomien zu tun. Das bedeutet, dass handlungspraktisches Wissen *along the job* erworben werden muss. Nach wie vor ist das kulturelle Feld ein sehr schwieriger Markt. Nicht alle unsere Absolvent:innen werden hier unterkommen. In anderen Sektoren der Ökonomie ist weniger Fachwissen als konzeptionelles Denken, Problemlösungskompetenz und Orientierungswissen gefragt.

Das kann man nicht oft genug betonen. Daher möchte ich vorschlagen, die Subjektivierung der Studierenden als Ausgangspunkt für eine Form der Angewandtheit zu nehmen, bei der die Wissenskommunikation im Zentrum steht.

4. Welche Angewandtheit?

Daran schließt sich sogleich die Frage an, wozu studieren wir Empirische Kulturwissenschaft, Europäische Ethnologie, Kulturanthropologie? In der Geschichte der Volkskunde finden sich verschiedene Formen eines Fachverständnisses von Angewandtheit. Besonders markant war die politisch-völkische Selbst-Instrumentalisierung für verschiedene Zwecke. Für die Post-Volkskunde ist die Angewandtheit aus fachhistorischen Gründen ein kontaminiertes Feld (Dow 2018). Für Kärnten/Koroška möchte ich nur drei Versionen von Angewandtheit in Erinnerung rufen.

Einmal die Selbst-Instrumentalisierung der Kärntner Volkskunde in der Nazi-Zeit etwa im „Institut für Kärntner Landesforschung“, wo Georg Graber, Oskar Moser und andere sich freiwillig zu ideologischen Steigbügelhaltern einer terroristischen Kriegsmaschinerie funktionalisieren ließen (Wedekind 2017). Zum Zweiten ist an die Haider-Ära in Kärnten zu erinnern, in der Volkskultur in besonderem Maße zu politischen Zwecken instrumentalisiert wurde und zum Dritten seien auch die vielfältigen Inszenierungen von Volkskultur erwähnt, in denen volkskundliches Wissen der Logik des Tourismus anheimgegeben wird. Letzteres findet sich weit über Kärnten/Koroška hinaus.

Da der Tourismus einer jener Bereiche ist, in denen unsere Absolvent:innen Anstellungen finden können und wollen, müssten wir zum Beispiel verstärkt darüber nachdenken, welches Wissen, etwa über erfundene Traditionen der Volkskultur, den Studierenden mit auf den Weg gegeben werden kann. Genügt es tatsächlich die Traditionen und Brauchtum zu dekonstruieren, müssten wir nicht reflektieren, wie mit dem gesellschaftlichen Begehren nach Authentizität und Geschichte konkret umgegangen werden kann?

An der Klagenfurter Alpen-Adria-Universität bin ich in einen Bachelor- und einen Master-Studiengang involviert, die jeweils den Namen „Angewandte Kulturwissenschaft“ tragen. Die beiden Studiengänge unterscheiden sich voneinander. Der BA zeichnet sich durch eine inhaltliche Dreiteilung in sehr unterschiedliche Fächer aus. Hier absolvieren die Studierenden

- Kurse in mindestens zwei Sprachen plus Kurse in englischer Sprache,
- Kurse, die in das Feld des Kulturmanagements hineinragen, sowie

- Kurse, die Kulturtheorie, Kulturgeschichte und empirische Kulturanalyse zum Thema machen.

Der MA hingegen versteht sich als ein sogenannter wissenschaftlicher, in dem wir allerdings dem Feld der Wissenskommunikation eine große Relevanz beimessen.

Mit der Bezeichnung „Angewandte Kulturwissenschaft“ sind wir in Klagenfurt keineswegs allein. Es gibt dort auch eine „Angewandte Informatik“ oder „Angewandte Betriebswirtschaft“, wobei das vor allem zeigt, dass in Bezug auf die Angewandtheit ein erheblicher Gap zwischen Wirtschaftswissenschaften, Technikwissenschaften und den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften besteht. In ersteren ist der unmittelbare berufliche Bezug stark und in den eher reflexiven Gesellschaftswissenschaften ist derselbe nur gering ausgeprägt.

Tatsächlich ist das BA-Studium der Angewandten Kulturwissenschaft im eigentlichen Sinne kein Universitätsstudium, sondern gleicht eher einem Fachhochschulstudiengang. Es erinnert durch die Bezeichnung „Fächer“ in der Curriculumsbeschreibung auch noch mehr an den Schulunterricht. Interessant ist, dass es in der Vergangenheit Debatten mit Studierenden der Angewandten Kulturwissenschaft gab, die dem Master eine zu große Relevanz des Wissenschaftlichen beigemessen hatten und daher die Bezeichnung „angewandt“ in Frage stellten. Von Seiten der Lehrenden lautete die Antwort postwendend: „Stimmt, aber der Master ist eben ein wissenschaftlicher Studiengang.“

Künftig möchten wir in Zukunft den Klagenfurter Studiengang in einer Weise konzipieren, dass das, was als hinderliche Theorie im Studium angesehen wird, ein unhintergehbare Werkzeug in der Wissenskommunikation ist.

Es geht darum, deutlich zu machen und im Studium selbst zu zeigen, wie viel besser ein berufliches Handeln erfolgen kann, wenn ich die spezifischen theoretischen Erkenntnisse in unserem Fach berücksichtige. Es bleibt aber dabei: Das Studium ist keine Ausbildung für die „Praxis“, sondern es ist die unhintergehbare Voraussetzung für eine bessere „Praxis“. Insofern „ist wissenschaftliches Handeln als Problemidentifikations- und Problemlösungshandeln zu verstehen“ (Jacke und Zierold 2014: 13). Ich schlage daher vor den Begriff „angewandt“ und die damit verbundene Idee von „Praxis“ vom Kopf auf die Füße zu stellen und die Idee der „Praxis“ an ihre theoretischen Voraussetzungen wieder rückzubinden.

Ich möchte den Allgemeinplatz, dass eine jede Praxis ohne Theorie nicht zu haben ist, dass jeder Praxis theoretische Apriori vorausgehen (Joas und Knöbl 2004) mit einer Studiengangs-Konzeption einholen, die die Mehrzahl der Studierenden dafür

gewinnt, die theoretischen Inhalte des Studiums für und in unterschiedliche Öffentlichkeiten zu übersetzen.

In Klagenfurt setzen wir vermehrt auf die Erprobung diverser Formen von Wissenskommunikation. In einer solchen Version der Angewandte Kulturwissenschaft geht es insbesondere darum, Ergebnisse der Kulturanalyse im kulturellen Feld zu erproben und in Vermittlungsformate zu übersetzen. Hierzu werden auch in Klagenfurt künftig verstärkt mehrsemestrige Wissenskommunikationsprojekte stattfinden (vgl. z.B. Institut für Kulturanalyse 2019a), in denen Erfahrungen gesammelt werden können, die sonst nur *along the job* zu haben sind (vgl. z.B. Schönberger 2019; Institut für Kulturanalyse 2019b).¹ Die Zielsetzung lautet, für die Studierenden eine realistische Vision des Zwecks ihres Studiums konkret und handlungsermächtigend zu entfalten. Nun ist das eine Entwicklung, die nicht in Klagenfurt erfunden wurde, sondern in unserem Fach bereits den *State of the Art* darstellt. Dabei kommen bisweilen interessante Publikationen oder Ausstellungen zustande. Inzwischen finden sich solche Vermittlungsprojekte selbst bei einigen Soziologie-Studiengängen (vgl. z.B. das Frankfurter Institut für Soziologie; Weber/Schinkels/Stegbauer 2018). In unserem Fach ging diese Entwicklung in den 1950er Jahren vom Tübinger Ludwig-Uhland-Institut aus (Ege 2014: 164). Insofern müssen wir nichts neu erfinden. Vielmehr gilt es die Erfahrungen unter Bologna-Bedingungen zu sammeln und zu bündeln. Die Verschulung führt paradoxerweise zu größerer „Praxis“-Ferne und erschwert mehrsemestrige Projekte zur Wissenskommunikation erheblich. In Graz wurde daher ein zweisemestriges Masterstudien-Projekt im Curriculum verankert. Das erscheint mir der richtige Weg, nämlich den Master um solch ein Lehrformat zu strukturieren. Das bedeutet beispielsweise, dass wir in Bezug auf den Nachwuchs, aber auch bei Berufungen keineswegs in erster Linie auf Peer-Review-Publikationen insistieren sollten, sondern auch die Fähigkeit zur Wissenskommunikation zentral berücksichtigen müssten. Hier sammle ich derzeit zahlreiche Erfahrungen mit der Erstellung von A0-Postern (unter regelmäßiger Hinzuziehung eines Informationsdesigners), in denen Wissen für eine größere Öffentlichkeit übersetzt werden muss (vgl. z.B. das Projekt „Selfies im Görttschitztal“, Institut für Kulturanalyse 2019c).

1 Die erste Version dieses Textes wurde bereits 2018 entworfen. In einigen Punkten müsste der Artikel vollständig überarbeitet werden. Doch die grundlegende Argumentation hat m.E. Bestand. Inzwischen wurde der Studiengang neu aufgesetzt und die Bezeichnung lautet „Angewandte Kulturwissenschaft und Transkulturelle Studien“, dessen Kernstück wie an anderen Standorten unseres Faches ein zweisemestriges Lehrforschungsprojekt ist.

Aber hier kommen nun auch wieder theoretische Aprioris ins Spiel. Wenn in den Fächern, die zur Post-Volkskunde zählen, die Etablierung eines weiten Kulturbegriffs die Voraussetzung war, bei dem mit Arnold Niederer (1975) gesprochen die Kultur vom Himmel ins Erdgeschoss zurückgeholt wurde, wenn damals der idealistische bürgerliche Kulturbegriff zu Recht dekonstruiert wurde, sind wir heute mit einer viel komplexeren Aufgabe konfrontiert. Die Etablierung der sogenannten Kreativwirtschaft und der Siegeszug des „Kreativen Imperativs“ (Reckwitz 2012) impliziert eine umfassende Überführung des Kulturellen in die Warenform. Der gegenwärtige hegemoniale Kulturbegriff ist ein durch und durch kommerzialisierter und eben ein Effekt der neoliberalen Ökonomisierung aller Lebensbereiche. Die Eventisierung, die Versuche, Kultur auf das Moment eines Standortfaktors zu reduzieren, realisiert das, was Guy Debord Ende der 1960er Jahre, als die „Gesellschaft des Spektakels“ analysiert hat. Die derzeitige Zurichtung alles Kulturellen im Sinne einer Ware, deren Wert daran bemessen wird, welchen Mehr-Wert sie generiert, ist auch der Ausgangspunkt des Interesses an unserem Studiengang. Wenn ich mir hierüber keine theoretische Klarheit verschaffe, bin ich nur Teil des Problems und kein Akteur oder keine Akteurin, der oder die im kulturellen Feld handelt oder gestaltet. Die Frage ist, wie wir es schaffen können diesen Sachverhalt verstehbar und damit auch veränderbar zu machen. Wenn wir Kulturanalyse in der Angewandten Kulturwissenschaft als Gesellschaftsanalyse verstehen möchten, wenn wir sie als Selbstbeobachtungsinstrument von Gegenwart begreifen, wenn das Studium zur Selbst-Reflexion befähigen soll, dann müssen wir daran arbeiten, die Fähigkeit zur Analyse von soziokulturellen Praktiken, von kulturellen Artefakten und zum Erkennen von normativen Aprioris einzuüben.

Es geht dabei nicht um das Dagegensein. Es geht um ein berufliches Handeln, das die Aprioris des eigenen Feldes versteht. Das bleibt für mich eine unhintergehbare Voraussetzung für jedes berufliche Handeln im weiten Feld der Kulturarbeit. Nur dann verstehe ich mein Berufsfeld, die Möglichkeiten und Begrenzungen und kann die gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen meines Berufsfelds angemessen in meinem professionellen Handeln berücksichtigen. Es geht in dem von mir favorisierten Verständnis von Angewandtheit also nicht nur um die Perspektive des theoriefreien Handelns oder um die bewusste Feier des bloßen Machens.

Es geht vielmehr um die Verknüpfung zweier Perspektiven: Kulturarbeit auf der Grundlage kulturanalytischer Methoden und Theorien. Wir sollten offensiver die künftigen Arbeitsfelder der Studierenden adressieren und mit den Methoden und theoretischen Analysewerkzeugen verknüpfen. Jacques Derridas berühmte Forderung nach der unbedingten Universalität verbindet er mit einem „bedingungslose[n] Recht zu hinterfragen.“ Hiervon sind wir noch meilenweit entfernt. Wenn Derrida

„auf Widerstand gegen jede Form von ökonomischer, politischer, rechtlicher oder ethischer Beschränkung“ dringt, dann ist das keineswegs als eine Forderung nach Zweckfreiheit oder Rückzug aus sozialen und ökonomischen Kämpfen zu verstehen. Sein „Denken des Unmöglich-Möglichen“ ist nicht als utopisch zu verwerfen, sondern ich verstehe es als Aufforderung immer wieder zu versuchen als Lehrer:innen im Sinne einer „Humanitas“ handeln. Ich möchte den Prozess der Ökonomisierung stören und vertrete eine Kulturanalyse jenseits eines rein zweckrationalen Kosten-Nutzen-Denkens. Handlungsrelevant wird dies dort, wo wir dazu beitragen können, die Handlungsmöglichkeiten eines marktförmigen Denkens einzuschränken. Hier knüpft ein anderer Satz Derridas über sein Verständnis als Hochschullehrer an, an dessen praktischer Umsetzung ich mich zu beteiligen versuche:

„Die Profession des Professors hat (...) mehr mit einer Konfession zu tun als mit dem Metier eines bloßen Wissensvermittlers.“

Nämlich die Konfession, Kulturarbeit kulturanalytisch zu fundieren und Kulturanalyse als handlungsrelevantes Werkzeug weiterzuentwickeln.

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Trügerische Imaginationen

Die „Restrukturierung“ der
deutschen Universitäten aus der
Perspektive der Europäischen
Ethnologie

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Zusammenfassung

Die akademische Landschaft hat sich in den letzten dreißig Jahren nicht nur in Deutschland massiv verändert. Obwohl dieser Beitrag davor warnen möchte, alle Transformationen in westlichen Gesellschaften als neoliberal zu bezeichnen, lässt sich nicht leugnen, dass das Leben von Forschenden und Studierenden durch verschiedene akademische Umstrukturierungsmaßnahmen erheblich beeinträchtigt wurde. Da die Staatshaushalte für die Grundversorgung (inflationbereinigt) stagnieren, sind Universitäten gezwungen, kurzfristige externe Finanzierungen in Anspruch zu nehmen, um sich Wettbewerbsvorteile zu verschaffen. Darüber hinaus wird von Forschenden zunehmend erwartet, dass sie im öffentlichen und virtuellen Raum sichtbar sind. Die Umsetzung des Bologna-Prozesses hat zu einem äußerst starren Bildungssystem geführt. Die Erhöhung des Verwaltungsaufwands verschärft die Situation zusätzlich. Die Auswirkungen stagnierender Haushalte werden noch deutlicher, wenn Gelder für Lehre und Forschung für die Bezahlung der Verwaltung abgeschöpft werden. Der vorliegende Beitrag versucht, die Prozesse aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive zu analysieren.

Schlagwörter: Transformation des Universitätssystems, Bolognaprozess, Hochschulfinanzierung, Drittmittelabhängigkeit

Abstract

The academic landscape has seen massive changes over the last thirty years, not only in Germany. Although the paper wants to caution against labelling all transformations in western societies as neoliberal, there is no denying that the lives of researchers and students have been significantly affected by various academic reorganisation measures. With government budgets for basic provision stagnating universities are being forced to seek short-term external funding to achieve competitive advantage. Moreover, researchers are increasingly expected to be present and visible in public and virtual spaces. The implementation of the Bologna process has led to a highly rigid system of education. The inflation of the administrative load further exacerbates the situation. The effects of stagnating budgets become even more palpable when funding for teaching and research is syphoned off to pay for the administrators. This paper seeks to analyze the processes from the perspective of European Ethnology.

Keywords: transformation of the university system, Bologna process, university funding, dependence on third-party funding

Dieser Beitrag soll – etwas unakademisch – mit einigen Erinnerungen und Anekdoten beginnen, welche die Veränderungen der Hochschullandschaft anzudeuten vermögen.¹ Als ich im Jahr 1980 in Graz Volkskunde zu studieren begann, gab es an unserem Institut einen Professor. Nach meiner Erinnerung kam er zwei bis drei Mal in der Woche ans Institut, um seine Lehrveranstaltungen zu halten, die wichtigsten organisatorischen Dinge zu besprechen und Unterschriften zu leisten. Dann zog er sich in sein wissenschaftliches Refugium zuhause zurück und las wissenschaftliche Literatur und arbeitete an seinen Forschungen und Publikationen. Die grundlegenden organisatorischen Aufgaben überließ er seinen Mitarbeiter:innen, vielleicht so manches andere auch noch, was ich als Student nicht so wahrgenommen habe. Ich glaube, es wäre ihm absurd vorgekommen, für seine Forschungen Drittmittel einzuwerben, denn die Aufgabe der Universität bestand darin, Studierende auszubilden und den Professoren, damals waren es ja tatsächlich fast nur Männer, den Freiraum für ihre individuellen Forschungen zu geben. Im Rahmen der niedrigeren Studierendenzahlen reichten die Kapazitäten für die Vorhaben des Instituts durchaus.

Ich überspringe nun ca. 25 Jahre und wechsle in das Jahr 2006, als ich an die Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU) berufen wurde. Ich ging – nach meiner Meinung – gut gerüstet in die Verhandlungsgespräche. Die Studierendenzahlen waren hoch (ca. 600 im Haupt- und Nebenfach) – und stiegen in den Jahren darauf noch einmal an – und die Grundausrüstung des Instituts mit zwei Professuren, zwei Mitarbeiter-Stellen und einem halben Sekretariat sowie mangelhaften Etatzuweisungen extrem niedrig. Ich kann nun nicht sagen, dass ich in diesen Verhandlungen schlecht behandelt worden wäre, aber mein Wunsch nach einer dritten Professur und nach zusätzlichen Planstellen wurde in dieser Verhandlung und in Gesprächen in den darauffolgenden Jahren stets zurückgewiesen. Es stellte sich heraus, dass für eine Exzellenz-Universität wie die LMU München, Studierendenzahlen relativ unerheblich sind. Der im persönlichen Gespräch überaus sympathische und umgängliche Präsident erläuterte mir bei einem Termin, dass wir das Betreuungsverhältnis ganz einfach zu unseren Gunsten ändern könnten, wenn wir Zugangsbeschränkungen einführten. Mein Argument, dass es in München so viele Studierende gäbe, weil wir halt einerseits ein attraktives Institut seien und andererseits aufgrund von bayernweiten Streichungen von Volkskunde-professuren mehr Stu-

1 Dieser Beitrag wurde ganz bewusst im Duktus des Vortrags belassen, der am 19. Oktober 2018 in Graz im Rahmen des Symposions *Neugier und Auftrag. Kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf den Umbau Europäischer Universitäten* gehalten wurde, allerdings um einige Gedanken und vor allem Literaturhinweise ergänzt.

dierende nach München kämen, spielte für ihn keine Rolle. Nur am Rande sei erwähnt, dass ich darüber auch mit dem zuständigen Ministerialrat gesprochen habe, der davon sichtlich irritiert war, weil er aber nur für die LMU zuständig ist, über die Vorgänge an den anderen Universitäten nicht genau genug Bescheid wusste. Das ist die Kehrseite der Hochschulautonomie, die zur Folge hat, dass es keine übergeordnete Instanz mehr gibt, die darauf achtet, wo auf welche Art und Weise gespart oder umstrukturiert wird, was zumindest eine Zeitlang zu Lasten der kleineren Fächer und der Einprofessuren-Institute ging.

Aber zurück zu meinem Gespräch mit dem Präsidenten der LMU. Selbstverständlich – so der Präsident – sei es möglich, zusätzliche Professuren für ein Institut oder ein Fach zu erhalten. Dafür müsste nur ein größerer Forschungsverbund geschaffen werden, mit dem erfolgreich Großforschungsprojekte eingeworben werden könnten, dann würde die Universität auch neue Professuren zur Verfügung stellen. Dafür hatte die Universität auch einen Steuerungsplan für Professuren mit der Überschrift 50:40:10 entworfen. Das bedeutete nichts anderes, als dass 50 % der Professuren (insbesondere Lehrstühle) unverzichtbar wären, 40 % könnten bei den Fakultäten bleiben, aber eventuell mit einer neuen Denomination ausgeschrieben werden. 10 % wären zwar *nice to have*, würden aber gestrichen, um damit neue Initiativen zu stärken.

Obwohl ich dieser Drittmittelfixierung der Universitäten, die ja durch mangelnde Grundfinanzierung durch die öffentliche Hand befeuert wird, weil zugleich die Mittel für die Projektförderung (Stichwort Exzellenzinitiative²) massiv erhöht worden sind, äußerst kritisch gegenüberstehe, habe ich mich nach diesem Gespräch mit dem LMU-Präsidenten sofort ans Werk gemacht und renne seither mit wechselhaftem Erfolg der Karotte hinterher, die mir vor die Nase gehalten wurde.

Ausgehend von diesem anekdotischen Einstieg möchte ich die Veränderung der deutschen Universitätslandschaft auf unser Vielnamensch Volkskunde/Europäische Ethnologie/Empirische Kulturwissenschaft/Kulturanthropologie, das ich in der Folge der Einfachheit halber *Europäische Ethnologie* nennen werde, im Speziellen sowie auf die Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften im Allgemeinen beleuchten. Was ich hier berichte, gründet sich nicht auf einer systematischen empirischen

2 Die Exzellenzinitiative ist die umfangreichste Förderinitiative für Universitäten, die bislang in Deutschland aufgelegt wurde. In der ersten Phase mit drei Förderrunden (2006–2019) gab es drei Förderlinien für Exzellenzcluster, Graduiertenschulen und sogenannte Zukunftskonzepte ganzer Universitäten, wobei letztere allerdings zur Voraussetzung hatten, dass mindestens ein Exzellenzcluster und eine Graduiertenschule eingeworben wurden. In der ab 2019 neu gefassten Exzellenzstrategie gibt es nur mehr die Exzellenzcluster und den Exzellenzstatus von Universitäten, die für eine erfolgreiche Bewerbung um diesen Status zwei eigene Cluster oder drei Kooperationscluster eingeworben haben müssen.

Forschung, sondern beruht – neben Recherchen im Internet und der Analyse der massenhaft vorhandenen Texte zur Thematik, auf die ich allerdings auch nur auszugsweise zurückgreifen kann – auf einer Art indirektem und ungeplantem ethnografischen Verfahren, insofern ich auf meine Beobachtungen und Erfahrungen im Lauf meiner akademischen Karriere zurückgreife: als Dekan und Mitglied der erweiterten Hochschulleitung, als Professor an einer sogenannten Exzellenzuniversität, als Vorsitzender der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde und auf Gespräche mit Kolleginnen und Kollegen bei unterschiedlichsten Gelegenheiten wie Fachkongressen, Hochschultagungen oder bei Gutachtersitzungen bei der DFG oder beim Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung.³

Generelle Entwicklungen

Für Leute, die schon längere Zeit im akademischen Betrieb tätig sind, ist der große Wandel, der hier in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten stattgefunden hat, nicht zu leugnen. Dabei geht es um Transformationsprozesse, die nicht nur die Universitäten betreffen, sondern die global zu beobachten sind, vielleicht aber gerade in jenen europäischen Gesellschaften, die einem wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Modell mit einem gemäßigt kapitalistischen Kurs folgen, besonders scharf wahrgenommen werden. Dieser mit dem Schlagwort Neoliberalismus zunächst nur undeutlich bezeichnete Wandel wurde in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften in Bezug auf soziale und gesellschaftliche Veränderungen ausführlich beschrieben. Das reicht von grundsätzlichen Fragen über Veränderungen in der Politik bis zur Arbeitswelt und der öffentlichen Daseinsfürsorge im Bereich Wohnen, Verkehr und anderer Leistungen, sowie dem Ausverkauf von so genannten Commons. Ein Zurückdrängen des Staates und staatlicher Einrichtungen zugunsten privatwirtschaftlicher Unternehmen lautete eines der Credos; Deregulierung, Outsourcing von Dienstleistungen und projektförmiges Arbeiten sind weitere Merkmale neoliberaler Einstellungen.

Die Palette von Autorinnen und Autoren, die sich diesem grundlegenden Wandel gewidmet haben, ist lang. Sie reicht, um nur wenige zu nennen, von Pierre Bourdieu und Michel Foucault über Richard Sennett bis zu Antonio Negri und Michael Hardt; im Fach waren es etwa Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch oder viele Wissenschaftler:innen aus dem Umfeld der Arbeitskulturenforschung um Irene Götz, Gertraud

3 Es handelt sich also in Teilen um eine Autoethnografie, bei der das ethnografische Selbst als Ressource genützt wird, wie Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich das beschrieben und dabei auch den Bologna-Prozess als Forschungsfeld angeführt hat (Bönisch-Brednich 2012: 54).

Koch und Klaus Schönberger, die sich diesen Transformationsprozessen angenommen haben.⁴

Für die deutschen Universitäten gibt es dabei mindestens zwei markante Einschnitte: Das ist einerseits die sogenannte Bologna-Reform, auf die ich später noch eingehen werde, und andererseits die starke Drittmittelfokussierung, die verstärkt kompetitive Elemente in die Finanzierung der Wissenschaften bringen sollte. In die Universitätslandschaft hat damit verstärkt das Projekt Einzug gehalten, das Ulrich Bröckling als Basiselement zeitgenössischer Gouvernamentalität bezeichnet hat. Darunter versteht er „Regieren als Projektmanagement im doppelten Sinn: *governing projects* und *governing by projects* zugleich“ (Bröckling 2013: 252). Es handelt sich bei dieser Restrukturierung der Wissenschaftslandschaft um einen weiteren Schritt in Richtung Ökonomisierung. Um nicht falsch verstanden zu werden: Ich halte es durchaus für richtig und wichtig, dass es eine drittmittelfinanzierte Forschung gibt, dass ein Wettbewerb um die interessantesten Ideen und Konzepte stattfindet, dass gerade risikobehaftete Forschungsideen unterstützt werden. Hier sind allerdings abermals zwei Aspekte zu berücksichtigen. Das eine ist die strukturelle Unterfinanzierung deutscher Universitäten seit ca. zwanzig Jahren. Das lässt sich auch mittels Zahlenmaterials belegen.⁵ Im WS 1999/2000 studierten an deutschen Universitäten 1,16 Millionen Studierende, bis zum Wintersemester 2017/18 stieg die Zahl auf 1,8 Millionen Studierende an, was einen Zuwachs von 55 % bedeutet, während sich die Anzahl der Professuren nur um ca. 12 % erhöht hat (auf ca. 27.000), in den kleinen geisteswissenschaftlichen Fächern ist sie sogar um 2 % gesunken.

Im gleichen Zeitraum wuchs das Budget der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) von ca. 2 Milliarden Euro um 60 % auf 3,2 Milliarden. Außerdem wurden mit Programmen wie dem Hochschulpakt und dem Qualitätspakt *Lehre* weitere befristete Programme aufgelegt, die Universitäten und Fachhochschulen zugutekommen, die aber keine langfristige Planungssicherheit zulassen. Während sich Bund und Länder etwa im Pakt für Forschung und Innovation dazu entschlossen haben, den außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen (Max Planck-, Fraunhofer- und Leibniz-Institute sowie der DFG) jährlich einen Aufwuchs von 3 % ihres Budgets zu garantieren, ist dies bei den Universitäten nicht der Fall. Die außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen finanzieren ihren Haushalt zu 80 % aus der Grundlagen-

4 Um diesen Beitrag nicht mit allgemein bekannter Literatur zu überfrachten, habe ich an dieser Stelle auf explizite Referenzen verzichtet. Eine Ausnahme soll der Hinweis auf zwei Titel der zu früh verstorbenen Grazer Freundin und Kollegin Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch sein (2003, 2006).

5 Die Zahlen wurden aus folgenden Quellen zusammengetragen: <https://www.hochschulverband.de/>, <https://www.datenportal.bmbf.de/portal/de/K254.html> und <https://de.statista.com> (letzter Zugriff: 15.10.2018).

finanzierung durch Bund und Länder und zu 20 % durch Drittmittel. Die Universitäten, denen auch noch die Hoheitsaufgabe der Ausbildung zukommt, finanzieren sich mittlerweile zu 50 % aus Drittmitteln, was weitreichende Konsequenzen gerade auch für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs mit sich bringt, der durch die Vielzahl von befristeten Beschäftigungen immer stärker in prekäre Lebensverhältnisse gezwungen wird und bei weitgehend stagnierenden Planstellen und insbesondere Professuren immer schlechtere Chancen auf eine dauerhafte akademische Karriere hat.

Ergänzend dazu zeige ich Ihnen noch ein paar Zahlen aus unserem Fach, nämlich wie sich die Stellen an unseren Instituten zusammensetzen. Was aus den Angaben auf den jeweiligen Homepages nicht hervorgeht, sind die Stellenprozente der wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter, was aber für den groben Überblick nicht so entscheidend ist, weshalb ich jede auf der jeweiligen Homepage angeführte Person in meine Statistik aufgenommen habe. Administratives Personal sowie wissenschaftliche und studentische Hilfskräfte werden nicht angeführt.

Universität	Professuren	Planstellen	Drittmittelstellen
Augsburg	1	6	
Bamberg	1	2	
Berlin	8 ⁶	5	20
Bonn	1	3	2
Eichstätt	1	1	
Frankfurt/Main	1	4	
Freiburg	3	3	4
Göttingen	3	8	7
Hamburg	3	3	9
Jena	2	6	1
Kiel	2	7	
Mainz	3	6	
Marburg	2	5	1
München	2 ⁷	3	12
Münster	2	6	
Regensburg	2	5	2
Saarbrücken	1	1	
Tübingen	3	6	12
Würzburg	1	6	2

6 Am Berliner Institut ist eine weitere W3-Professur ausgeschrieben.

7 Am Münchner Institut wurde der Ruf für eine dritte Professur erteilt. Es handelt sich allerdings nicht um eine Planstelle, sondern um eine W2-tenure-track-Professur *ad personam* aufgrund eines erfolgreich eingeworbenen ERC starting grants.

In dieser Tabelle sehen Sie die Institute unseres Faches in Deutschland, die noch als eigene Einheit erkennbar sind und hier zeigen sich schon einige eindeutige Befunde. Obwohl von den Studierendenzahlen ein mittelgroßes Fach, handelt es sich von den Planstellen her meist um kleine Institute. Die Ausnahme ist – zumindest bei den Professuren – das Berliner Institut, wobei hier bei den Professuren auch zumindest drei befristete Juniorprofessuren enthalten sind, die nach der Förderung durch diverse Programme nicht dauerhaft etabliert werden können. Sonst sind auch an einigen anderen Standorten Juniorprofessuren enthalten, bei denen es sich allerdings um Planstellen handelt, die aber meist nur befristet – also ohne *tenure track* – besetzt werden dürfen. Worauf ich mit dieser Tabelle hinaus will, ist der teilweise hohe Anteil an Drittmittelmitarbeiter:innen im Verhältnis zum restlichen wissenschaftlichen Personal, insbesondere zu den Mittelbaustellen. In Berlin und München gibt es viermal so viele Drittmittelstellen wie Mittelbaupositionen, in Hamburg dreimal so viele, in Tübingen doppelt so viele und in Freiburg und Göttingen jeweils fast gleich viele. Dabei war teilweise noch nicht einmal zu erkennen, ob manche Mitarbeiter:innen, die nicht als Projektmitarbeiter:innen ausgewiesen waren, nicht doch über befristete Programme wie den Qualitätspakt *Lehre* oder Stundienzuschüsse der Länder finanziert werden. Rechnen wir aus den hier aufgelisteten Professuren die befristeten Juniorprofessuren raus, so buhlen nur in diesem Pool – denn es gibt ja noch viele hochqualifizierte Wissenschaftler:innen, die gerade in keinem Projekt oder keiner Universitätsanstellung sind – ca. hundertfünfzig qualifizierte Wissenschaftler:innen um zweiundvierzig Professuren.⁸ Der Ruf nach besseren Bedingungen und Lebenszeitperspektiven für jüngere Wissenschaftler:innen ist also mehr als berechtigt.

Ich will aber noch zu einem anderen Aspekt bei dieser Projektförmigkeit des Universitätsbetriebs zu sprechen kommen. Dabei handelt es sich um die Auswirkungen auf Personen und Inhalte. Schon im Jahr 1988 – also lange vor dem „Exzellenzwahnsinn“ in Deutschland – hat der Soziologe Joachim Matthes in Hinblick auf die zunehmende Projektförmigkeit in der Forschung von einer „Frühverkrüppelung von Forschungsideen“ gesprochen, weil die „Lebensperspektive“ einer Forschungsidee immer auf eine Projektlaufzeit gerichtet sein müsse (Matthes 1988: 467). „Die Notwendigkeit“, so Ulrich Bröckling, „immer neue Projekte zu akquirieren“, bringe „eigene Semantiken, Sozialcharaktere und Ereignistypen hervor“, die erst noch sozialwissenschaftlich untersucht werden müssten (Bröckling 2013: 250).

8 Diese Rechnung ist sehr schwierig aufzustellen, weil der Durchlauf auf Mitarbeiterpositionen mit Vertragslaufzeiten zwischen drei und sechs Jahren sehr viel schneller erfolgt als bei Professuren, wo im Durchschnitt von ca. zwanzig Jahren ausgegangen werden muss. Ebenso wenig Berücksichtigung finden hier die über nationale Grenzen hinweg stattfindenden Stellenvergaben und Berufungen.

Die Projektanträge müssen an die Vorgaben oder Merkblätter der DFG oder des European Research Council (ERC) zugeschnitten werden, wobei unter anderem jene Forschungsdesiderata erst kreiert werden, die man selbst dann zu beheben versucht. Dabei würden Forschungsveteranen geschaffen, wie Bröckling meint, die sich von Zeitvertrag zu Zeitvertrag hangeln und „ohne deren Routinen und Tricks kaum ein Projekt eine Begutachtung überleben würde“ (ebd.). Ganz zu schweigen von jenen Beratungsunternehmen, die sich auf die Unterstützung beim Verfassen und Verwalten von EU-Anträgen spezialisiert haben. Die „universitäre Planstellenaristokratie“ blicke auf diese prekären Existenzen „meist mit einer Mischung aus Mitleid und Verachtung“ hinab (ebd.). Diese Personen gibt es auch in unserer Disziplin und häufig müssen sie bis zur Grenze des berufungsfähigen Alters zittern, ob sie an eine Professur oder eine andere Dauerstellung gelangen können, wobei ihnen häufig zum Nachteil gerät, dass sie durch die Drittmittelbeschäftigung weniger Erfahrung in der Lehre und Betreuung von Studierenden aufweisen.

Die Drittmittelfixiertheit zersetzt aber auch – um mit einem Titel von Richard Sennett (1998) zu spielen – den Charakter der Forscher:innen, und zwar auch jener auf Dauerstellen. Treffen wir uns heutzutage auf Konferenzen, so wird häufig nicht über eine jüngst fertiggestellte oder in Fertigstellung befindliche Monographie gesprochen – wer kommt überhaupt noch dazu, eine Monographie zu verfassen? –, sondern man/frau unterhält sich über Projekte, womit selbstredend drittmittelfinanzierte Projekte gemeint sind. Das ist die neue Währung, in der sich der Wert einer Forscherpersönlichkeit bemisst. Von einigen Universitäten weiß ich, dass für die jeweilige Hochschulleitung hinter jedem Professor bzw. jeder Professorin die Summe der eingeworbenen Drittmittel steht, die als Hauptmerkmal der Leistungsfähigkeit einer Person gilt.⁹

Nicht ohne Scham dachte ich bei der Vorbereitung dieses Vortrags an viele Situationen, in denen ich mich selbst mit diversen Projekten wichtig gemacht habe. Die Selbstverständlichkeit, mit der dies getan wird, ist frappierend, und schockierend kommt dazu, wie Kolleg:innen nicht an ihren wissenschaftlichen Leistungen gemessen werden, sondern an der Einwerbung von Drittmitteln. Diese gelten bei Berufungen ebenso als ein bedeutendes Kriterium wie auch schon bei zu besetzenden Mittelbaustellen. Bei tenure-track-Verfahren habe ich als Dekan erlebt, dass die Entfristung von Professuren trotz hochrangiger Forschungsleistungen zunächst

9 Silke Götsch hat 2001 bereits die Problematik aufgeworfen, dass wissenschaftliche Leistung zunehmend an Drittmitteln gemessen würden, meinte allerdings, dies würde auf die Geisteswissenschaften weniger zutreffen als auf die Naturwissenschaften (vgl. Götsch 2001: 17). Das hat sich allerdings spätestens seit der Exzellenzinitiative grundlegend gewandelt.

mit der Begründung abgelehnt wurde, dass es noch keine größeren Drittmittelwerbungen gab oder die Entscheidung über einen Antrag etwa bei der DFG noch nicht gefallen sei.

Bei Drittmittelprojekten kann im Bourdieu'schen Sinne die Wirkmächtigkeit aller Kapitalsorten beobachtet werden. Zunächst einmal braucht es Ressourcen, um überhaupt an solchen Anträgen arbeiten zu können. Es liegt auf der Hand, dass kleinere Institute und Lehrstühle nicht die Kapazität haben, um größere Forschungsverbünde wie etwa Sonderforschungsbereiche, Graduiertenkollegs oder gar Exzellenzcluster zu beantragen und zu koordinieren.¹⁰ Schon eine Forschungsgruppe mit sechs bis zehn Teilprojekten stellt dabei eine riesige Herausforderung dar. Dann bedarf es logischerweise auch des kulturellen Kapitals – sowohl das inkorporierte als auch das institutionalisierte durch Titel wie Professor oder Lehrstuhlinhaber –, dass einem Antrag jenseits der Inhalte zu Strahlkraft verhilft. Schließlich darf auch das soziale Kapital der Beziehungen innerhalb der *scientific community* nicht unterschätzt werden, das bei Begutachtungen nützlich sein kann. Im Erfolgsfall erwächst daraus jenes symbolische Kapital, das – z.B. bei Hochschulleitungen – wieder in ökonomisches Kapital transferiert werden kann. Außerdem verführt die Tatsache, dass Antragsteller:innen schon mehrfach bei Drittmittelanträgen erfolgreich waren, dazu, dass neue Anträge wohlwollender gelesen werden.

Generell gesehen führen diese Entwicklungen aber auch zu einer Hierarchisierung der Hochschulen mit jenen an der Spitze, die in der Exzellenzinitiative erfolgreich waren und die insbesondere durch das sogenannte Zukunftskonzept, bei der Universitäten als ganze Exzellenzmittel erhalten, eine Ungleichheit im System hervorbringen, wie sie etwa im Fußball schon im Bereich der Champions League zu beobachten ist.¹¹ Die erfolgreichen Universitäten bauen mit den diversen Drittmittelzuweisungen und der sogenannten Programmpauschale ihre Strategieabteilungen und die Forschungsförderungsabteilungen aus, was sich bislang weniger erfolgreiche und kleinere Universitäten nicht leisten können. Überhaupt, und das ist mein letzter Punkt zu diesem Thema, haben die Transformationen in der Hochschullandschaft zu einer Aufblähung der Verwaltung rund um die Hochschulleitungen geführt. Allein in den zwölf Jahren, in denen ich an der LMU München arbeite, hat sich die Zahl der Referent:innen von Präsident und Kanzler vervielfacht, es wurden Stabsstellen für alles Mögliche eingerichtet, die jeweils mit mehreren Personen

10 Sehr wohl sind aber einige Kolleginnen und Kollegen an Sonderforschungsbereichen und Graduiertenkollegs beteiligt.

11 Im internationalen Vergleich ist diese Hierarchie zwischen finanzstarken Eliteuniversitäten und finanzschwächeren Universitäten insbesondere im angelsächsischen Raum zu beobachten, während sich die Universitätslandschaft in Deutschland (noch) dadurch auszeichnet, dass hohe Qualität in Forschung und Lehre weitgehend auch in der Breite aller Universitäten erreicht wird.

ausgestattet sind.¹² Im gleichen Zeitraum mussten die Fakultäten Stellen abgeben, die dann in einem Belohnungssystem für erfolgreiche Antragsteller:innen wieder ausgeschüttet werden, ohne dass es allerdings zu einem signifikanten Zuwachs an Planstellen in den Fakultäten kommt. Schließlich baut auch das Professoren-Besoldungssystem darauf auf, besondere Leistungen durch Leistungsbezüge zu honorieren, wobei an fast allen Universitäten diese Leistungen in der Einwerbung von Drittmitteln gesehen werden.¹³

Bologna-Reform

Die andere weitreichende Veränderung in der deutschen Universitätslandschaft lässt sich unter Bologna-Reform fassen, mit der ein einheitlicher europäischer Hochschulraum mit verpflichtender wechselseitiger Anerkennung der Studienleistungen, höchstmöglicher Mobilität und barrierefreies Studieren über regionale und nationale Grenzen hinweg, für Deutschland eine Verringerung der Studienabbruchquoten und nicht zuletzt eine größere Passgenauigkeit für die Wirtschaft erreicht werden sollte. Abgesehen davon, dass eine Kulturwissenschaft wie die Europäische Ethnologie immer schon gewarnt sein muss, wenn etwas homogenisiert werden soll, hat sich herausgestellt, dass zumindest in Deutschland diese Reform schiefgelaufen ist und gerade für die kleinen Fächer zu einer Katastrophe wurde.

Man muss nicht unbedingt Ulrich Beck folgen, der konstatierte: „Was zwei Weltkriege nicht geschafft haben, könnte Bologna erreichen: die deutsche Universität zu zerstören“ (Beck 2010), aber man kommt nicht umhin, jene Verschiebungen festzustellen, die sich von einer inhaltlichen Auseinandersetzung damit, was in einem Studium auf welche Art und Weise vermittelt werden soll, hin zu einem bürokratischen Monster verschoben hat, das die Verwaltungsaufgaben aufgebläht hat, wie es die deutschen Universitäten bis dahin nicht gekannt haben.

Werfen wir einen Blick zurück in die Geschichte des deutschen Magisterstudiums. Studierende begannen ein Studium der Europäischen Ethnologie, von dem sie von der Schule her keine Ahnung hatten, viele von ihnen waren auch Studienfachwechsler, die erst während ihres Studiums auf dieses Fach aufmerksam wurden. In

12 Leider kann diese Beobachtung nicht mit Zahlen unterlegt werden, weil die Stellenpläne und das Organigramm für 2006 (wie überhaupt für frühere Jahre) nicht mehr abrufbar sind.

13 Seit 2002 gibt es für deutsche Professor:innen die sogenannte W-Besoldung mit einem Grundgehalt und leistungsbezogenen Elementen. Die Leistungsbezüge können einerseits bei Berufungs- und Bleibeverhandlungen vergeben werden sowie andererseits – meist in geringerem Ausmaß – für besondere Leistungen, worunter fast ausschließlich Drittmittelerfolge zu verstehen sind. Die Durchschnittsgehälter der Professor:innen blieben durch diese Maßnahme unverändert, allerdings ergaben sich Verschiebungen zwischen Fächergruppen, so dass etwa die Professor:innen in den Naturwissenschaften besser gestellt sind als Geisteswissenschaftler:innen.

den ersten vier Semestern wurden sie in das Studium eingeführt und mussten dann das Nadelöhr Zwischenprüfung bewältigen. Im Hauptstudium folgten dann die Hauptseminare und insbesondere das Studienprojekt, welches die perfekte Vorbereitung für einen erfolgreichen Abschluss der Magisterarbeit und der Magisterprüfung darstellte. Abgesehen von den theoretischen und methodischen Grundlagenveranstaltungen konnten die Studierenden ihre Seminare und Vorlesungen relativ frei wählen. Das stellte zu Beginn des Studiums sicherlich eine Herausforderung dar, wurde am Ende allerdings stets als große Bereicherung empfunden, weil innerhalb des größeren Rahmens des Studiums der Europäischen Ethnologie ganz gezielte Schwerpunktsetzungen möglich waren, in die sich die Studierenden dann vertiefen konnten. Hatte zu Beginn des Studiums noch kaum jemand eine Ahnung, wofür zum Beispiel die Kulturtheorien nötig seien, sah dies spätestens nach Beendigung des Studienprojekts anders aus. Noten spielten zudem erst bei der Magisterarbeit und der Magisterprüfung eine entscheidende Rolle.

Das Bachelorstudium gehorcht völlig anderen Gesetzen. Mit Schaudern denke ich an die vielen Besprechungen, bei denen unsere inhaltlichen Vorstellungen an juristische Vorgaben insbesondere bezüglich des European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) angepasst werden mussten. Alle Module mussten durch sechs oder drei ECTS-Punkte geteilt werden können, pro Semester mussten es exakt dreißig Punkte sein. Jede Note zählt von Beginn an in die Abschlussnote hinein. Positive Entwicklungsschritte verbessern zwar den Notenschnitt, können aber schlechtere Noten vom Beginn des Studiums, als die Inhalte des Faches noch nicht völlig durchdrungen werden konnten, nicht gänzlich wettmachen. Ich erinnere mich an mein Studium in Graz, wo wir Studierende mehrere Semester benötigten, um die Inhalte eines der ersten theoretischen Seminare zu verstehen. Für die Abschlussnote hätte so etwas im deutschen Magistersystem keine Rolle gespielt.

Aber die Noten sind ja nur ein kleiner Teilaspekt. Was eingesetzt hat, ist eine „Taylorisierung von Bildung und Wissenschaft“, wie Norbert Bolz das genannt hat (zitiert nach Reitz 2007: 475). Es geht um eine Technik der Effizienzsteigerung, bei der „die Optimierung körperlicher Abläufe“ nunmehr auf den Geist übertragen wird (ebd.). Mit der Einführung des ECTS-Systems, das ja auf der Umrechnung von – vermeintlich investierten – Zeitstunden in Leistungspunkte beruht, wird „eine alte volkswirtschaftliche Idee, die Arbeitswerttheorie, in die Praxis umgesetzt“, wie der Soziologe Stefan Kühl argumentiert hat (Kühl 2012: 35). Dies wird auch als ein Schritt zur zunehmenden Ökonomisierung des Studiums gesehen, die auf verschiedenen Ebenen durchzusetzen versucht wird. Der Soziologe Franz Schultheis sieht die Bologna-Reform „als ein Musterbeispiel von top down-Politik“ (Schultheis 2008:

190); sie sei ein „strategisches hegemoniales Projekt“ meint der Politikwissenschaftler Malte Albrecht in Anlehnung an Ernesto Laclau und Chantal Mouffe (Albrecht 2013: 13). Ziel sei das Erreichen einer *Employability* (Kellermann 2016: 13), weshalb im Zentrum des BA-Studiums die Weitergabe formellen Wissens stehe, der BA werde dadurch zur Ausbildung degradiert, lautet die Meinung vieler Kritiker:innen (vgl. u.a. Wallimann 2009). Manche Wissenschaftler sprechen gar vom BA als einem Studienabbruchzertifikat (zit. nach Kühl 2012: 139). Die Palette der Kritik ist elendslang und die meisten Leser:innen werden die Argumente kennen. Ich will daher noch einmal engler auf die Auswirkungen auf unser Fach eingehen.

Die Europäische Ethnologie ist an den meisten Universitäten eine kleine Disziplin, meist mit wenigen Professuren ausgestattet. Die Bologna-Reform nun brachte unter anderem die Berechnung von Kapazitäten in den Universitätsalltag ein. Wie viele Semesterwochenstunden können von einem Institut oder einem Fach in einen Studiengang eingebracht werden. Dabei stellt sich dann häufig heraus, dass ein eigenständiger Bachelor oder Master kapazitätstechnisch gar nicht zu stemmen ist. Also wurden Institute gezwungen, entweder auf Bachelor oder Master zu verzichten beziehungsweise einen gemeinsamen Studiengang mit anderen Fächern auf die Beine zu stellen. Gibt es dann keinen eigenständigen Bachelor, dann fehlen auch die Leute für das wissenschaftlich anspruchsvollere Masterstudium, ganz zu schweigen von den Promovierenden, die für die Forschung besonders wichtig sind. Kann sich ein Institut nur den Bachelor „leisten“, so bleibt es auf der einfachsten Stufe der Ausbildung hängen. Lässt es sich auf Gemeinschaftsversionen von BA und/oder Master ein, so fehlt eine solide Ausbildung in der eigenen Disziplin, was wiederum die kognitive Identität eines Faches, wie Rolf Lindner das genannt hat (Lindner 1987), in Frage stellt und nicht mehr erkennbar werden lässt.

Die weitreichenden Veränderungen werden sichtbar, wenn wir uns die achtzehn deutschen Europäische Ethnologie-Institute ansehen. Nur mehr die Hälfte von ihnen bietet sowohl einen eigenständigen Bachelor als auch Master an. Alle anderen verfügen zumindest über einen co-gestalteten Studiengang im BA und/oder Master.¹⁴ Darunter finden sich so traditionsreiche Institute wie Marburg, Frankfurt am Main oder Bonn. Dazu gesellt sich aber noch ein anderes Problem, das mit dem Aspekt der *Employability* zu tun hat. Praktisch alle Institute, die ich kenne und die noch Bachelor und Master in Europäischer Ethnologie anbieten, richten diese Studiengänge konsekutiv aus, gehen also von der Tatsache aus, dass sechs Semester Studienzeit nicht ausreichen, um das Fach Europäische Ethnologie durchdrungen

14 Hier soll nicht gegen Kooperationen bei gemeinsamen Studiengängen argumentiert werden, allerdings erachte ich sie nur als Ergänzung zu eigenständigen Studiengängen im BA- und MA-Bereich für sinnvoll.

zu haben. Die Studierenden aber denken sehr viel strategischer oder pragmatischer. Die Hälfte oder ein Drittel drängen nach dem BA auf den boomenden Arbeitsmarkt, ein weiteres Drittel will zwar einen Master absolvieren, allerdings meist in einem anderen Fach oder zumindest an einer anderen Universität und nur der Rest studiert an den gleichen Universitäten im gleichen Fach weiter. Das führt zu niedrigen Masterstudierendenzahlen an fast allen deutschen Europäische Ethnologie-Standorten, denen mit unterschiedlichen Maßnahmen wie etwa der Umbenennung von Masterstudiengängen zu begegnen versucht wird.

Mindestens ebenso gravierend sind allerdings die Auswirkungen auf den Lehrbetrieb und die Studierenden. Die Zunahme an Lehrveranstaltungen im neuen Bachelor gegenüber dem Magister und die damit verbundene Verschulung führten – so etwa der Literaturwissenschaftler Jochen Hörisch – zu einer Studiermentalität (2006: 124), bei der nur mehr Prüfungsrelevantes gelernt werde. Student:innen würden zu Kunden in einem Dienstleistungsbetrieb, wofür ich gerne Beispiele anführen kann. Wenn Texte für ein Seminar nicht online zur Verfügung gestellt werden, weil wir gerne hätten, dass die Studierenden eine Bibliothek auch von innen sehen und sich von der Atmosphäre und anderen als den benötigten Büchern und Zeitschriften inspirieren lassen, hagelt es Proteste oder es schlägt sich in der Evaluierung nieder. Falls eine Klausur zu einer Vorlesung vorgesehen ist, dann sollten Professor:innen am besten in der Vorlesung schon die ausformulierten Antworten auf die potenziellen Fragen bereitstellen. Sollte dann eine Note nicht den eigenen Erwartungen entsprechen, dann hat der Dienstleister versagt, weil er die falschen Fragen gestellt oder die Studierenden nicht ausreichend vorbereitet hat.

Das BA-Studium hält zudem für die Studierenden auch jede Menge an Hürden bereit, wobei die Erstellung des Stundenplans, um eine überschneidungsfreie Seminarplanung vorzunehmen, zu den größten gehört. Dabei geht es ja nicht nur darum, dass die Lehrveranstaltungen unter einen Hut gebracht werden müssen. In den meisten Fällen gehen die Studierenden auch irgendeiner Form der Erwerbstätigkeit nach und die Arbeitgeber sind nicht so flexibel wie es von Hochschullehrer:innen selbstverständlich erwartet wird. Um nun aber den möglichen rechtlichen Folgen vorzubeugen, dass nämlich jemand klagt, er oder sie könne nicht in der vorgesehenen Regelstudienzeit studieren, weil die Überschneidungsfreiheit von Pflichtveranstaltungen nicht gegeben sei, hat sich etwa die bayerische Ministerialbürokratie etwas Besonderes einfallen lassen. Es darf nämlich in den Studienplänen keine Anwesenheitspflicht für Seminare verlangt werden. Damit wird die Vorstellung über den Haufen geworfen, Studierende könnten in den Seminaren durch Auseinandersetzung und Diskurs mit Lehrenden wie Peers mehr lernen, als ihnen durch die Lektüre von Büchern und Texten oder durch Online-Angebote

möglich wäre. Dass dieser Umstand keine Revolution unter den Hochschullehrer:innen hervorgerufen hat, ist verwunderlich, denn ich habe noch niemanden getroffen, der oder die das für sinnvoll erachtet. Dazu kommt noch das Sahnehäubchen einer flankierenden Maßnahme: Mündliche Leistungen dürfen in Seminaren nur dann bewertet werden, wenn eine Zweitprüfer:in anwesend ist. Das bedeutet, dass Referate, Wortmeldungen und Diskussionsbeiträge nicht in die Beurteilung eines Seminars einfließen dürfen, außer es sind zwei Lehrende anwesend, die sich wechselseitig kontrollieren, damit niemand ungerecht behandelt wird. Im selben Bundesland Bayern dürfen an Gymnasien Lehrer:innen schlechte Noten allein aufgrund der Tatsache vergeben, dass sich Schüler:innen nicht häufig genug gemeldet haben – also ganz unabhängig davon, ob sie etwas Richtiges oder Falsches gesagt haben. So viel zum Vertrauen in die Lehre an den Universitäten. Die Bürokratisierung führt auch dazu, dass flexible Umgänge mit Studierenden, die sich in problematischen Situationen befinden, erschwert werden. Im Magisterstudium gewährte man eine Verlängerung der Abgabefrist ganz unbürokratisch, wenn Studierende glaubhaft machten, dass sie private Probleme haben, weil etwa eine Beziehung in die Brüche gegangen ist oder in der Familie Schwierigkeiten auftraten. Heute müssen Wiederholungsprüfungsfristen gesetzt werden und wenn die Note bis zu einem Termin nicht ins System eingetragen werden kann, dann muss das Seminar ein Jahr später wiederholt werden, weil es nur einmal jährlich stattfindet.

Schließlich muss all dies auch noch verwaltet werden und aus den Studienzuschüssen, welche die Studiengebühren abgelöst haben, werden etwa allein in den Fakultäten der LMU mehr als fünfzig Studiengangskoordinator:innen finanziert, die Prüfungsämter mussten aufgestockt werden und auf der Ebene der Hochschulverwaltung sind ebenfalls Stellen für den Umgang mit der Bologna-Reform geschaffen worden. Ganz zu schweigen von den Kosten für die Akkreditierungsagenturen, die unsere Studiengänge überprüfen müssen.¹⁵ Es kommen einem die Tränen bei dem Gedanken, wie sinnvoll all diese Ressourcen für Forschung und Lehre hätten verwendet werden können. Um den Mehraufwand in der Lehre zu bewältigen, wurde aber nicht nur Verwaltungspersonal eingestellt, sondern man kam auch auf die glorreiche Idee, Lehrprofessuren und Hochdeputatsstellen zu schaffen, denen bei einer Lehrverpflichtung von achtzehn Semesterwochenstunden keine Zeit mehr

15 Es wäre einen eigenen Beitrag wert, die Akkreditierungspraxis einer genaueren Prüfung zu unterziehen. Obwohl mittlerweile die Sinnhaftigkeit der Akkreditierung nicht mehr nur von Wissenschaftler:innen, sondern sogar von einzelnen Wissenschaftsminister:innen massiv bezweifelt wird, lässt sich eine einmal eingeführte Praxis offensichtlich nicht rückgängig machen. Dies hat sowohl mit einer Audit- und Evaluierungskultur neoliberaler Governance zu tun, aber auch mit einer Verrechtlichung unserer Gesellschaft, zu der gehört, dass selbst in Wissenschaftsministerien fast ausschließlich Jurist:innen an den Hebeln der Entscheidungsprozesse sitzen.

bleibt, um eigenen Forschungen nachzugehen, wodurch eines der Grundprinzipien der Universität – nämlich die Einheit von Forschung und Lehre – ausgehebelt wird. Lehre ist dadurch nicht mehr unmittelbar an Forschung gebunden. Der Philosoph Konrad Paul Liessmann hat dementsprechend die Bologna-Reform als Grund für die Misere der europäischen Universitätsidee bezeichnet (Liessmann 2006: 104). Möglichkeiten für individuelle Zugänge, originelle Forschungsansätze und unorthodoxe Fragestellungen schwinden. Ein Beispiel dafür ist die Praxis der Europäischen Union bei der Promovierendenförderung. Wenn sie einen Antrag für ein Initial Training Network oder ein European Joint Doctorate beim ERC stellen, müssen alle maximal fünfzehn geförderten Dissertationsprojekte vorab festgelegt werden und im Erfolgsfall können sich potenziell Promovierende darauf bewerben. Damit werden allerdings keine kritischen Köpfe gefördert, die für eine Forschungsidee brennen, sondern Promovierende „herangezüchtet“, die den Ideen anderer zu folgen haben – wir können nur hoffen, dass sie im Förderungsfall so viel Eigenständigkeit behaupten, diese Teilprojekte an ihre eigenen Interessen anzupassen. All diesen Widersinnigkeiten zum Trotz beteiligen wir uns aber dennoch an solchen Beantragungen, weil es im Idealfall ermöglicht, mit solchen Mitteln junge Wissenschaftler:innen zu fördern und manchmal auch andere sinnvolle Aktivitäten – zum Beispiel aus den Mitteln der sogenannten Overheadpauschalen – quer zu finanzieren.

Abschließende Bemerkungen

Ich könnte noch lange fortfahren, die Veränderungen des deutschen Hochschulsystems und ihre Auswirkungen zu beklagen, was möglicherweise den Eindruck bestärken würde, hier trauere ein älterer Professor der guten alten Zeit nach. Das ist aber keineswegs der Fall, denn ich bin durchaus für Veränderung, nämlich in dem Sinne, dass die unendlichen Summen Geldes, die jetzt für Verwaltungen, Evaluierungen und andere bürokratische Verfahren ausgegeben werden, in die Grundausstattung der Universitäten fließen, damit die Lehr- und Forschungsbedingungen für Studierende wie Mitarbeiter:innen an Universitäten sich bessern. Dies wird so schnell nicht der Fall sein, aber ich will dennoch nicht pessimistisch enden. Als Kulturanthropolog:innen haben wir gelernt, dass der Mensch ein kreatives Wesen ist, das sich nicht nur einfach an gegebene Umstände anpasst, sondern eigensinnig und so weit als möglich selbstbestimmt Wege sucht, die sinnvoll erscheinen. Praktisch täglich habe ich an der Universität mit jungen und älteren Menschen zu tun, die über die Neoliberalisierung und Bolognisierung der Universität klagen, die dabei aber stets unser Tun kritisch hinterfragen, die in Forschung und Praxis nach

Lösungen für eine bessere Gesellschaft und eine bessere Universität suchen. Meine Kritik ist ein Appell an Sie, sich dabei nicht entmutigen und unterkriegen zu lassen.

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Impact – Dirty Word or Salvation of the Humanities?

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Zusammenfassung

Anwendungsorientierte Forschung, deren Themen von Förderorganisationen, politischen Akteuren oder Lobbygruppen vorgegeben wird, gewinnt immer mehr an Bedeutung. Im Kern geht es dabei um die Bewältigung drängender Fragen unserer Zeit, zum Beispiel in den Ausschreibungen zu gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen innerhalb des Horizon2020-Programms der Europäischen Union. Dieser Fokus auf Relevanz und Wirkung wird jedoch oft als Bedrohung für die von intellektueller Neugierde getriebene Forschung gesehen und untergräbt oder delegitimiert diese sogar. Dieser Beitrag will zeigen, dass dies eine falsche Dichotomie ist, und untersucht spezifische Herausforderungen und Chancen der Impact-Debatte für die Geisteswissenschaften. Er erörtert einige wichtige problematische Merkmale des Impact-Konzepts für die Geisteswissenschaften und gibt Empfehlungen, wie diesen begegnet werden könnte. Er veranschaulicht diese Punkte anhand ausgewählter Beispiele aus den Impact-Fallstudien des britischen Research Excellence Framework 2014.

Schlagwörter: Geisteswissenschaften, Impact, gesellschaftliche Relevanz, Forschungsförderung

Abstract

Agenda driven research, with topics defined by funding agencies, political actors or lobby groups, is constantly gaining in importance. At its core is the commitment to tackling pressing issues of our time, for example in the societal challenges calls of the Horizon2020 programme of the European Union. This focus on relevance and impact, however, is often seen as a threat to curiosity driven research, undermining or even delegitimising it. This contribution will argue that this is a false dichotomy and will explore the specific challenges and opportunities of the impact debate for the Humanities. After outlining some major problematic features of the impact concept for the Humanities it makes recommendations how these might be addressed. It further illustrates its points with reference to selected examples of the UK's 2014 Research Excellence Framework impact case studies.

Keywords: humanities, impact, societal relevance, research funding

Neugier und Auftrag, Curiosity and Commitment – the topic of this conference and its title in honour of Helmut Eberhart are both inspired and inspiring and I want to thank the organisers for the privilege of being part of this reflection and this celebration. Universities are, and have been for centuries, defined by the tensions between curiosity and commitment. Intellectual curiosity, the passion for enquiry, the quest for truth regardless of the consequences, is a formidable intellectual power propelling scientific enquiry, human progress and self-determination. Academic freedom, ‘the right to pursue knowledge for its own sake and to follow wherever the search for truth may lead’ (IAU 1998), to quote the well-known IAU definition, safeguards this curiosity and is a defining principle of the modern university.¹

Commitment to society, the determination to contribute to its continuous improvement and flourishing, is an equally strong *raison d’être* of universities and is one that goes right to the core of our institutional responsibilities. Such commitment took many forms over the centuries: Since their foundation in the Middle Ages, for example, universities have enabled and organised the production, circulation and exchange of knowledge across borders and have been central nodes in the networks of knowledge and culture that have created and sustained a shared civilisation of common values and aspirations across Europe and beyond. Helmut Eberhart and I organised a conference on this very topic in Graz in 2007 as part of our common work as Chairs of the *Culture, Arts and Humanities Task Force* of the *Coimbra Group* between 2006 and 2011 (see Barkhoff and Eberhart 2009). Other forms of commitment in which Coimbra Group universities especially excelled include a prominent role in the life of their city and region and a central contribution to their economic, social and cultural life. Many also played a prominent and sometimes decisive role during the 19th and early 20th centuries in the formation of national identities and nation-states, in the creation of national movements, national histories and national cultures.

If I look at forms of commitment in more recent and contemporary times, society rightly expects that we contribute, through our teaching, research and public engagement, to the strengthening of open, democratic, tolerant and pluralistic societies. Such a commitment resonates in the mission statements and strategic plans of all our institutions and, more importantly, is deeply embedded in their daily practices.

However, today the expectations of politicians and other stakeholders towards universities are also increasingly more immediate, practical and measurable. To stay

1 This is the definition of academic freedom adopted by the International Association of Universities (IAU) at their UNESCO-sponsored meeting in Nice in 1950, reiterated here in a 1998 policy statement.

with the European dimension, which is the focus of the *Coimbra Group's* work, the *European Commission* has, especially since the economic crisis in 2008, insisted that universities in the first instance have to contribute to the economic recovery in Europe, have to support job creation, economic growth and technological innovation and that especially European funding for research should principally and predominantly serve these goals. Governments across Europe have echoed this imperative in their national funding strategies and research priorities for higher education. This approach has, of course, informed the Commission's current Framework Programme *Horizon 2020*. In its Pillar 3 40 % of its overall funding is allocated for addressing grand societal challenges of our times such as climate change, energy, transport, food and agriculture, health and well-being, migration and integration, the future of democracy, extremism and terrorism or robotics and artificial intelligence. All these are formidable challenges, and it is indeed a noble obligation of researchers to contribute to tackling the great questions of our times which will determine the shape of our societies in the decades to come – and in some ways even the future of Humankind. For the Humanities at the start of *Horizon 2020* in 2012, the so-called 'embedding agenda' was championed by the then *Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science*, the Irishwoman Máire Geoghegan-Quinn. This novel and inclusive approach entailed the invitation and expectation that *SSH, Social Sciences and Humanities*, would increasingly become an integral part of all interdisciplinary approaches to all these challenges. It is obvious that none of the above-mentioned challenges can be effectively investigated and addressed without *SSH* perspectives being an integral element of the research set-up and research process. All these challenges have to be addressed not only at the level of technological and administrative solutions, but crucially at the level of attitudes, motivations and behaviour. Tackling each of them depends decisively on investigating underlying social, cultural and behavioural dimensions. In each of these challenges it is, after all, human behaviour that has created the problems and human behaviour in all its complexity is, alongside with technological innovations, also an important part of their solution. Across the Humanities community this embedding agenda had been welcomed and supported, but the reality in the funding calls of *Horizon 2020* has been radically different from these aspirations: Humanities and Social Sciences are almost invisible in the vast majority of funding calls, and this is despite detailed recommendations from the *SSH* community on how the embedding agenda could be delivered (Coimbra Group 2017a).² The *SSH* embedding agenda has not been delivered and is seen by many inside and outside the commission as a failure and its

2 See the recommendations in section III. 'Societal Challenges and the role of the Social Sciences and the Humanities' of the Coimbra Group's position paper on *Horizon 2020* (Coimbra Group 2013), and the LERU advice paper *The Future of the Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe: Collected LERU papers*

future in the next Framework Programme FP9, *Horizon Europe*, which is currently being shaped, is uncertain and further marginalisation looks very likely.

In the *Culture, Arts and Humanities Task Force* and its successor, the *SSH Working Group* of the *Coimbra Group*, Helmut, our colleagues and I have been debating the reasons for this and how they are related to the so-called impact agenda. ‘Impact’ is, of course, alongside with ‘innovation’ and ‘knowledge transfer’, a current key-word of research policies in Europe and globally. It is the concept, according to which the societal relevance of research and the commitment of universities towards the public good is framed in today’s debates. Policy and funding decisions are increasingly driven by the insistence on measurable societal impact. Impact is, for example, a key evaluation criterion for *Horizon 2020* proposals in Pillar 3, accounting for 30 % of the assessment. Following the recommendations of the influential Lamy Report on maximising the impact of EU Research and Innovation Programmes it is clear that the role of impact in FP9, *Horizon Europe*, is only to increase (Coimbra Group 2017b).³

In the United Kingdom, which in its research assessment policies has pursued the impact agenda more proactively and more systematically than any other European university system, the 2014 *Research Excellence Framework* exercise *REF*, which measures research performance in a discipline-specific peer-review process, allocated 20 % of its overall research funding to UK universities, overall £ 1.6 billion over five years, based on the evaluation of impact. For the 2020 *REF* that proportion is expected to rise to 25 %. The governments, funding agencies and university leaderships see impact as an important tool with enormous potential to leverage benefit to society from the investment into higher education teaching and research, and as an instrument to steer research policies and agendas in this direction.

The UK’s *REF* offers a usefully broad definition of impact that shows its proximity to the concept of commitment as outlined earlier. It defines impact ‘as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health,

on the *SSH research agenda* (Van den Doel 2013). In its contribution to the mid-term evaluation of *Horizon 2020* in January 2017 the Coimbra Group already expressed serious concern that the embedding agenda was lagging behind expectations and made suggestions on how to remedy this. One such recommendation (that has not been picked up since) was ‘to make it an evaluation criterion for all SSH flagged topics to address SSH issues properly in the proposal and also demonstrate this in the structure of the consortia. Failure to do so should automatically be scored as major shortcomings.’

3 See Lamy 2017. In its reaction to the Lamy Report, the Coimbra Group stressed the special position of SSH *vis a vis* the impact agenda: ‘the Coimbra Group would wish to emphasise that SSH perspectives need to be included more explicitly in the formulation of calls, and the concept of impact should be adjusted to be appropriate to the kind of contributions that SSH could and should make.’

the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'.⁴ This is a definition that most of us in the Humanities, I think, would be prepared to embrace and work with; I certainly would. So why is impact such a feared, critiqued, maligned and sometimes even loathed concept, especially in the Humanities? In some quarters it has become almost a dirty word, one that a civilised, decent member of our community better not utter in public, certainly not in a positive or affirmative sense. I think we can agree across the Humanities communities that there is absolutely nothing wrong with the expectation that our research is useful and has a palpable effect on society and that, on the contrary, we can and should take pride in the contribution we make to our societies. My introduction also already indicated that societal benefit or impact has always been an expectation on us and is nothing new.

But it is precisely the current economic and political contexts and their effect on university and research politics that cause the problems. As this symposium is devoted precisely to the transformation of European universities caused by these contexts, it will suffice briefly to remind us of the three most relevant interrelated trends to explain the growing tension the impact agenda has created between curiosity and commitment. There is firstly (and principally) the move from curiosity-driven to project-driven research, with the research agenda set by stakeholders from outside academia such as governments, supra-national organisations like the *European Commission*, the private sector, lobbying organisations or philanthropic donors. There is secondly the move from discipline-based and individual research to interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and thirdly changes in the funding model for university systems away from long-term core funding to short-term project funding.

In this context, it is not difficult to see why the impact agenda with its increasing insistence on demonstrable societal benefit of publicly funded research, on accountability and a return for the investment of taxpayer's money, causes particular challenges for the Humanities and contributes to a sense of crisis experienced by so many. I will briefly discuss the six major problematic factors that I see in this respect – and there might be others –, before arguing that despite those, and in order to confront them the Humanities not only need to engage with the impact agenda but also have a lot to gain from such engagement. As always, these six factors are deeply interrelated.

Firstly, if one demands impact as a research result and makes it a criterion of evaluation and funding, then one needs evidence that proves and measures this impact

4 See this definition and its contexts at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/REFimpact/> (accessed 13 February 2018).

with a degree of precision and objectivity. While this might look like an obvious truism, it is one with far-reaching consequences, as impact takes many forms, some of which are more easily measured than others. If one wants to measure contributions to technological advancement or economic benefits, then the number of patents, spin-off companies, jobs created and the contribution to GDP are strong and relatively reliable and objective indicators. But how does one measure and objectify the more indirect and more long-term effects that most activities in the universities and especially the Humanities have? How does one measure, for example, a changed attitude in parts of the general public towards a nation's history that research on cultural memory has influenced over time? How does one then prove the link between the two and prove that such changes have strengthened democratic values or civic participation? How does one measure, for example, the contribution literatures of migration and their investigation and promotion by literary scholars make towards a more tolerant and inclusive society? How does one prove that a deeper appreciation of art by new audiences enriches people's lives and contributes to well-being? These are some of the questions that Humanities advocates, who try to make the concept of impact work for our disciplines, find themselves confronted with.

Secondly, the increasing emphasis on societal impact entails the danger of marginalising or even delegitimising curiosity-driven research, non-applied research and basic research. This is a problem for all disciplines but is arguably affecting especially those domains of knowledge such as the Humanities, which are more characterized by curiosity-driven and non-applied approaches. When looking at PhD and postdoctoral topics in our respective fields we can increasingly observe how research agendas are being influenced and steered by the impact agenda. If I look at my own discipline of German literary and cultural studies today most PhD projects cover areas for which the societal relevance is relatively easy to identify and to demonstrate: cultural memory and memory politics, literatures of migration and intercultural encounter, gender, ageing and generational relationships, medical humanities and environmental humanities. In general, contemporary authors and topics are favoured over more historic ones. These are of course all important and exciting topics very much worthy of investigation. But there is increasing evidence that topics that are harder to justify in terms of their societal relevance and impact, on obscure and neglected authors or topics or on more distant pasts, be these the Middle Ages or the Age of Enlightenment, are far less researched today than they were twenty years ago.

Thirdly, a narrow focus on impact discourages serendipity and thus considerably impoverishes the innovation potential of research. To let your mind roam freely

wherever it takes you, to give space to digression and change of focus, to pursue avenues of which you had no inkling that they existed or that they might become interesting and relevant for your work is one of the strongest assets of curiosity-driven research and is also at the heart of a productive and innovative research process. Of course, a focus on a given question and a particular problem to solve is not a strict opposite to the freedom of imagination and flexibility of approach, but if the research culture is continually shifting towards applicable results and measurable impacts, then the delicate balance between these two sides of the research process is in danger of going out of kilter. In their spirited defence of universities against an overly utilitarian and managerial approach *What are universities for?* Geoffrey Bolton and Colin Lucas make this important point:

Successful research, whether in the sciences, humanities or social sciences, depends upon a culture and individual attitudes that value curiosity, scepticism, serendipity, creativity and genius. They are values that are crucial to the university educational process at its most profound, and are most readily acquired in an environment of free-ranging speculation and research that is permeated by them (Bolton and Lucas 2008).

In the same vein these authors also remind us that agenda setting by stakeholders from inside and outside academia inevitably misses potential solutions and decisive innovative developments and can get it very wrong. For example, President Roosevelt's 1937 Commission to advise on the most likely innovations of the next thirty years missed, among other things, nuclear energy, lasers, computers, Xerox, jet engines, radar, antibiotics and the genetic code (Bolton and Lucas 2008: 8).

Fourthly (and briefly), if funding decisions are increasingly based on impact, then it is in the logic of such funding instruments that areas which can prove and quantify their impact more easily and will attract a greater share of the funding. Of the thirty-four billion Euro in *Horizon 2020*'s Societal Challenges Pillar 3 just four billion Euro were designated for Social Science and Humanities, with only a small fraction of this money actually going to the Humanities.

As a fifth point we must ask how the research agendas are set and by whom. Especially the *Horizon 2020* programme, which has been one of the main drivers of the impact agenda, has been influenced not only by political agents, but also by various pressure groups from industry, who have their professional lobbyists employed in Brussels. At the inaugural meeting of the *Coimbra Group's SSH Working Group* in January 2016 we debated with the late Philippe Keraudren, who was a tireless and committed advocate of the Humanities at the DG Research in Brussels, how we could best work for a greater prominence of Humanities topics in the Commission's

programmes. We discussed with him our concerns that the embedding agenda greatly lagged behind its original ambitions and that embedding recommendations by networks such as the *Coimbra Group* or *LERU*, the *League of European Research Universities*, were not being picked up. We observed that between the first and final drafts of work programmes often good calls with a broader perspective and a less applied focus were watered down, got their funding drastically reduced or completely disappeared. His message was as clear as it was sobering: with the lobbying power and constant presence of so many pressure groups trying to influence decision-makers in Brussels every day, the voices of and for the Humanities are simply drowned out. If the Humanities want a stronger presence in the Commission's funding call, we concluded, they need to get better at lobbying, they need to establish and resource stronger lobbying groups nationally and in Brussels, they need to build coalitions, hone and coordinate their key messages, become more consistent in what they ask for and speak more with one voice.

Finally researching for societal impact according to agendas set by politicians should be viewed with a degree of caution for another reason. Few would question the political importance and urgency of the societal challenges selected for the current framework programme, and the intended closer links with the *Sustainable Development Goals* in the next Framework Programme, FP9, will further increase the legitimacy of research agendas derived from those goals. However, if we look back in history, we can see that especially the Humanities can be in danger of serving partisan and deeply problematic agendas especially when their impact in the political field is called for. In European universities the impact of large parts of the Humanities, of historians, philologists and linguists was arguably at its highest when they served, at various junctures during the 19th and 20th centuries, nationalistic causes that provided scholarly – and often pseudo-scholarly – authority to processes of identity demarcations and hostile othering and thus exacerbated divisions and conflicts. Against such political instrumentalisation the distance which institutional autonomy and academic freedom provides is essential.

It might have become plausible from what I have said so far to see impact as a dirty word, or at least as a highly problematic concept. Where, the reader might wonder at this stage, considering the title of this paper, does impact as salvation come into it? The reality for all of us in academia, and especially for young researchers who are embarking on their careers, is that the call for societal impact will not go away and will only increase in importance. Whether we like it or not, we will have to engage with it, we will have to confront it and we are well advised to join in the debate in order to influence and shape it in a way that works better for the Humanities. Besides all the challenges outlined thus far there are also real opportunities in this

focus on greater societal impact, opportunities to increase the public visibility of Humanities research, to demonstrate to a wider audience why what we do matters and to achieve benefits for our societies.

In the first instance we need to argue and fight for ways of expressing and evaluating impact that are more appropriate for the Humanities and their more indirect and long-term influences. One aspect of this is to emphasise that the principal and most important way in which the Humanities have an impact on society is through the education of the next generation of leaders, equipped with skills crucial for vibrant democracies responsive to innovation and change, skills such as critical reasoning, independence of mind, creativity and problem-solving. Martha M. Nussbaum in *Not for profit. Why democracy needs the Humanities* has eloquently argued for the centrality of the Humanities for responsible and active citizenship (Nussbaum 2008), as has John Laver, the founding chairman of the *British Academy's Humanities Research Board* in the 1990's, who described 'two distinctive attributes' of Arts and Humanities graduates: 'reflectiveness, leading to a thoughtful tolerance that is one of the hallmarks of a civilized culture, and a sense of being rooted in a cultural and historical context' (Laver 1997: 157). Let me add to this the intercultural competence that comes with the ability to read other cultures and negotiate their 'otherness' and the importance of language skills for this. The societal impact that derives from influencing the hearts and minds of our students must be included in the assessment and evaluation of societal impact.

We must, therefore, from the perspectives of the Humanities, monitor current practices, in the expression, measurement and evaluation of impact to learn from them, but also to critique them and make suggestions as to how they could be better adapted to our needs. Let me again take the UK's *REF* as an example. Included in the submissions from Higher Education Institutions for the 2014 *REF* were a total of 6679 impact case studies, in which the specific and demonstrable impact of individual research projects finds clear expression. Of these four-page documents, in which researchers outlined how they disseminated their research beyond their academic peers, engaged with a wider public and influenced domains beyond academia, 27 % were from the Arts & Humanities.⁵ The ways in which this societal impact was achieved varied greatly and included exhibitions, screenings, readings or films, lectures, workshops and debates, websites, social media, videos, interviews, media appearances, political consultancy work and co-operations with cultural and creative institutions, heritage and community organisations, civil society groups,

5 For an overview and a first analysis of these Impact Case Studies see the research report King's College London and Digital Science (2015).

NGOs, charities or policymakers. All these case studies are available on a publicly accessible website, and they make interesting and sometimes inspiring reading.⁶ They can even instil a cautious optimism that there are many imaginative ‘impacts’ to explore and that the impact of Humanities research can in fact be achieved and expressed. Two examples, chosen because of their proximity to Helmut Eberhart’s discipline and research interests, may briefly illustrate this.

The first one comes from the field of Anthropology, which contributed thirty-two case studies overall to the 2014 corpus. The case study *Visual Mass Observation. Facilitating public engagement with a new collaborative ethnography* was based on participatory research by Michael Stewart from University College London who in his *MyStreet Project* encouraged and trained members of marginalised communities to produce films ‘on their own environments – and reflect ethnographically on their everyday experience’. During this work he ‘formed relationships with over three hundred filmmakers, inspiring them to use ethnographic investigations of everyday British life’ (Stewart 2014). Through a website which presented 315 films in a living archive the project reached within two years over 11.000 visitors. Selected films were screened at the *Open City Docs Fest* at UCL to great acclaim and considerable national and international media coverage. Additionally, three hundred fifty participants from disadvantaged schools and communities were trained in ethnographic filmmaking in eighty-nine workshops across London, with very positive effects on their skills sets, self-esteem and empowerment. The impact case study also includes very favourable comments on the project by famous directors of British blockbusters like *Notting Hill* and *Billy Elliot*, who encountered the *MyStreet Project* as jury members.

My second example comes from the field of Religious Studies and has the title *Promoting Pilgrimage in Churches, Cultural Heritage and Tourism*. It reports on a multitude of engagements of Ian Bradley, specialist for pilgrimages in Scotland and Europe in the Middle Ages and Professor emeritus in the School of Divinity at St. Andrews. Here is the hundred-word summary of his impact:

Dr Ian Bradley’s research on the history and practice of pilgrimage in Scotland has had an impact on public understanding of cultural heritage, on the tourist industry, and on the development of new practices by local authorities, churches and the military. Dr Bradley has been commissioned to devise and lead pilgrimages in Scotland and beyond, which have yielded quantifiable economic benefits of over £ 250,000. His research has contributed to the conservation of cultural heritage through a range of

6 All case studies can be accessed at <http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/%20> (accessed 16 February 2018).

consultancy work, with impacts including the establishment of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum in 2012 and enhancements to the visitor experience at Iona Abbey. It is continuing to shape pilgrim route infrastructure development by national and local agencies, church groups and the army (Bradley 2014).

I have to admit that I chose this case study also because it provides a link to my own university, Trinity College Dublin: The *Book of Kells*, the illuminated manuscript of the gospels, which is the pride of our library, The Long Room, and one of Ireland's major tourist attractions, was written on the Scottish island of Iona around eight-hundred.

What can we learn from these examples? Firstly, surely, that societal impact can be achieved and can be expressed. I am confident that most cultural anthropologists and European ethnologists present here today could produce similar case studies on work they have undertaken or could produce plans for similar activities arising from their current and future research. Secondly, it is already clear from these two examples that impact comes in many forms and facets, and that there are multiple ways of demonstrating it. This is encouraging overall, and while there is a focus on quantifiable evidence such as web-hits, audience numbers or generated income, evidence such as testimonies from involved and affected parties or media coverage is equally important and valid.

We certainly have to fight any notion that impact would ever be introduced as a mandatory element of research, which notably the *Research Excellence Framework* has not done, but it would certainly befit and enrich us as members of the Humanities research community to ask ourselves questions like those every grant application in the UK now has to produce in a so-called pathway to impact statement: Who might benefit from this research? How might they benefit? How do you ensure that potential beneficiaries of your research can engage with this research? While some might see this as a kind of coercion towards a narrowly utilitarian approach, I would rather take it as an encouragement and an open invitation to develop a culture of research design that always includes a dimension beyond academia, seeks appropriate partners for the co-creation and usage of our knowledge and connects to the greater questions of our time. The challenge here is not so much to steer our research topics and research questions artificially to suit an imposed impact agenda, but rather to include, regardless of what we work on, the systematic reflection and articulation of societal benefit into the way we think about, plan and structure our research, its outputs and their dissemination.

Public engagement and the so-called third mission of universities are more than an add-on to teaching and research. They are proud obligations of higher education

institutions and the contemporary expression of the kind of commitment that has been fundamental to universities and their core values throughout history. Any discussion about societal impact must be framed within this wider context. No one would deny that the impact agenda provides huge challenges for the Humanities, but it also offers considerable opportunities. We must rethink as disciplines and as institutions how we engage with a wider public and non-academic, non-specialist audiences. This is not easy and implies, among other things, seeking new partnerships in the private sector and in civil society, a readiness to listen to and understand the perspectives of these partners and to see the generation of new knowledge increasingly as a process of co-creation. These points were emphasised, for example, by two recent position papers from *LERU*, the *League of European Research Universities* on the topic, one from March 2017 and the other from April 2018 (Van den Acker and Spaapen 2017; Keustermans et al. 2018). It entails also a willingness and a conscious exercise to refrain from the jargon and the delight in hermetic language which one finds too often in academic discourse, and to cultivate a language that is not only understood by our peers, but instead is responsive to the way of thinking outside the academic world. All this challenges deeply engrained academic cultures and habits and requires a readiness to step outside our disciplinary cultures and comfort zones. It also means a readiness to embrace new formats of delivery and engagement and to create dedicated spaces in our institutions such as Humanities Research Institutes or Institutes of Advanced Studies which encourage and enable involvement in public debate and develop and sustain a culture of engagement with the big questions of our time. We must train and reward among our students and our young researchers discursive practices that combine disciplinary depth of analysis with clarity of expression and a focus on non-specialist audiences. The thesis-in-three competitions, which the *Coimbra Group* now organises across Europe every year, is just one example of this.

Crucially Humanities advocates must make their voices heard loud and clear in policy debates and insist in the engagement with university leaderships, funding agencies, governments and other policy makers that the focus on easily quantifiable output and direct economic benefit, which has dominated the impact debate for too long, is wrong and needs to be adjusted. We must develop and suggest more nuanced and more sophisticated ways to assess broad societal impact – in its many shapes and sizes – in sensitive and appropriate ways and with flexible and diverse sets of indicators, paying particular attention to the more indirect and long-term benefits that the Humanities bring to civil society and the public good. These points have been emphasised in several valuable recent contributions to the debate, for

example by the *Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences in Canada* (Federation 2017) or the *Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute* in my own university (Burgess 2018).

We know that Humanities matter. We as humans are fundamentally meaning-seeking creatures and as such we need the reflection of our questions and aspirations in critical reasoning and open debate, and the refraction of our highest hopes and deepest fears in art and in culture. We need to tell our stories and we need to listen to the stories of others. We need this as much as we need food on the table and the air that we breathe. Try to imagine, for a moment, a world without music, visual art, drama, film or poetry, a world in which we could not make links with the past of our people and position ourselves in relation to tradition, or a world in which we could not connect with other cultures and unfamiliar people via the common reservoir of artistic, cultural or philosophical expressions of our shared humanity – it is a world that one cannot imagine as it would quite simply not be a world inhabited by humans. We have a lot to give, and we do give much to society. The challenge is to find convincing ways to articulate this. The imperative of impact might not be the salvation of the Humanities, but it is not its downfall either. It is an opportunity that we must embrace and shape with equal measures of vigilance and confidence.

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Ulrika Wolf-Knuts

Was Everything Better in the Past?

The Situation of the Universities in Finland

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Zusammenfassung

Die Studentenbewegung, die im Jahre 1968 stattfand, hatte vielleicht keinen unmittelbaren Einfluss auf die finnischen Universitäten, die dauerhaften Folgen wurden aber bedeutend. Seitdem wurden mit der Zeit etliche Reformen durchgeführt. Wichtig werden in diesem Artikel Themen so wie „Wie war es in den 1970ern an Universitäten in Finnland zu arbeiten und zu studieren?“, „Was hat sich bis heute geändert?“, „Was sind die Folgen der Änderungen, und wie gehen wir damit um?“ oder „Wie sah der Prozess der Auswahl der änderungsbedürftigen Praxen aus?“ Interviews und Fragebögen liegen meiner kulturanalytischen narratologischen Untersuchung zu Grunde und sie will die Veränderungen auf verschiedenen Ebenen aufdecken. Gleichzeitig will sie auch demonstrieren, dass viele Aspekte des Universitätslebens doch unverändert blieben. Waren die Veränderungen für Gedeih oder Verderb?

Schlagwörter: Universitätsreformen, Veränderungen, Universitätsverwaltung, Narratologie

Abstract

The 1968 student movement may have had little immediate impact on Finnish universities, yet its long-term effects were profound. Since then, quite a few reforms have been introduced in quick succession. In this article topics such as “What were the 1970s like for staff and students and Finnish universities?”, “What has changed until today?”, “What are the consequences of the differences, and how do we deal with them?”, or “What was the selection process like?” are central questions to be answered. Drawing on interviews and questionnaires and employing a cultural-analytical narratological approach, my presentation seeks to uncover the changes that have taken place at different levels, while it will also demonstrate that many aspects of university life remain un-changed. Were the changes for better or for worse?

Keywords: university reforms, changes, university administration, narratology

The Background

During the last few decades, universities in Finland have undergone great change. I will demonstrate this with the example of my own university, *Åbo Akademi University*, situated in the town of Turku, which is called *Åbo* in Swedish. Firstly, I compare the old and new practices in the university management. Secondly, I look at the effects of the *Universities Act* 2009, and, thirdly, I ponder on how the reform influenced the study of culture, mainly ethnology and folkloristics. I finish this article with a couple of suggestions for how these disciplines could develop.

Curiosity and Commitment was the title of a conference held in Graz, Austria, in October 2018. My main question concerns the relation between curiosity and commitment at the Finnish universities of today. I derive my method of analysis from the discipline of folkloristics, which studies people's ways of thinking based on their narratives. Consequently, I work with a hermeneutical perspective when I look for the meaning of the situation today in contrast to the conditions before the year 2009 when the Finnish Parliament passed a new *Universities Act* (Universities Act 2009). The new administration started in January 2010.

Despite being in Finland, for historical reasons the general language at *Åbo Akademi University* is Swedish. Finland was part of Sweden until 1809 and consequently Swedish was the language of administration and authorities. In 1640, in *Åbo*, the Swedish Queen Christina established a university called *The Royal Academy of Åbo*. After a devastating fire in 1827, this university moved to the capital, Helsinki. However, in 1918, a new *Åbo Akademi University* started to work in Turku in the same place as the old university. Mentally, many colleagues of mine reckoned the roots of today's *Åbo Akademi University* from the year 1640. *Academia Aboensis Rediviva* is a good label for the new institution (Nordström 1968). This certainly means that, for a long time, the employees regarded their university as an old and glorious institution. My main sources for the following paragraphs are Nordström (1968) and Ahlbäck and Nygård (2018), together with the *Universities Act* 2009.

Financial Matters

The new *Åbo Akademi University* started with some forty students, six professors, and a handful of staff working in three faculties. Today, some five thousand and five hundred students, eight hundred postgraduate students, one thousand and one hundred professors, university teachers, researchers and other staff work and study at four faculties at *Åbo Akademi University*. Per annum around one thousand and four hundred publications and seventy doctoral dissertations are published.

The budget is ninety-eight million euros, of which almost sixty million is state funding (*Facts* 2018).

Until 2010 the universities in Finland were at times private, at times they were private but obtained a great part of their resources by the support of the state, at times they were completely financed by the state. In 1981 *Åbo Akademi University* was the last one to change its profile from a private to a state university. This step caused heated dispute, due to the fear of influence from the state concerning how to conduct research. However, the lack of financial resources forced a radical change in the situation (Ahlbäck 2018).

As in other European countries, the aim of the Finnish governments often was to reduce public costs. Student welfare, care-taking and education are the greatest expenses and consequently the institutions dealing with that kind of service should be private, it is argued, or the number should even decrease. Accordingly, the juridical status of the universities changed. Before 2010, still being state universities, they had access to the state purse, but since that year, they are ‘official-juridical’ institutions, which means that they depend on the *Department of Education, Research, and Culture*, but they also have a certain degree of freedom. In this way, they resemble enterprises. As a result of this, the universities can now only obtain a limited quantity of money from the state. More and more capital has to be acquired from the private sector, that is, from industry, from foundations or from private persons. The discussion about the influence exerted by the financial supporter is relevant again. A failure in the acquisition of financial means may lead to bankruptcy. Certainly, the so-called *Academy of Finland*, a governmental funding body for scientific research, allocates resources, but evaluating national and international experts regard only a minimal number of the applications as appropriate. Today, at some universities the leaders even urge the researchers to try to find external financing. This is also true within the humanities and the studies of culture, even if these disciplines do not really need that much financial resources. The reason for this pressure is that the university receives additional state funding for assiduity.

The Board, the Rector, and the Deans

Until 2010, there were numerous board members. They were the vice rector(s), the dean of each faculty, representatives of other units and groups of the staff, and a couple of students. All members belonged to the university and the rector was the chairperson.

However, the idea of regarding the universities more or less as enterprises led to changes within the boards. Consequently, there now is a small board. The vice-rectors do not participate, and the faculties are not represented. Every participant is elected for his or her individual characteristics and expertise. An external chairperson leads the board instead of the rector and around one-half of the members must be recruited from outside the university. The connection with society and/or other educational institutions is important. A couple of students are still members.

Being the rector was a commission of trust. At that time, he functioned as a ‘*primus inter pares*’. He led the board and carried the overall responsibility for the university. Administrative personnel helped him to run the university. This model with working methods loyal to colleagues is now gone. Nowadays, the rector works mainly with the ‘foreign affairs’, that is, with the *Department of Education, Research, and Culture*, with other rectors, and, moreover, he or she is in charge of financial, disciplinary, and other internal matters. He or she reports to the Board. The rector and the deans have the real power. This, of course, is fine as long as the elected persons are wise, but as soon as lust for power comes before wisdom this model of administration is disastrous.

Being a dean was likewise a commission of trust to accomplish alongside working as a professor. The faculties were financially dependent on the central fund and there were no obligations to ‘produce’ degrees or raise money. Now, the faculties are rather independent. The deans are more influential than before and have only a limited amount of teaching duties. Every faculty led by the dean is responsible for its own results, such as degrees, publications, citations and the amount of external funding received. The amount of state funding is related to and depends on the faculty’s predictions and results, and they function as binding factors in an agreement between the university and the *Department of Education, Research, and Culture*. The dean is the managing director of his or her faculty. He or she must encourage the students and employees to adapt to a ‘performance university’ concentrated on the agreement between the university and the *Department*. A discipline may close if the employees and students do not perform well enough.

The Students

Until now, it was possible to conduct lifelong studies. It was possible to study for many years and then leave the university without a degree. Often, the family or somebody else close to the student paid for him or her to stay at the university. Depending on the needs of family establishment or other circumstances, the payers

formulated the conditions for a student. Some decades ago, girls who enrolled in a university often wished to find a suitable husband. If somebody wanted to obtain a doctoral degree, he or she had to marry a rich partner or belong to a wealthy family, or as was the usual solution to this practical problem, write his or her dissertation in his or her spare time (Wolf-Knuts 2018: 55–57, 80–84).

According to the Bologna reform for university studies starting in 1999, the curriculum is limited in time: in Finland a Bachelor's degree takes three years, a Master's two, and, if somebody wants to become a doctor, he or she should finish within another four years. Complicated calculations can render a student more time, for instance, if a woman gives birth to a child, if a man has to attend military service, or if somebody falls seriously ill. The same individual can have a Master's degree in various disciplines, and for prospective doctors there are scholarships, grants and even positions. The goal is to limit the duration of studies for financial reasons. Universities are expensive, and the country needs working taxpayers.

In Finland, it costs nothing to study for a Bachelor's and a Master's degree (Wolf-Knuts 2018: 57). Every student receives a monthly amount of money from the state to allow him or her to pay for his or her studies and rent. In case this money is not enough, bank loans and income from part-time work are solutions. Taking this view of university education into consideration, the authorities do not easily approve of slow students or students who drop out of their education without a degree. This is because the students' allowance consists of money paid by Finnish citizens' taxes, and, consequently, only seriously studying young people with realistic plans should receive resources.

Yet another, less ethically meaningful, perspective is that the calculation of the amount of state money for every university unit depends on the number of degrees of various kinds bestowed during a specific period. Again, the idea of the 'high-performance university' is central. However, the state does not have unlimited resources, which means that the amount of money for a degree varies from one year to another depending on how many degrees there are to pay for and how much money has been defined for sharing between the universities in the entire country. This led to the decision that the state will only pay for a specific number of degrees. The surplus number does not render the university any money at all. Therefore, at *Åbo Akademi University*, for instance, it is not popular if the number of Bachelor's and Master's degrees exceeds the agreement with the governmental *Department*. Rather the professor should try to be strategic in his or her supervision and plan for a continuous stream of degrees according to agreements with the state.

Research or Teaching?

Until this model filled with an ideal of efficiency started, researchers were rather free to work on issues they were interested in, even individually. Certainly, there has always been some relationship with industry, from which scientists obtained support, but generally, research was a matter of individual interest. Today, the researcher has to adapt to set up immense, or at least, big projects, to find suitable colleagues, preferably also from outside the country, and then again to adapt to working in such a milieu. Consequently, many fields of unsuspected knowledge remain unobserved, and many scientists complain about how difficult it is to find an opportunity to conduct fundamental research. Some even maintain that research has now become alchemy, for it does not bring any new knowledge. Financial support is not guaranteed. To run a research project without being able to trust the financing is like leading a kolkhoz: ‘When it started to work, there appeared new rules that created chaos in the finances’ (Salmi 2019: 6; cf. Alvesson et al. 2017).

In Finland of 2019, research is much preferred compared to teaching. It is almost impossible to receive external funding for teaching, while there are quite a lot of foundations that support research. During the last fifty years, teaching has become more and more of an issue for the teacher instead of a matter for the student. Teaching usually consisted of courses, which were certainly meant to prod slow students. However, university teachers’ training developed and today the educators prefer a new interactive pedagogy. Reading a book alone is not regarded as an efficient means any more. Because of less financial resources and, consequently, a reduced number of teachers, the students have to work in a more independent way. Certainly, there is help on the Internet and the students can also help one another, but self-regulating work is difficult. Subsequently, there is an increasing need of study counsellors. The freedom in how one arranges one’s studies increases; with the help of computer platforms it is possible to study when it feels suitable instead of being obliged to participate in physical lectures. This requires much more self-discipline from a student than a decade or more ago.

The Premises

Twenty years ago, almost everyone had an office of his or her own. Now, the employees are placed in narrow rooms, for the guaranteed state money is reduced and, consequently, the administration of the university buildings is privatised, but at the same time, the rental of the premises is unchanged, or has even risen. To share the office with somebody else is certainly disturbing but, on the other hand,

this also brought an advantage. People who otherwise never co-operated started to plan joint projects. In contrast to the time before the reform, entire universities were also obliged to work together. In some cases, a couple of universities even amalgamated. Mostly within the fields of science, the professors and directors accepted deep co-operation, for nowadays the apparatus and the devices are too expensive for one institution to purchase and to renew.

Creating Relevant Research Profiles and Projects

Whereas universities generally were rather alike all over the country in the wake of more co-operation and less money, the state wants the universities to create profiles. If the *Department of Education, Research, and Culture* accepts a profile, the university receives some more millions of euros as added financial resources. In 2019 Åbo Akademi University has two profiles of its own called *Minorities* and *Molecular Process and Material Technology*, and two profiles in co-operation with the Finnish University of Turku, namely *Drug Development and Diagnostics* and *The Sea*. Within these projects, it is possible to employ various experts and to enhance high-level research. This arrangement is supposed to encourage relevant high-quality investigations, above all marketable innovations, by employing either international researchers or very good Finnish scientists and scholars.

There is a demand for free and unattached research (Sevelius 2019). Still, in the 1970s an external financial support, for instance from industry or from a municipality, was called into question. However, the new *Act* was supposed to give the universities greater autonomy. This was successful only to some extent: The industry formulates its wishes, which certainly influence the work at the universities. Generally, the foundations have strict definitions and do not grant funding for just any kind of research. Today, really free and experimental research, driven by curiosity, is rather rare. In addition, the peer review institution contributes to this disadvantage. The referees guide the issues of research even more than the access to money does. The critical referee may acknowledge only what he or she finds acceptable, or what does not threaten or otherwise influence his or her own research. Publishing is a matter of fitting into the relevant current of research. The referee has a lot of power (Bal 2018). Previously, it was the scientist, the readers and the reviewer of the printed text that were the authorities.

According to their scholarly and scientific value, the research journals are ranked with the figures one to three or even four. It is worthwhile trying to publish in third- or fourth-grade journals, for articles in them render the authors' university a reward with the highest amounts of financial support from the *Department of*

Education, Research, and Culture. To publish is yet another source of financing. However, nobody asks whether it is intelligent to publish any kind of article on any kind of issue in highly ranked international journals. Again, local research topics will be missing because they are not regarded as interesting enough for international readers, not to mention the ethical viewpoint of not making it possible for compatriots to read and understand what the scholars have discovered. This, certainly, is a central question in the study of culture when it is based on interviews.

In spite of all the reforms, however, Finnish research did not improve. It is stable, but other nations, such as Switzerland, Denmark, and Austria, are winning this competition. In such a perspective on academia, stability is of no use (Academy 2018).

What then is Finnish academia like in 2019? The student has quite a lot of options on how to build his or her career. However, in many cases the project-thinking limits the opportunities when it comes to research. As a doctor-to-be one should pick a topic that suits the interests of the supervisor and, after that, one has to keep pace with the others in the supervisor's project that, in turn, follows plans that the financier accepts. After the Master's degree, the researcher at a Finnish university is dependent on his or her colleagues, who are dependent on the financial supporters. Consequently, researchers can only realise their ideas if they fit into the frames of reference of others. This was not always the case, at least not within the humanities and arts, but at that time the demand for external money was minimal.

Participating in research groups also requires consideration. Every participant's part of the work must fit into the other participants' parts in the same way as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle fit together. Consequently, the working methods must be target-oriented and result-oriented. In the project group, peace is important; otherwise, the outcome might be dysfunctional. This, certainly, is important, for research that confirms hypotheses is nice, but research that diverges from the hypotheses is triggering. It leads to more critical thinking, perhaps even to innovations, a sacred word in Finnish academia and industry.

Efficiency, Control, and Discipline

Thus, efficiency and performance seem to be central ideas. Time for research is measured (cf. Salo and Heikkinen 2018: 94–95, 100). There is a well-constructed system to take care of the students. Non-efficient students can see a student psychologist or even a psychiatrist if the teachers, professors, mentors and other available non-medical helpers are not sufficient. In this case, the university is a

care-taking institution. However, the concern does not really centre on the well-being of the students for their individual sake, but also for the presumably lost money that the university does not obtain if the student drops out without a degree.

People known for not being swift and result-oriented, but for speculating and being pensive, even if they are good researchers, they are not evident co-operators in research that requires perspectives of various kinds. To make people work in a result-oriented environment paid by result-expecting financiers leads to control. Control is partly a sign of mistrust, but it can also be associated with money. On the one hand, if control works because of unbelief, it means that colleagues do not trust one another. On the other hand, in Finnish universities nowadays there are systems to measure everything: working time, degrees, examinations, publications, in what forum a publication appeared, citations, external financial support and so forth. The university of today is a society of control. Moreover, because of this control, comparison is possible, at least if one does not demand any precision and reflection about that process. Control and comparison give birth to competition, which generally implies improvement, but which also brings forth envy and down-heartedness (Ehn and Löfgren 2004: 31–41). Sometimes envy triggers, and sometimes envy cripples. If it paralyses people, they will not commit themselves to competition. Good social relations are a prerequisite for success in the universities in Finland. The *Universities Act* 2009, section 2, paragraph 1 reads:

The mission of the universities is to promote independent academic research as well as academic and artistic education, to provide research-based higher education and to educate students to serve their country and humanity at large. In carrying out their mission, the universities shall promote lifelong learning, interact with the surrounding society and promote the social impact of university research findings and artistic activities.

This is a great formulation. Interestingly enough, it mentions the verb ‘promote’ (Finnish *edistää*, Swedish *främja*). This means that the starting point of the *Act* is that the universities have not yet reached their goal or filled their commitment. They are still working on it. Consequently, it is worthwhile asking in what way this idea will be realised. My analysis demonstrates that the proper path to this super goal is discipline. Universities in Finland have one task above offering independent academic research, academic education based on research and roles as servants in Finland and the world. That task is to discipline people at the universities. This, certainly, is good for the individual, although he or she should have learnt it at school. Discipline is also excellent for the country. Nevertheless, one also has to ask if discipline accompanied by envy and fear of having less of everything, from students to money, promotes creativity, one of the main conditions for meaningful

research to find new knowledge. The purpose of academia in Finland has changed and this change has consequences for the eye on universities.

Independent and Relevant Research

Another central concept in the *Act* is ‘independent’ (Finnish *vapaa*, Swedish *fri*). Independent means not being dependent on anybody or anything, and independent research means scholarly and scientific work that does not depend on anything else than scholarly and scientific rules – in order to achieve high-quality knowledge, be it comfortable or not. However, some researchers have always been dependent on patrons. Modern research is very much dependent on financial support, on referees and editors, or on relevant trends and tendencies within both academia and the surrounding society. Probably, fully independent research has always been and remains a dream.

In the discourse on doing scholarly work, the concept of relevance is central. It seems that research for its own sake is not enough, education for doing good research is not enough, but the accent lies on the third objective for universities, namely to ‘serve their country and humanity at large. In carrying out their mission, the universities shall promote lifelong learning, interact with the surrounding society and promote the social impact of university research findings and artistic activities’ (*Universities Act* 2009). However, there is no definition of what relevance means, neither is there any mention of whose understanding of relevance should rule. Consequently, those institutions that dominate society will take the right to define relevance and, thereby, to decide what kind of research should receive support. Moreover, and because research is considered expensive, this process defines which kind of research is allowed. Disciplining university staff and students is a means of creating co-operative citizens who are able to ‘serve their country and humanity at large’. For folklorists and ethnologists this means that they prefer to investigate recent everyday life and today’s society. Some examples: vegan subcultures on Facebook, public breast-feeding, the coffee pause in the office, diabetes narratives, folk belief and tourism, or hateful texts on the Internet.

Certainly, it is possible to argue about the situation of research in Finland. There is indeed freedom to choose one’s attitude because of one’s ethical demands. The fast path is to surrender. The long and risky path is to reflect critically and to think about the consequences of the demands mentioned in the *Act*. Surrendering means being hostage to the dominating factors in the society. Protesting means at least trying to build a different, perhaps even, a better society.

How does the Modern University in Finland Relate to Curiosity and Commitment in the Study of Culture?

My description of the situation of Finnish universities with the example of *Åbo Akademi University* demonstrates that curiosity is hardly the main driving force for education or research. Universities have no obvious right to exist per se. Instead, they have to work in the same way as an obedient employee works for his or her master in order to fill his or her wishes and needs. The scientists are commissioned to come up with innovations, for innovations are defined as 'useful'. That means that an innovation must be of such a kind and quality that people want to buy the new product. Accordingly, financial parameters define usefulness. To fulfil this condition is difficult for an ethnologist or a folklorist.

However, curiosity is not always connected to usefulness. Curiosity drives a person to investigate something because he or she cannot withstand the need to get an answer. Curiosity means looking for knowledge, which means a kind of knowledge that was not known before. Curiosity can even be driven without any side intentions, and the new knowledge gives the explorer a feeling of satisfaction without calculation. How to utilise this formerly unidentified knowledge in practice is a problem only for those who come after and want to recognise how to use the knowledge. History demonstrates how every now and then scientists and scholars surprisingly and unexpectedly find important outcomes besides those that they predicted. When these astonishing results are refined, they turn out to be very useful, but without the first random discovery no subsequent researchers would be able to develop further innovations.

It seems that this kind of research into the blue is not at all possible today. No industry or foundation would support such an unplanned or apparently badly planned research project. Useful and, consequently, innovative research presupposes good planning, pondering every aspect, at least having a feeling of the outcome, or even knowing it. However, a student of ethnology or folkloristics cannot necessarily prepare every detail. He or she should get permission to let the research material speak. He or she should allow him- or herself to be surprised. Students of culture should allow themselves to go this way of seeking answers, for they are not immediately dependent on external funding. Studies of culture are possible to conduct in this way, for the study of culture and everyday life is comparatively inexpensive. However, researchers easily get infected in the general atmosphere that much money in big projects is extremely important, and even the only way to go.

It is not necessary that research based on curiosity should produce a useful result. Above all, the usefulness can be perceived only over time, centuries or decades later. Alternatively, one has to redefine the word 'useful'. Today 'useful' implies, above all, 'financially profitable'. For instance, one ideal of the society planners of today is that it should be possible to automatise the outcome of research in order to avoid increasing staff costs. In this way, as consumers of useful research, humans can contribute to producing new technology, new remedies, or new means of communication, but they are also at risk of soon becoming unwanted, not useful, since robots do most of what man once did.

Curiosity can be compared to playing. Sudoku, chess, all games in which various combinations of elements are a means to reach the goal, for instance victory, start with curiosity and continue because of curiosity. The question is, 'Can I learn something new this time? Can I conquer myself?'

Probably from the very beginning of science, curiosity was regarded as useful and worthy of positive support. Competition was and is obvious. However, the question asked today is: 'Can I win the great competition for external funding with my research?' So, this curiosity is not about science or 'truth', but it is about money. There is a difference between research for the sake of curiosity and research for the sake of a specific commitment. The scientist or scholar who does research out of curiosity competes only with himself or herself, whereas the researcher who works from the perspective of a specific commitment competes with many other researchers. He or she should consequently reach the goal as the top winner. Ideas that do not succeed in the competition are apt to vanish – or the researcher goes on working on his or her research plan for years without really achieving very much.

Research based on curiosity for knowledge seems freer than research based on a commitment. In this way, it is possible, for instance, to study Mongolian languages, a field that does not immediately bring any advantage to Finland, but that without doubt gives Finland a good position among worldwide experts on Mongolian culture (cf. Janhunen 2012). Commitment-based research consisting of projects with many participants is expensive. Much time is put in negotiations about topics such as, who formulated the original idea, whose name should be mentioned first in the row of authors in the published article, how the money should be divided between participants of varying competences, and, last but really not least, who is allowed to participate in the project.

Suggestions

The combination of curiosity and commitment calls for reflection. What makes the study of culture useful? Probably, the answer differs in every single case. Firstly, 'On the whole, do I really have to do useful research?' and, secondly, if the answer was positive: 'How do I create usefulness in my research?' are important questions in any discipline, also one dealing with cultural matters.

Typical for Nordic ethnology and folkloristics is the micro perspective. The research material seems to be better the smaller it is. Still, one of the aims of ethnologists and folklorists is to find cultural patterns. But how much of something do you need to demonstrate that a pattern exists? Many investigations on culture are detailed case studies (Svensson 2012: 17). Add the generally mentioned viewpoint that this kind of research finds its perspectives in studies from within and from below (Alftberg 2013: 39; Jönsson and Nilsson 2017: 67, 71). This, too, supports the micro perspective. Now the problem arises: Even if the ethnologist and the folklorist concentrate on research relevant to society, because of their research methods it is seldom possible to generalise anything from their results. Moreover, these researchers want to work with a hermeneutical perspective, which means that the interpretation of the individual researcher is central and needs explanation. Firstly, the researcher collects his or her research material, after that he or she analyses and interprets this very same material. The way of conducting research becomes subjective unless the research method is transparent. This easily arouses doubt among more quantitatively oriented colleagues.

Certainly, hermeneutics is a good starting point for the study of cultural matters, but scholars have to ask whether the external financiers appreciate it too. The strictly limited research material calls for an explanation in a serious way, for why our society should know what Mr X thinks and how Mrs Y interprets his thoughts. If Mr X is not a famous person or if he did not live very long ago (e. g. Ginzburg 1983) it is necessary to explain what is interesting about him.

Secondly, many ethnological and folkloristic studies affect ethical problems. They mostly come to the fore in the situation of interviewing. To handle ethical matters demands great confidence. They call into question how the researcher meets the interviewee, what it is feasible to speak about, and even write about, and to publish, or what the researcher should do with the material later on, if the interview for instance slipped into intimate topics. None of this is regarded as a problem big enough to convince influential communities of dominating researchers and scientists of its importance (cf. Agnidakis 2018: 13). Ethnologists and folklorists

have to influence the authorities to see that this issue is worthy of thorough research.

The reason for a sceptical attitude towards research in cultural matters is that today 'real' research must be great, fast and expensive (cf. Salo and Heikkinen 2018: 91). Probably risking the characteristics of their disciplines, ethnologists or folklorists have to adjust to this commitment-based research in some way or another. Still, few researchers are strong enough to work on their own or courageous enough to devote their time to thorough and reflexive slow science (cf. Salo and Heikkinen 2018: 90–91). Slowness is typical of ethnology and folkloristics of today, for, very often, they consist of interviews that are based on trustful narrating and listening. It takes time to build trust. Real trust is the answer to honest and serious curiosity.

However, if somebody does not want to take the risk of breaking the ruling trends it is necessary to ask the difficult question: In what way is it possible today to perform useful studies within ethnology and folkloristics? What does 'useful' mean?

Today, in some countries there is a temptation to do nationalistic and therefore income-yielding research. We saw that back in the nineteen-thirties. We would not like to see it again.¹ Certainly, nationalism is an international phenomenon. However, folkloristics and ethnology are nationally inspired and tied to the study of a culture of a specific area. Can we shape the study of culture in such a way that it works as a counter-weight to nationalism? This could be a relevant topic. Can we create such research impulses that we could answer the important and burning question why nationalism has returned today and to such an extent? Today, we too easily turn our backs on the neo-Nazis instead of talking to them in order to discover their world-view in their everyday narratives. A good exception is the professor of religious studies, Mattias Gardell, who wrote a minute study of a Swedish terrorist:

There is also much to do for a folklorist or ethnologist concerning the problem of unverified 'science'. For instance, what allows young people of today to regard themselves as such well educated parents that they avoid letting medical experts vaccinate their children? They really take a great responsibility for human lives, but it is not at all clear how they regard themselves and their expertise in matters of epidemiology (Gardell 2015).

We might also work with the issue of automation. We do not know what people think when robots are predicted to perform 'everything'. Without doubt, thoroughgoing automation will influence people's thoughts about the consequences in everyday life and concerning human dignity. If we know

¹ Cf. Sevelius (2019) about the situation in Hungary.

something about the conceptions that people have, we might be able to react to them and help to create a better future in which humans still feel that their lives are meaningful, even when they have no paid work. At the same time, we must not lose the historical perspective. What was it that in bygone times gave humans their vital spark and their capacity of living? For instance, we know that it was not easy to live like the idle bourgeois women who had one main task, which was to act as a piece of jewellery for their husbands (Johannisson 2013). Consequently, we can ask: 'What does the concept of idleness mean to human beings as it is said to be the beginning of all vice?' We might also ask what an effect the computer had on our disciplines. It seems that this device started to define what is easy to investigate for it makes work convenient. Accordingly, it is also important to ask what people talk about topics that are regarded as difficult or even impossible to explore with the help of the computer – and why. The computer is certainly a good helper, but it also creates borders, and it supports indolence, both physically and intellectually.

It would not be surprising if some folklorist would change his or her direction of an 'unwanted' and useless researcher and start working at an advertising agency in order to create a nice financially juicy and appetising narrative that he or she sells to some big enterprise, for we know quite well how a good story works. This would give folklorists a clear profile and a defined position within working life.

A necessary alternative to these societally bound research topics is that we start observing ourselves. Are the research methods of folkloristics and ethnology efficient enough? We work in a way which those who play the leading role within the administration of research projects do not really understand. Our research is not valid for other cultures than our own, nor can we offer general 'truths'. On the contrary, it is our virtue to find and unveil informal and unexpected knowledge, which fills gaps in our understanding, or which can modulate it (Agnidakis 2018: 12; Daun 1974: 13; Sevelius 2018). Is it good enough that ethnology or folkloristics devote themselves to 'pluralistic, complex and individually based' perspectives? (Agnidakis 2018: 14). Generally speaking, are our theories valid? Should we start working with statistical methods, with big data instead of our individually based micro data? Or should we combine big data with micro perspectives? In other words, do we need more solid production of evidence in order to make it possible for the authorities to create a better society on the foundation of our research outcomes? This group of questions also includes problems concerning the collegial review system. To what extent does it restrain free, seminal research? Every now and then, researchers must repeat an honest and sincere reflection on this topic.

However, it is not enticing to give in and admit that we do not have a voice in the world of research. On the contrary, perhaps today the need for ethnologists and folklorists is greater than some decades ago. Rumours and ‘fake news’ rapidly spread worldwide and, therefore, students of culture certainly have a huge task in confuting the claims against science that are so often formulated in our time characterised by post-factual thinking, claims such as drinking silver water against all kinds of ailments, or avoiding vaccines because nature takes care even of dangerous illnesses. Those claims are comparable to propaganda. At least in Swedish, propaganda is a foul word. However, packed into the parcel of alternative facts, propaganda seems easy to accept and to live with. Folklorists and ethnologists are well aware of everyday culture and its mechanisms. They can tell why people create their world-view in a specific way, mostly in the way that makes them happy. Ethnologists and folklorists ought to know why propaganda and alternative facts are appealing to some people or some groups of people. This, I think, should now be their greatest task and might guarantee the existence of their scholarship and their expertise, even outside the small group of colleagues that constitutes their closest environment.

Was everything better in the past? Partly yes and partly no. Independent research and slow science were more frequent than today, but in Finland, money for expensive research was difficult to find. For natural science, probably everything is better today. When it comes to the humanities and arts, however, one has to state that the situation is more difficult due to the demand for big projects and a change in the approach to scholarly work. Because of the *Universities Act* and its perspective on how a university should be managed, and due to society’s demands for useful research with natural science and enterprises as the ruling model, not all kinds of scholarly work are generally regarded as serious research. Consequently, ethnologists and folklorists should reflect seriously on their research methods, but, at the same time, keep the initiative to design their disciplines and develop the opportunity to do slow, well-reasoned research.

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Britta Kalkreuter

Design Education and Research from *Commitment to Curiosity* and Beyond

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Zusammenfassung

Der Aufsatz präsentiert Perspektiven auf die Rhetorik und Richtung britischer Forschungsgeldgeber, zu einem Zeitpunkt als Großbritannien Kraft des EU-Austritts zum neuen Europäischen Grenzbereich wird. Erfahrungen, die über 2 Jahrzehnte im Lehr- und Forschungsbetrieb eines traditionsreichen schottischen Design Instituts gesammelt wurden, werden mit Leitbildern aus der Akademie und Communiqués aus der Politik verglichen, um zu hinterfragen, warum Forschung immer mehr als Ökonomisierung verstanden wird und ob Wissenszuwachs bestenfalls als abgeschlagener Dritter hinter Unternehmungsgeist und Volkswohl fingieren darf. Wie reell die vielerorts gefürchtete Abwendung von Wissenschaft hin zur Anwendung ist, wird daraufhin am Beispiel der fundamentalen Debatte des (Welt-)Entwerfens versus Unterwerfen im Design betrachtet.

Schlagwörter: Design Forschung, Innovation, Ökonomisierung, Wissenschaft

Abstract

As Britain looks set to leave the European Union, the paper offers perspectives from the 'new European margin' on changes in the rhetoric and orientation of UK funding for research. Drawing from experiences in a Scottish design institute over 20 years and contemplating mission statements from The Times' International University of the Year 2018 (HWU), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the UK's brand new research funding body UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), it asks how research came to be mentioned (always) alongside enterprise, whether expansion of knowledge could become (a distant?) third behind contribution to economic prosperity and national wellbeing, and how real a much feared shift from basic to applied research is. Special attention will be paid to what kind of bed fellows research and innovation are within recent debates on rewilding versus taming the academic discipline of design.

Keywords: design research, innovation, enterprise, knowledge

Climate emergency and identity politics dominate much public discourse at present (Block 2019) as classic ideologies of the left or right seem to flounder in many an election. At this time, the discipline of design has been elevated in two very different ways as it is blamed for driving overconsumption and hailed as holding the key for sustainable production, and it simultaneously champions global collaboration as well as a retreat to local horizons, depending on practitioner and client. In this paper, I consider what research can teach education so that the University discipline of design might best meet expectations placed on it in the face of contemporary challenges. Through authorised narratives and grass-roots accounts by Alumni of what is now Heriot-Watt University's (HWU) School of Textiles and Design I will look back, and by studying current research policy documents I seek to project a future. By focusing on a more than 130 year old institution that evolved from a local technical weaving college to the design school of the UK's International University in the year 2018, so at a time when Brexit looms large over all discourse on the island, I am able to trace how outlooks for design in academia meander between offering *solutions* and providing *ideas*, between showing *commitment* to industry to being *curious* individuals, and how these paths might finally come together in a *curious commitment* to solving real challenges.

Design as a University Discipline. Introductory Thoughts on Research, Education and the Challenge of Heritage

In the UK, a research census is taken every five to eight years to distribute research specific government funding for Higher Education institutions, with the next such event happening in 2021. The census looks mainly at the quality of outputs but has more recently moved towards affording increased importance to research impact beyond academia, in what might be described as a shift in appreciation from a researcher's personal *curiosity* to *commitment* to wider societal relevance. This chimes with research funding directions in the UK and Europe as challenge led calls, frequently referencing UN sustainability goals, proliferate at the expense of funding that is reactive to individual research initiatives and agendas.

At the same time, a growing number of design institutions in Australasia and northern Europe are fundamentally regrouping discipline specific degree programmes to encourage multidisciplinary approaches to finding solutions of universal challenges as their cohorts coalesce around the *planet, people, play* (Design School Kolding, Denmark), or *motion, leisure, activity, identity* (Design Academy Eindhoven, Netherlands). This drive is arguably less pronounced in the UK where Higher Education design attitudes towards *curiosity* or *commitment* reveal tensions that seem to be partly rooted in a particular stance on the relative importance of tradition and

innovation. This paper has sought heritage design education perspectives, not just because of (the UK) fashion's continued recourse to heritage narratives, but also because of a perceived nostalgia – at least in a proportion of UK institutions – about the tested pedagogy of delivering design education largely as skills-based making of product in studios and workshops, so essentially as a craft.

An increasing band of academic authors have concerned themselves with a resurgence of craft, and Leopold Kowolik recently posited that craft is 'inherently conservative' as he seeks to 'reveal where craft risks being reactionary in its nostalgia'. His paper in the journal *Craft Research* attempts to 'illustrate craft's inner logic, and in so doing rid craft's identity of elements that serve either as a nostalgic bid for pre-industrial simplicity or as a tool to be appropriated by consumerist branding falsely appealing to fictive notions of personal authenticity' (Kowolik 2018: 103). His concerns will strike a chord with many a UK design academic in their daily concern of translating scholarship and research into keeping contemporary the curriculum of design while being frequently met with resistance from alumni, some staff and occasionally students. Such resistance will invariably cite the fine technical tradition of the UK's design education. In my case, working at the Kingdom's oldest textile education institution¹, a vocal band of local stakeholders is demanding a renewed *commitment* to providing skilled workers to an ever smaller, but nonetheless influential group of textile businesses, but more about that later. The decision to elicit the heritage voices from amongst alumni of the School of Textiles and Design at HWU was timely: The School had decided to celebrate a historic milestone of its metamorphosis from technical training college to design school with an exhibition just as the wider University was championing the School's amalgamation with physics, chemistry and engineering departments into a new college that would espouse perfectly the proud HWU tradition of educating for industry; the planned move promised also to add design thinking and studio practice to the core competencies of science and engineering in a nod to the above mentioned perception that design might be central to finding solutions for all kinds of future challenges. The move therefore had the potential both of being a leap back into the future, or a new direction for both parties, but the discourse around the proposed merger, much like many discussions involving art and design's inclusion into STEM subjects to form STEAM, equally seemed to expose a certain lack of explicitness in our own educational methods: How might a design school convey its most coveted asset, *the tacit*

1 The author of this present paper is an Associate Professor at the School of Textiles and Design of Heriot-Watt University. Founded in 1883 as a technical college that trained loom tuners for the local weaving mills, and known as the Scottish College of Textiles since 1968, it became part of Heriot Watt University in 1998, at a time when many further vocational education institutions achieved University status in the UK.

knowledge of design, to cohorts of engineers used to being lectured facts about physics and stochastics, nuts and bolts?

In short then, instances of parallel and frequently conflicting realities and concerns underlie this paper's exploration of design futures between curiosity and commitment as we realise that seismic changes are required to address academia's role in the potentially apocalyptic destruction of our planet.

Heritage Perspectives

Design Research

Back in research, heritage continues to be one of the three priority areas of the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). And while some might consider its association with design passed its prime, brands continue to employ their heritage as marketing capital, and many an educational institution's reputation is built on its history, generally the longer the better, rather than its forward plans. Craft's currency in design has grown again after a long decline, and the debate on what might lead us to the preferred futures that designers ought to seek is lively, ranging from Kowolik's doubts about craft's futuring credentials and the branding intentions behind its revival, to Don Norman's more sanguine attitude towards 'the [making vs thinking] forks in the road' for design (Norman 2016: 348).

As a heritage researcher working in a design school in the UK, I approach the holy grail of design futures from the angle of heritage understood broadly in Rodney Harrison's words as 'a dialogue of (...) actors who are engaged in keeping pasts alive in the present, which function toward assembling futures'. I share his hope that understanding heritage as natural and cultural, as including practices, artefacts, environments and actors 'might be (...) productively connected with other pressing social, economic, political, and ecological issues of our time' (Harrison 2015: 28). Unlike Harrison I do not consider this understanding to be necessarily at odds with more traditional heritage definitions which widely acknowledge that authorised and endogenous perspectives of heritage co-exist and can be equally valid, as these equally conclude that any heritage account must be constructed in a discursive manner amongst many actors (e.g. Smith 2006).

Chamithri Greru and I tested such definitions in fieldwork in India (Greru and Kalkreuter 2017) and Sri Lanka and were able to confirm that

what precisely to invoke as heritage (...) [can] become (...) a choice that is dependent on circumstances, on whether to promote, ignore or alter traditional practices,

whether to maintain kinship structures or abandon egalitarian and communitarian values to an extent, in summary, dependent on what is at stake (Greru and Kalkreuter 2020).

On that basis, heritage can be regarded as an often conscious and even strategic choice rather than a uniform recollection with implications that are easily agreed; but rather than being troubled by such parallel realities, this paper posits that valuing and including diverging interpretations of the past into a dialogue might lead us into productive solutions for the difficult (indeed wicked) problems that lie ahead.

Design Education

Gleaning past lessons for future design education from heritage actors was planned around the 50th anniversary of my institution's renaming from the 'Scottish Woollen Technical College' to the 'Scottish College of Textiles'. The intention was to elicit official and grass-roots perceptions of the educational and professional heritage of an eminent institution that today forms part of the industrially focused Scottish Heriot-Watt University under the current name of the School of Textile and Design. This endeavour presented a complex anthropological field site: An exhibition to mark fifty seminal years of design education had initially been planned to form an educated backdrop to the 2018 degree exhibition of the school, to present, in the mind of management, a proud lineage of the institution's involvement with industry through skills training. Pilot research into the institution's archive and alumni network did, however, quickly reveal that the polysemous nature of what alumni and associates of the institution regarded as its educational heritage offered no realistic prospect of presenting adequately in exhibition format what lessons for future design education might be worth learning from considering our past. Instead, a memory wall was installed in the hospitality area of the annual degree show to elicit as wide a range of voices as possible.

In preparing the memory wall, I visited the school's archive with an alumnus of the late 1960s, to search boxes of yearly reports, graduation photographs, industry events and so on, which are kept in a yet to be fully catalogued state. The alumnus had recently semi-retired from a successful international textile consulting career that brought textile expertise to fashion houses around the world. Since his retirement he had turned some considerable attention back to his Alma Mater as well as the remaining local design industries, frequently giving up time for mentoring students while rallying the school's management for support in establishing a museum of textiles heritage in the Scottish Borders.

The position of our alumnus on what constituted ‘the golden years in textile design education’ was never in doubt, and while his freely and frequently declared bias ruled him out as a preferred grass-roots heritage narrator, his expertise in making sense of archived notes and images was vital.



Figure 1: Memory wall at degree show May 2018, School of Textiles and Design, High Mill Building, Galashiels, Scotland.

Believing in the elicitation potential of the visual, the memory wall was constructed of built heritage images carefully selected to charter the transformation of the school’s development over the past fifty years from a bricks and mortar perspective on the one hand, and as it had presented itself in the varied archived material on the other hand. The memory wall illustrated the school’s move into a modernist campus in the late 1960s to expand and transform from local loom tuning facility to the ‘Scottish College of Textiles’. Furthermore, it shed light on the acquisition, floor by floor, of a 19th century mill to develop workshops from local weaving manufacturers, following in the steps of designer Bernat Klein who was an early design occupant of factory floors left empty by the declining textiles industry in the Borders. Other elements of the memory wall dealt with the addition of campus residences in the 1980s to cater for increasingly non-local students and the gradual replacement of carding machines and fancy yarn twisters by sewing machines and domestic knitting machines in the 1990s. Finally, the handing over of much of its industrial

production space to a local vocational college in the 2000s and the building of a campus in Dubai to make HWU's brand of design education a global one were issues dealt with on the memory wall.

Along the last decade of the school's existence had seen only superficial makeovers, certainly as far as its built environment was concerned, but even with regards to the development of its academic outlook and engagement with stakeholders, according to records and local perceptions.

Most of the above can be regarded as versions of authorised heritage accounts as the selection of the school's milestones was based on artefacts, images and evidence that were subject to an institutional collection policy.



Figure 2: Grass-roots appeal at Memory Wall, Degree show May 2018, High Mill, School of Textiles and Design, Galashiels.

Grass-roots testimony was sought as well, and even ahead of the opening of the memory wall, as alumni and former staff of the institution were asked to contribute personal perspectives on their education and professional careers. Visual and narrative images were elicited in an opportunistic, yet broad sample based on personal links that staff in the school had maintained with colleagues, students and stakeholders. Contributions were encouraged via the school's social media channels and finally through the University's alumni networks, fully acknowledging that, while allowing polyvocality, this sampling method would likely reach only those areas of

memory that were institutionally valued or were coming from stakeholders that had reason or desire to stay in touch with their Alma Mater.

The response was as follows: Graduates from the past two decades were by far the most enthusiastic contributors, and their images of extra-curricular activities portrayed no discernible lack of party potential in the small University town of Galashiels where textiles industry had once dominated the headlines. From this community of alumni little could be gleaned, even after prompting, about the educational or professional foundations laid at the times of such great social memories, other than the great number of fellow graduates that remained part of one's social, not however professional network.



Figure 3: Example of grass-roots photo display, Degree show May 2018, High Mill, School of Textiles and Design, Galashiels.

These more recent graduates' attrition rate from the specific design disciplines they trained in is high, and as they focused on having 'personally grown so much during time at the School' one might conclude that they see a great value of University education in design as encouraging individual curiosity in the wider world rather than educating a workforce with commitment to existing businesses.

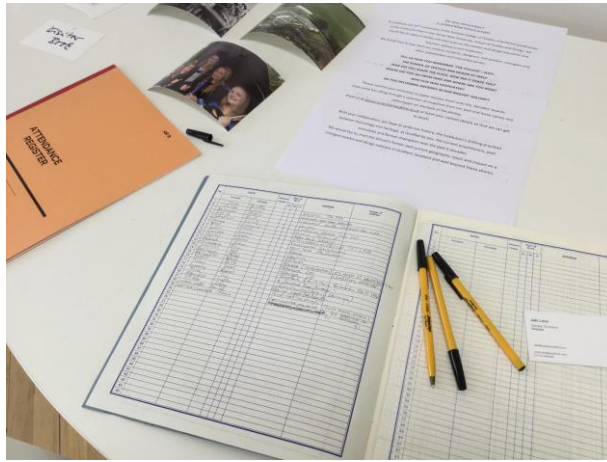


Figure 4: Visitor book at the Memory Wall, Degree show May 2018, High Mill, School of Textiles and Design, Galashiels.

The voice of older alumni was recorded in personal interviews during the opening event of the 2018 degree exhibition in front of our memory wall, and was also gleaned from comments that visitors, many of them connected to remaining local industry, had been invited to leave on cards underneath the built heritage images. The accounts received by this older generation of former students are broadly characterised by what a group of alumni who had all started their degrees in 1968 had to say about their educational experience and careers. Their professional networks had also been forged as social networks during their student years and maintained through professional changes that shared important trajectories: All five graduates had started careers (then in textiles) with Small and Medium Enterprises that were either local to the school or to their own home area. Two of the three women had soon taken indefinite career breaks to raise families. The three remaining textile designers saw their companies change from cloth production to garment and product manufacturers before downsizing saw them lose their positions as production moved overseas; one then sidestepped into marketing of overseas production, two started a career in an unrelated area.

The standout aspects of their recollections of time spent at the school were technical expertise and skills and the ability to ‘hit the factory floor running’, so to fit in and be useful to the existing business of established textile mills. For them commitment more than curiosity was the key advantage of their university education in design.

But the businesses did not of course survive for more than a few decades, and the most interesting testimony came perhaps from one of the women who had put her career on pause in the 70s after having children: Having left the College a year before completing her studies in what was then called Industrial Design (Textiles), she returned to her old place of study some twenty-five years later to resume her degree in Textile Design as it was called by then. Both her educational and professional experiences are of note, and the fact that she returned as a weave tutor for some years in the early 2000s and had collaborated with local weaving industry made her a multiple expert witness for this enquiry. She was able to compare that practising a comprehensive range of possible weave structures strictly in black and white yarn had been replaced by less technical experimentation, but now in full colour; that fewer technicians supported ever growing numbers of design students in the weave shed but lecturers did now exist not just for technical areas but also in visual studies and even history of art; that replacing weave and knit as the core of student learning in the school, the disciplines of fashion, marketing and communication alongside surface design now drew the largest numbers of (now mostly female) applicants. While a Head of Design had been appointed alongside the long serving Head of Textiles in the early 1990s, design as an explicit area of studies was still not to be found in the curriculum.

The name change of the degree was echoing the reputational difficulties that industrial degrees on a declining manufacturing base in textiles had developed by then, while highlighting the increased attraction of textiles for the wider design community.

On graduating in the 1990s, our loyal two-time student never sought to work for the remaining weaving mills in the Scottish Borders but instead set out as a local designer-maker, using existing production capacity in the Borders once her business went national. When international success followed within the decade, her garden studio remained the business hub and design studio for luxury accessories made in Scotland, while marketing moved increasingly into franchising before going online. She retired some ten years ago, and the business closed with her.

From these educational heritage accounts a hazy picture was beginning to emerge: It outlined a three-decade long rise of student numbers in not-industrially focused design disciplines while the local industry – seeking to transform from abundant cloth makers to providers of highly specialised luxury fashion products made in Scotland – provided fewer and fewer employment opportunities for such graduates.

It showed graduates during the latter parts of these decades remembering their design university more as a place of social growth and personal learning than as a provider of skills targeted at existing employment opportunities.

Future Directions

Design Research

The Universities UK's (UUK) pledge on Brexit makes interesting reading for those trying to understand what vice-chancellors and principals in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland see as a university's core contribution to society. As a dyed-in-the-wool Art Historian, I was probably always going to baulk somewhat at the strong and exclusive emphasis on 'economic growth', on 'improving productivity', on 'Industrial Strategy' and on 'strengthening trade relationships'. But could working for almost two decades in a Scottish institution that brands itself as 'a pioneering University (...) with innovative research and highly employable graduates' (University UK 2018) have changed my outlook on what University research should and could deliver? Many design graduates in the UK are encouraged to hang on exclusively to research through practise paradigm that remains somewhat at odds to the contemporary view of seeing designers as creators of preferred futures. Entrepreneurship – for designers: the ability to make an immediate living with an innovative market proposition – here appears favoured over the recognition that design emanating from academe might aim to address some of the pressing concerns of today's design industry. The ubiquitous bringing to market of yet more products is not necessarily a concern that coincides with our wider society's, or the planet's interests, yet ethical, environmental and societal challenges tend to remain undervalued in student work. I posit that we have a way to go in UK design research to bring to deserved prominence terms like Anthropocene, Decolonialising, Elimination Design and Design Futuring, while these are starting to become second nature to design schools Down Under and across the sea. And unsurprisingly, many students show the same lack of ambition that in extreme cases can be observed in some practise-based research, also: Critical practise, with its notion of design having cultural resonance and a degree of responsibility is only slowly influencing a discipline whose dominant approach since engaging with research has been the development of individual creativity. Research content here is expressed in terms of the individual's intention and personal rationale for an innovative design rather than a rigorous and intentional framing, and then solving of a 'wicked problem', a dilemma worth thinking about for more than just the entrepreneur (Douglas, Scopa and Gray

2000). Specifically, it seems to me that design education and research in many institutions still focuses on individual competence rather than collaborative efforts as students and staff are all too rarely engaged in group projects or multidisciplinary efforts. Yet we know that only very few can vanquish the collective strength of a group by working alone; think of research funding applications, curriculum design or preparations for product launches when the market is saturated and known to harm the planet.

Design Education

However, as consumers seek identity beyond ubiquitous fashions and grow weary of the environmental impact of the mass market offerings, a further shift in textiles education from curiosity back to commitment could be witnessed locally, but significantly not at university level: A 2018 initiative to inject more than half a million pounds of government funding into a textiles skills' based training facility in the Scottish Borders shows renewed commitment to educating a workforce for transformed (now luxury) manufacturing industries when the government press release states that

a centre of excellence for textiles is to open (...) to address skills shortages in the textiles and knitwear sector and (...) to provide industry-specific training for both the current and future workforce. (...). This initiative will address business critical issues in the local textiles and knitwear sector and provide a stream of skilled young workers across all roles, enabling the world-renowned Borders businesses in this sector to address succession planning issues and reduce or remove the need to send work overseas (Hol-yrood 2018).

The development is of note as it shows nostalgic expectations for continuing the skills-based pedagogy of 19th century art schools in 21st century University settings overtaken by government skills training initiatives outside higher education. In doing so, this development proves a clear reversal of the tide of art and training college incorporations into UK Higher Education during the 1990s formation of polytechnic Universities. Alongside this we see a remarkable repatriation of craft-based making skills training back into an industry that seeks to protect its specialist base, as for example Chanel completes its Métiers d'Arts headquarters in Paris and supports hundreds of apprenticeships around Europe, including Scotland. It leaves us to question what place Universities in design might occupy in the future when commitment to local industries is covered by other providers and curiosity has led design to be considered somewhat of a general degree that furnishes graduates with personal more than professional networks. On this basis, a worrying trend towards

design becoming a professionally irrelevant degree might be feared, but, surprisingly, some promising horizons seem to emerge beyond the cliffs of Brexit: This topic's relentless ubiquity in any academic future gazing at the time of my preparation to be a UK voice at Graz University's 2018 symposium on Curiosity and Commitment: Cultural and social sciences and the transformation of European Universities brought into sharp focus future potential for research. In the following paragraphs, I will be reflecting on some signposting of what design as a holistically cultural rather than merely technical discipline at university level might gain from these.

Commitment as Taming an Out-of-Control Status Quo, Curiosity as Rewilding our Collective Efforts to Improve the Present

The Design studies researcher Alice Payne has recently framed this potential cross-road for design as the choice between taming and rewilding, which strongly resonates with the commitment and curiosity theme of this tome: Her point of view derives from fashion studies, a discipline still not taken seriously in certain quarters of academe, yet arguably the design discipline that affects many of us most on a daily basis, and one that contributes a mighty £ 50 billion to the UK economy alone each year. What Payne, an award-winning fashion designer and senior lecturer in Fashion at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia states in her paper deserves to be cited in its entirety here:

The Anthropocene describes our current geological era, in which human activity has grown to become a planetary force. Interest in 'sustainable fashion' reflects the necessity to address the social and environmental ills of fashion. Yet thinking on sustainable fashion remains chiefly industry and user-focused, examining narrow questions regarding how industry may shift practises, or how users may engage with fashion differently – hence only tacitly positioned within the context of the Anthropocene. (...) First, fashion's Prometheans, the techno-optimists, propose a future in which cleaner technologies can lead to the gradual evolution of a better industry. In contrast, fashion's Soterians take a cautionary approach, and seek to unbind fashion from the unsustainable growth imperative of capitalism itself. Under these two, the definition of 'sustainable fashion' may differ, but, critically, their dialogue will shape the direction of fashion. Together, their actions create a 'fashion futuring', a dynamic process of negotiation between what I term the 'taming' and the 'rewilding' of fashion, within a world of our own making (Payne 2019: 5).

To me, Payne's conceptualization of the current fashion design industry revives a challenge to all design researchers and educators that was at the heart of the Bauhaus, the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm and other great design education movements of the 20th century: To be critical contributors to the prevailing economic system in that our offerings are informed by research rather than our research being shaped by industry needs; and that our ultimate goal for design research and education must be enriching community and society by presenting ideas for preferable futures rather than offering solutions for (often individual) economic growth in the short term.

An approach such as this places dual emphasis on curiosity and commitment, with curiosity demanding a collective push towards preferred futures or ideas, and commitment describing a continued will to constructively critique existing paradigms, or solutions.

For design, the writing might be on the wall as design anthropology and participatory research methods are moving quickly into design research and practise projects to perhaps soon relegate trend forecasts and profit charts from the university library to the boardroom.

Positioning Design between Curiosity and Commitment

In my mind, the crossroads for design research, and for education by implication, is whether we are content to provide business with solutions over ideas, with profound effects not just on our curriculum but also the sustainability of our discipline, our industries, our planet. And politics have much to do with current discussions as the UK seeks to position itself as a major economic powerhouse, while academic concerns over Brexit grow daily, while environmental and ethical deadlines are (dis)missed daily.

The body representing all UK Higher Education Institutions, Universities UK (UUK) lists Brexit as one of key concerns on its website, not just because of concerns over the movement of students and academics into a UK outside the EU, but also because of the immense importance of EU funding for research and innovation.² UUK unsurprisingly lobbies for continued full association with Horizon Europe 2021–2027 (worth € 100 billion), and interestingly for this paper, the funding is structured

2 EU funding is vital for the health of research in UK universities, with close to seven billion Euros of European money pouring into UK research between 2007 and 2013, accounting for as much as 15 % of yearly Research and 2.5 % of total income for UK universities. Five out of the Top Ten EU Universities in terms of attracting EU research funds were British in that same period, and the total value of EU research income gained by UK institutions is second only, and marginally so, to Germany (Full Fact 2018).

around the three pillars of (1) open science, (2) global challenges and industrial competitiveness, and (3) open innovation, mirroring research rhetoric in the UK. Horizon 2020 was seen by the European Commission as ‘a means to drive economic growth and create jobs’, while the European Horizon framework 9 places much emphasis on ‘fundamental research and grants for research mobility and infrastructure’ before clustering research into five formidable challenges of our times: health; inclusive and secure society; digital and industry; climate, energy and mobility; and food and natural resources. Enhancing Europe’s innovation output limps in a distant third, with a lack of demonstrable impact from Horizon 2020 research cited as one of the drivers for this shift in emphasis (European Commission 2018).

In the UK, the newly established UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) body has similarly vowed to work ‘in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish.’ It continued by promising that ‘we will invest every pound of taxpayers’ money wisely in a way that maximises impact for citizens, in the UK and across the world.’ The radical news for researchers tired of having to spin out their ideas into money making ventures in order to attract funds is the emphasis on three separate impact scenarios as UKRI wishes to ‘push the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding’, ‘deliver economic impact and social prosperity’ and ‘create social and cultural impact by supporting our society and others to become enriched, healthier, more resilient and sustainable’ (UK Research and Innovation 2018).

The last strategy of my own university Heriot-Watt was placing much emphasis on closeness to business, with Applied research, Graduate Apprenticeships, Spin outs, Knowledge exchange and Entrepreneur competition support for staff and students given high priority. Our website still cites Business as a third priority next to Study and Research, and it proudly declares its position of the second University in Scotland with regards to the number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships [InnovateUK], and the 4th in Scotland and top 15 in UK for number of spinouts created [PraxisUnico & Young Company Finance 2000–12] (Heriot-Watt University 2018). We are encouraged to run live projects with industry that excite our students, save industry the need for Research and development Departments, and exhaust staff. But at my University also there is a realisation that research funds are shifting towards more than immediate business impact, and broad stakeholder engagement has been sought for the new Strategy 2025 as it places much more emphasis on equality of opportunity and the transformation of lives. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are being cited here as an ‘imperative to link equality of opportunity, economic growth, sustainable use of resources and protecting our planet’s environment in a single

framework' and the website stresses that 'the research and teaching capacity of Universities is recognised as a key mechanism for driving economic growth *and* transforming lives within this framework' (my emphasis).

Curious Commitment to a Promising Future of Design in Academia

Based on my observations above, the design academe in the UK of 2019 might be described as having moved from commitment, via curiosity to a position of curious commitment, where wild ideas from multidisciplinary engagement with broad issues are valued as part of the solution for taming current challenges, and where design is buoyed by its rightful perception as offering practises for inclusive problem solving. Some heritage actors from industry and academe will be disappointed at the discipline's turn away from straight-forward training for existing industries; some students will resent the emphasis change from personal discovery to global challenges, whether ethical, environmental or indeed economical; but many academics will welcome the subtle shift away from Higher education's neo-liberalisation towards design's true potential. Considering the evidence in this paper, design researchers might be cautiously optimistic that the challenge-driven and impact-obsessed transformation of the funding landscape can bring some positive developments for our area and well beyond, to academic fields that tend to be drawn to ideas as much as solutions, that value curiosity alongside commitment, that like to rewild at least as much as to tame. If we agree with Roland Barthes (1967) that fashion is a social system of meanings for which clothes are the material basis, then education in fashion as well as all design must value research and training beyond immediate application to existing business systems. It must be oriented towards preferred futures and more carefully critique what part of its great heritage is still fit for purpose, so that the discipline might have the potential to positively transform the ways in which we live and to meet the formidable challenge of regaining sustainability in our actions.

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Images of Utopia

University Policies, Academic Practices & Social Changes

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Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag zielt darauf ab, die sich verändernde Rolle der Universität innerhalb der neoliberalen Wissensökonomien zu erörtern. Es wird die Frage aufgeworfen, welche Art von Raum Universitäten bieten und zu sein versuchen, um ihre Rolle in Bildung, Forschung und Öffentlichkeit zu erfüllen und zu schärfen. Darüber hinaus wird die Vorstellung einer Universität als Instanz der kritischen Offenheit, des freien Denkens und des öffentlichen Engagements betrachtet, die im Verständnis der Geisteswissenschaften verankert ist. Ein solches Konzept steht im Gegensatz zu dem häufig propagierten Modell eines sich selbst tragenden, marktorientierten und finanziell unabhängigen Anbieters von Berufsausbildung. Der Beitrag stellt die Ergebnisse des Projekts vor, das sich mit der Rolle der Universität im Rahmen der Ereignisse von 1968 befasst. Gleichzeitig soll die Beschreibung des Projekts dazu dienen, die gegenwärtigen Veränderungen im Bildungs- und Forschungsbereich an der Universität Zagreb aufzuzeigen.

Schlagwörter: neoliberale Reform, Universität, öffentliche Rolle, kritisches Denken

Abstract

The paper aims at discussing the changing role of university within the neoliberal economies of knowledge. It raises the question what kind of space universities provide and attempt to be in order to accommodate, and facilitate their educational, research and public roles. Furthermore, it approaches the idea of university as an instance of critical openness, free thought and public engagement which is engrained in the role of liberal art education. Such a concept stands against the frequently promoted model of a self-sustaining, market-based and financially independent provider of professional and vocational training. The paper presents the results of the project that deals with the role of university in the 1968 events. At the same time, the description of the project will be used to show the contemporary transformations of the educational and research system that occur at the University of Zagreb.

Keywords: neoliberal reform, university, public role, critical thinking

Our paper aims at discussing the changing role of university within the neoliberal economies of knowledge. The question we raise is: What kind of space do universities provide and attempt to be to accommodate and facilitate their educational, research and public roles? We approach the idea of university as an instance of critical openness, free thought and public engagement, which is engrained in the role of liberal art education. Such a concept stands against the frequently promoted model of a self-sustaining, market-based and financially independent provider of professional and vocational training.

To outline those processes, we will present the results of the current project of the *Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology* in Zagreb which deals with the role of university in the 1968 events, oriented towards achieving social and political changes. At the same time, the description of the project will be used to show the contemporary transformations of the education and research system occurring at the university. This is primarily related to the imperative of meeting societal needs through research projects, producing applicable knowledge but also designing projects that attract external funding.

In that way, we aim to address the changed position of university and its impact on society. In the chapters that follow we discuss two interrelated demands of neoliberal reforms. One refers to Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology that conceives itself as an applicable science. The other refers to the academic sector in general being prompted to transform into a market-oriented Higher Education Area.

Finally, we would like to address the following issues: How does ethnology and cultural anthropology handle 'the freedom to enable the "critical instinct"' (Chilton after Wodak 2009: 14) and bring its 'imagined role' to societies? How does it fit scopes of national and international funded projects? How does it handle university policies, respective academic practices and meets social change?

Meeting the Demands of Neoliberal Reforms

In which way has neoliberal governance reinvented the role of university and education to fit its political programs and overwhelming reforms of social and economic life? Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as Mark Olssen and Michael A. Peters show,

the traditional professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced with the institutional stress on performativity, as evidenced by the emergence of an emphasis on measured outputs: on strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures and academic audits (2005: 313).

By this overturn in higher-education policy, public higher education institutions all around the world were irrevocably pulled into governmental discourse, strategies and plans related to economic reforms. This meant that public universities became the target of a severe audit culture that was meant to assess economic sustainability and ability of educational programs to respond to governmental ideas of the role of universities in knowledge capitalism. In this way, auditing becomes the first step to reach neoliberal reforms in higher education. The universities were diagnosed and pressured to meet the demands of immediate economic restructuring (e.g. lowering dependency on budget, and re-thinking the project based self-financing). The same happened to the educational programs that underwent numerous evaluations and, in many cases, responded to evaluations by changing programs in accordance with neoliberal economies. Olssen and Peters showed that ‘marketization has become a new universal theme manifested in the trends towards the commodification of teaching and research and the various ways in which universities meet the new performative criteria, both locally and globally in the emphasis upon measurable outputs’ (2005: 316). Accordingly, the role of university has changed, at faster or slower pace, adapting the goals in research and aims in education to better fit neoliberal policy. Our modes of teaching and its end-goals as well as our research (its mode and its aim) have increasingly started to echo the imperative to change, to adapt, to fit. Public universities answered this demand by proposing re-education, vocational trainings, specialisations that would provide immediate recognition for the global market needs of very particular specialists in the changing world of globalised capitalist economy.

The other discursive imperative that pushed its way into the university arena is the one of ‘knowledge capitalism’ and ‘knowledge economy’. Those ‘are twin terms that can be traced at the level of public policy to a series of reports that emerged in the late 1990s by the *OECD* (1996a) and the World Bank (1998), before they were taken up as a policy template by world governments in the late 1990s’ (ibid.: 331). Turning into ‘hegemonic’ imperative, knowledge capitalism has conceptualised knowledge as ‘the most important form of global capital – hence “knowledge capitalism”’ (Burton-Jones 1999; cited in Olssen and Peters 2005: 338). That ongoing shift has superimposed new forms of knowledge utilisation. By becoming a *capital* and a *value*, the knowledge and the knowledge-providing institutions of higher education have been reclaimed by capitalist concepts of utility, like need and demand or user and consumption. In knowledge capitalism as the new learning economy, learning institutions are pushed ‘to tailor their products and services to the needs of individual and corporate knowledge consumers’ (Burton-Jones 1999; cited in Olssen and Peters 2005: 338). As Alan Burton-Jones suggests, behind the idea of ‘knowledge capitalism’

stands the concept of evaluating knowledge as the means that is ‘fundamentally altering the basis of economic activity, thus business, employment, and all of our futures’ (ibid.). But what kind of knowledge is useful and what, on the other hand, is unwanted and useless, a knowledge of no practical value? In a way, the neoliberal university is no longer encouraged to linger upon reflection and production of knowledge known as the *Mode 1 knowledge* – the one that ‘has been traditionally produced in the academy separately from its use’. Instead, we are increasingly stimulated to produce *Mode 2 knowledge*. That is ‘the knowledge which is produced in-use, linked directly to the functional imperatives of the world of work’ (Gibbons et al. 1994, cited in Olssen and Peters 2005: 330).

The Language of Neoliberal University and Education and its Croatian ‘Translation’

As far as we can see and have described by now, it is obvious that the discourse of neoliberal economy has impacted educational and knowledge policy and, consequently, made it *inseparably* intertwined with social and economic policy of late and developed capitalism, and more so, of global capitalism and its neoliberal policy of free market. Political interest in the goal of education to promote economic growth has been broadly discussed and used in political programs and strategies of conservative, democratic and liberal governments worldwide. While these programs differ in several ways, they share common ground by emphasising the role of education in economic reforms on the one hand and linking education with social changes and social stability on the other. Some of them (like American presidential candidates and the parties they represent) put an emphasis on ‘massification’ of education in general, and higher education in particular. They see those processes as ways to combat poverty, under-education, high percentage of dropouts, low percentage of higher-education attendees, enormous expansion of private higher-education system that discourages a large part of population to gain knowledge needed to participate in the global economy (cf. Mazier 2014: 18, cf. Obama 2007). The others, predominantly those aired by governments that promote welfare capitalism, or/and market and state capitalism (European ones, but American democrats alike), stress the role of education and *universities* as supportive of governmental politics – ‘that is to accommodate its students to succeed in the global economy’ (Fairclough 2006: 70).

So, it would be justifiable to say that it is not just economy that is global. It is also the discourse on utilising education or, better to say, the program to put the education to use by labour market and industry, which is becoming increasingly global in political discourses.

Many prominent political leaders have thus declared the dependence of economy on useful education. Such was the case with Barack Obama, who said:

Since the early nineties, when these trends first began to appear, one wing of the Democratic Party – led by Bill Clinton – has embraced the new economy, promoting free trade, fiscal discipline, and reforms in education and training that will help workers to compete for the high-value, high-wage jobs of the future (Obama 2007: 146).

A part of the Democratic party program of restructuring and reforming America's global leadership was seen in 'those investments that can make America more competitive in the global economy: investments in education, science and technology, and energy independence' (Obama 2007: 159).

An elaborate analysis of educational discourses was systematically conducted by Norman Fairclough in his assessment of the British New Labour party program in a book titled *New Labour, New Language?* The image of knowledge capitalism and its discursive wordings, where knowledge is seen as 'capital' and 'value' and appears in collocations with 'economy', makes Fairclough conclude that:

In the case of education, the emphasis is overwhelmingly on economic development. This becomes evident when we look at how education is represented – what discourses are drawn upon in representing education. Education Minister David Blunkett's foreword to the Green Paper 'The Learning Age' assembles a variety of different discourses around learning – it is 'the key to prosperity' and 'human capital', but 'love of learning' also goes with 'an enquiring mind' and 'civilised society' and 'helps us fulfil our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature'. Yet the 'human capital' discourse is overwhelmingly dominant – in Blunkett's words, 'investment in human capital will be the foundation for success in the knowledge based global economy'. Like any corporation, the Government 'invests' for competitive advantage, and in a knowledge-based economy that primarily means investing in 'human and intellectual capital' (Fairclough 2006: 48–49).

The creeping ideas of knowledge capitalism and knowledge economy have been one of the most influential and hegemonic discourses in the last few decades. It influenced the whole range of political narratives, regardless of divisions between the right and the left, conservative, democratic or liberal. The 'translation' of global economy of knowledge and its accompanying discourse into the Croatian political arena was somewhat expected. It was particularly so due to the collapse of Yugoslavia and the change of the political regime in the 1990s in Croatia, which was accompanied by dismantling of the socialist welfare political system. The newest election program of the contemporary Croatian president Kolinda Grabar Kitarović is a vivid example of the impact of globalised discourse on education and economy. Being

nominated as a presidential candidate in late 2014 by the *Croatian Democratic Party*, a right-to-centre Croatian political party, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović published an election program titled *For better Croatia*. Her program consisted of around forty pages and evoked education as one of the major issues in bettering Croatia. This program resembles the wordings of the speech of one of the British labour leaders during Blair residency as Prime Minister.¹ Kolinda Grabar Kitarović thus states:

I will especially support the necessary reforms of the education system, which has to be in function of economic growth. Within my jurisdiction and without impinging on the autonomy of institutions, I will endorse the structural reforms in this field, in accordance with the acts implemented in the European Higher Education and Research Area. Concretely, the President of the Republic of Croatia should coordinate the creation of a national agreement by advancing towards successful European standards, and not primarily by maintaining the existing bad practice in the Republic of Croatia (Kitarović 2014, trans. by authors).

It is important to ensure more investments in the education of human potentials in this field, particularly of young people, since that will bring new quality to the system. It is also crucial to endorse a public understanding of the importance of fundamental social values of the Rule of Law, starting from the earliest school age of children and youth through the educational process that follows the model of European institutions (Kitarović 2014, trans. by authors).

In our president's political vision, the educational reform is a 'necessity' and it is related to economic growth, whereas the education is seen as to enhance 'human potentials'. Working along the borrowed wordings of neoliberal educational reforms, her program reflects the ideational change to be made in education. In her program, the ideas and concepts of 'quality of education', 'European framework', 'successful European standards' are opposed to what is otherwise practised and indulged in Higher Education in Croatia. Those other strategies of researchers and educators are labelled as a 'bad practice', when compared to the good practice that should mimic 'European' values in education.

All those tendencies are vividly reflected in the policies and practices of the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences* at the University of Zagreb. We are talking about the largest public faculty of humanities (and social sciences – them being sociology, psychology, pedagogy, information and communication sciences) in Croatia. In the last decade, the faculty provides 189 BA and MA study programs in a range of disciplines and enrolls around thousand students each year after conducting extensive entrance exams. The first challenge we have been facing for a decade now is the

1 Cf. Fairclough (2006: 49) on David Blunkett's foreword to the *Green Paper – The Learning Age*.

decrease in the number of applicants. Ten years ago, a number of 3910 candidates (with a peak in 2010 with 4146 prospective students that participated in the entrance exam) applied for taking entrance exams. In the following years the number rapidly fell to around 2622 in 2017 (cf. Faber 2018). After 2017 and the restructuring of management, which followed almost two years of management crisis, the new management pulled the statistics showing that in the last eight years the faculty lost around 2500 students. While in-depth analysis of the reasons for such a decrease in admission was not conducted, the lower management was told that there are several factors that lead to 'small numbers'. Some of them reflect societal transformations, such as economic, ideological and socio-cultural changes. The problem was not as simple as it first appeared and could not be pinned directly to the previous management. One of the main challenges we face is the dominance and primacy of *STEM* fields, which have been directly emphasised and prioritised by the Croatian Government. The change has manifested itself in the financial support to humanities, which dropped rapidly in comparison to the financial support to hard sciences. The second factor is an increasing number of small public universities 'strategically' dispersed throughout the country. The third is a growing number of private Higher Education institutions that reappeared in the last decade.² The latter – without an entry-exam policy – are claimed to compete with public universities and are colloquially defined in very unfavourable terms as 'pay-and-get-your-diploma-universities'. The fourth is a loss of trust among students in education-in-humanities, particularly regarding its potential to enable them to navigate successfully through a global job-market. It is not rare that we overhear our students saying: 'I don't know what to do with this diploma once I get it from the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences*'. It is a recursive reflection on the future of humanities and students' own career prospects.

Along with a lack of marketing, propulsive and active work in advertising the university, those would be the main reasons conveyed by management on why humanities and some social sciences do not prosper at our university. Those trends go together with a shift of perception of what university represents and which roles it should fulfil. Its recent role is best explained in the new strategies developed by the

2 According to the *Agency for Science and Higher Education*, in 2019 there are 104 public institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia. They make a cluster of eight public universities, eleven public polytechnics, and three public colleges. On the other hand, there are twenty-six private institutions of Higher Education: two private universities, six private polytechnics and eighteen private colleges (cf. Mozvag – Directory of Study Programmes 2018). In 2010, there were seven public universities, three private universities, thirteen public polytechnics, three private polytechnics and three public colleges in comparison to twenty-seven private ones (cf. Doolan, Dolenec, Domazet 2012).

Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, and consequently in our own Faculty's strategic documents. The role of knowledge and the very conceptualisation of knowledge is formalised and appropriated through those documents.

Strategies of a Reformed University

In 2014, the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology was adopted as one of the main legislative goals of the Government of Zoran Milanovic, the former chairman of the centre-left *Social Democratic Party* in Croatia. Its title, *New Colours of Knowledge*, promised a change in the approach to education and a new and refreshed look of the educational concepts and mechanisms. The fact that the then Prime Minister himself, as well as all his ministers and special advisors, took part in the *National Coordinating Body for Developing the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*, shows the importance attributed to the document in the political arena of the time. It is conceived as the first systematic strategy that encompasses all the levels of education, from pre-school, primary and secondary education to higher education, adult training and lifelong learning. In the introduction to the Strategy, a strong link between education and science, defined as the state's developmental priorities, and the economic growth is established. On the one hand, education policymaking is brought in connection with the global economic trends, and with the specific vastly changing Croatian context on the other. Croatian researchers and educators are prompted to be open, mobile, innovative and to use advanced technologies. Their mission, as well as the mission of the whole science and education system, according to the Strategy, should be to 'enhance global knowledge through research and to contribute to the welfare of Croatian society, especially the economy' (Ministry of Science and Education 2017: 17). Although humanities and social sciences are supposed to have their share in building a knowledge society based on those values, other disciplines are prioritised in the vision of the restructured education and research system. Knowledge and skills related to *STEM* fields are thus treated as prerequisites for the construction of a progressive, economically stable and technologically advanced Croatian society and thus, according to the Strategy, should be taught from an early age (ibid.: 25). In applying *new colours* to the face of the Croatian educational and research system, to 'reach the level of highly developed countries', universities are supposed to play a special role. This is how the vision of a university is formulated in the Strategy:

Universities must assume an active role in transferring innovations from science to the economy and to society. Universities also play an important role in the lifelong learning system by developing education curricula, training programmes (especially

by experts working in the education system) and contemporary teaching aids. Universities must play an active role in their immediate environment (social, economic and cultural) with which they need to interact constantly. Special attention must be paid to strengthening the links between universities and the economy (Ministry of Science and Education 2017: 20).

Along with stressing the contribution of science and education to economic growth and the imperative placed on the value of knowledge on the labour market, another dimension that is particularly stressed in the Strategy is the European framework, to which the Croatian research and education belong and look up to. The strategic planning in Croatia is largely based on a series of European Union documents and instruments (such as *Horizon 2020*, *Innovation Union*, *A Digital Agenda for Europe*, *Youth on the Move*, *A Resource-Efficient Europe*, *Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*, etc.; *ibid.*: 18). Also, the European dimension of education, that is, training for European coexistence, is proclaimed to be one of the core values that should be placed to the forefront through a comprehensive curricular reform (*ibid.*: 50). However, when we look at the formulations, showcases and comparative examples used in the Strategy, we can conclude that not all parts of the European Union are treated equally as role models: priority is given to the ‘experience from industrially developed countries’ and ‘the best practices from European’, that is, predominantly West and North European countries (*ibid.*: 24, 28).

Those strategic priorities, set at the governmental level, flow down from the top of hierarchy through the organisational chart that encompass all the educational and scientific institutions in Croatia. Therefore, strategic plans of universities and faculties throughout the country – the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences* at the University of Zagreb included – often quote the Ministry’s policies and use their strategic acts as the framework for their own strategic planning. Their programs and actions are largely dependent on the Ministry’s financing, which drives the institutions towards achieving the Ministry’s strategic goals, their criteria and definitions of a successful education and research system.

The University of Zagreb is no exception to this rule. The university bodies have developed and acquired several separate strategic documents that regulate distinct domains of the university’s activities, such as the *Internationalization Strategy*; *Energy Analysis and Refurbishment Strategy*; *Quality Insurance Strategy*; *Development Strategy*; *Research, Transfer of Technology and Innovations Strategy*, etc. In the strategy centred on research, technology and innovation, again both lines of argument for a better education and a better university are used: economic development through the application of knowledge on the one hand, and the wider European context on

the other, which is often referred to by the European Union motif of unity in diversity. The document outlines the university's mission in the following way:

The University will strengthen the link between innovations and economy, endorse international cooperation and networking, as well as systematically encourage and develop its social influence. It will reinforce the communication between the scientific and artistic community and the public (Sveučilište u Zagrebu 2014: 2).

The same trend is observable in the new *Development, Science and Research Strategy* of the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences* which has been acquired in February 2018. Here, internationalisation and the faculty's positioning within a frame of comparable institutions in the European Higher Education Area are proclaimed to be among the main goals of strategic planning. In this document, the emphasis is not so much placed on the economic growth based on research and education. In the case of humanities and social sciences, the key concept that replaced the scientific contribution to economy is applicability of knowledge and skills. Career profiles based on market demand, meeting the needs of the contemporary society, collaboration with entrepreneurs, civil societies and local communities are set as principles that should navigate humanities and social sciences towards the new horizons of educational reform. Another shift noticeable in this document is the change of focus from the learning process to learning outcomes. In this way, by detecting concrete, measurable and applicable results of our educational activities, knowledge is again treated as goods, and the learning institutions gain their comparative value based on their adjustments to societal and market needs (cf. *Filozofski fakultet* 2018).

What, then, is the position of the ethnology and cultural anthropology study program and of our department in this network of diverse policies and actors? The structural imperative to orient its scholarly considerations towards research applicable for the benefit of society and economy, and its educational plans towards the production of competencies recognised on the labour market, is strongly felt in this field as well. Although attention is still paid to critical thinking and cultural analysis of contemporary and historical social processes – neoliberalisation of education in Croatia included – the adoption of a discourse that insists on the production of more 'useful' knowledge (useful in economic and political terms) is also discernible. Therefore, in its mission statement, the *Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology* is presented as follows: 'It is a centre of intellectually stimulating and innovative research which applies specific ethnographic approaches in order to respond to the challenges of contemporary dynamics on the regional, social, political,

economic, and cultural level' (cf. Mission and Vision-Statement at Website of the *Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology Zagreb*, n.d.).

Our ability to adjust to diverse social circumstances and to different subject matters and to work productively in interdisciplinary projects and teams becomes a source of viability for our discipline, as well as for the Department itself.

Knowledge Revisited: Two Case Studies

How do these tendencies and new orientations work in practice? To chart general trends in Higher Education in Croatia and their echoes in the fields of ethnology and cultural anthropology study programs, we will address two projects of the *Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology* that show the workings of the global knowledge economy in our context. The first one bears the title *Harmonisation of Study Programs from the Field of Humanities and Social Sciences with the Needs of the Labour Market* and was conducted within the Croatian qualification framework – qualification standards, granted by European Social Fund (ESF) within the Operational Program *Efficient Human Resources*, 2015–2016. The second one is entitled *Images of Utopia 50/68*, which was part of the larger EU project *CreArt*, which links six European cities in promoting artistic creativity. It was carried out in cooperation with the *Croatian Association of Fine Artists*, a non-governmental, non-profit, and politically neutral union of professionals, in 2018.

How do these two projects fit into the image of a neoliberal university? It seems to us that both address 'the major challenge [seen] as one of reconciling traditional functions of knowledge production and training of scientists with its newer role of collaborating with industry in the transfer of knowledge and technology' (Olssen and Peters 2005: 334). The latter one belongs to what Norman Fairclough sees as a traditional role of university in enhancing human understanding of other humans. It was when he was trying to explain the role of university and his own endeavours in researching public rhetoric of politicians that he had to position himself in opposition to the expectations set for him as a researcher by neoliberal research agendas. He states for himself that he sees his work rather as 'within the tradition of critical social science – [that] seeks knowledge for purposes of human emancipation (rather than for instance to make organisations work more efficiently)' (Fairclough 2006: 16).

The first project belongs to what we have appropriated to be our contemporaneity and immediate future in research and education aims. In that sphere, knowledge is viewed as a set of skills that enables us and our students to manoeuvre through the

global market of the knowledge economy. The project *Harmonisation of Study Programs with the Needs of the Labour Market* is a direct reflection of all the tendencies on the global and national level we described above. It was carried out within the Croatian Qualifications Framework as the main set of principles and financing source, which functions as a niche increasingly used by Faculties to finance the reform of their study programs. Through this project, the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences* attempted to make a systematic step towards the recognition of humanities and social sciences on the labour market and to eliminate ‘the observed weaknesses of the study programmes’ (Belaj 2017: 509). The *Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology* was selected as one of the seven departments involved in the project, whose programs show ‘strong potential of being integrated into the labour market’ (ibid.). This is how Marijana Belaj, a project coordinator for our department, describes the objectives and procedures of the program reform:

[T]he objective of the Department was to define the integral qualifications standard in accordance with actual occupations and labour market needs, and to improve the existing bachelor and master programme of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology by founding it on the learning outcomes of an appropriate level and an adjusted load on students with regards to the number of ECTS credits achieved. Following the guidelines and methodology of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF), research of graduates’ working careers and the development of occupational standards preceded the creating of the qualification standards (ibid.).

Therefore, labour market analysis was an integral part of the project, and it served as a basis that informed and directed all the other project phases, which had the design of new study programs as one of its most relevant outcomes. For that purpose, a survey was conducted among the ethnology and cultural anthropology alumni who graduated from 2003 to 2014, to get information on their careers, educational needs and applicability of competencies they gained while studying. The survey results have pointed to some interesting trends in the treatment of knowledge and higher education. Ninety-four ethnology and cultural anthropology graduates submitted their questionnaires – 39,9 % of the whole number of graduates in the observed period (ibid.: 510). Roughly half of them graduated within the Bologna system, and the other half finished their studies before the reform took place. At that time 83 % of them were employed, in different fields: museum and heritage preservation institutions, scientific and teaching fields, sales jobs, etc. What the survey has shown is that the graduates highly value the way their study program equipped them with specific skills for their professions, especially for research and critical analysis, establishing professional communication and intercultural dialogue – they even wrote they got more of those skills than they actually need

in their everyday working surroundings. What they stated they lacked are the skills of project conceptualisation and project management, as well as competencies in the sphere of cultural industry and cultural products and other general skills (ibid.: 512). The survey results posed a serious question for the Department members. Shall we then reduce the parts of our programs that foster critical thinking, systematic cultural analysis and ethical issues to boost the competence of our graduates in project and culture management? In the new study program devised in the frame of this project we attempted to find the middle ground – always a difficult position to maintain. This is a challenge we still face in our everyday teaching practice.

The second project carries the subtitle which we could easily use to define the strivings of university teachers and researchers in the contemporary processes of knowledge formation. *Images of Utopia* can be read as pointing to a gap between global, EU and national power relations and expectations from higher education and what we, as educators, professionals and citizens, consider to be the education for an open, mobile, tolerant and just society. What kind of involvement of professors, scholars and students is needed to make a social change that counts? This was one of the questions we raised in the project that marked the 50th anniversary of the 1968 happenings in Croatia or the former Yugoslavia, as well as worldwide. The evocations of the political turmoil, social movements, student protests and their repression, as well as the overall atmosphere and significance of 1968, served as a lens through which we observed the current situation in our society and at our university (Potkonjak and Škrbić Alempijević 2018). The core of the project revolved around the artistic reinterpretation of 1968, that is, around temporary spatial interventions created by five members of the *Croatian Association of Fine Artists*. We combined artistic and research activities, by including five students of ethnology and cultural anthropology in the project, whose research the two of us supervised. Their aim was to grasp ethnographically the memory materialised through art, its effects and its potential to transform people's sense of place and, perhaps, to change their experiences and world-views. One of the issues we wanted to raise echoes the topic of this paper: what kind of university contributes to the students and graduates' role of active citizens? What kind of education encourages them to show 'a much broader social interest than demands focusing on the improvement of students' living standard', which back in 1968 were 'criticised together with other segments of political, economic and social life' (Klasić 2018: 23)?

The site of the artistic interventions was not selected by chance. The artwork was located in the building of our faculty: The images mounted along the corridors we cross daily at a swift pace changed the rhythm of our and other passersby's steps; they made our everyday working space seem different and conveyed alternative

messages, at least temporarily. This is how we argued for the choice of the faculty as the venue for these artistic interventions:

Why the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb? Except for the fact that we wanted to enrich the Faculty's programme of public events by adding an art project to it, the reason for selecting this location lies in the collective perception of that institution. Such perception is imbued with social memory in general, and not primarily with evocations of the year 1968. In the public discourse and institutional self-perception, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is often perceived as the point of critical thinking and free expression of diverse identities and ideas. As a result, the Faculty is represented as the initiator of social change, as the place where many student protests took place, social movements were initiated and resistance against dominant policies was expressed. In our contemporary social memory, it is also defined as an arena in which the images of utopia are being (re)created (Potkonjak and Škrbić Alempijević 2018: 15).

In conclusion, we think that the strategies of our department, as well as the collective and individual endeavours of its professors and students, can be sketched through the intertwinement, common threads and clashes between those two projects. The one insists on the harmonisation of education with the needs of the labour market, and the other searches for images of a utopian university in present-day higher education policies, practices and realities.

What our research has shown is that the current university policies, as well as tactics and practices of educators and researchers are deeply immersed in the actual political, economic and social context. They reflect the dictates of the global and national system of governance and institutional frameworks; at the same time, they function as mechanisms that keep that system operational and viable. Also, they highlight the dilemma of how research and higher education can serve the society best: either by creating conditions and knowledge for a better life and a better, healthier, more pleasant, secure, harmonious and equal world, or by equipping individuals better for market needs and keeping track of money flows. In contemporaneity, those two approaches are rarely seen as synonyms. The tension between those different tendencies is particularly observable in humanities, where the direct applicability of knowledge and skills on the market is not as clear-cut and obvious as in some other scholarly areas. That also brings ethnology and cultural anthropology, which seek for a deeper understanding of humanity and finding solutions to human problems, to a very delicate position. In this process, these disciplines are getting attuned to the neoliberal developments of the 21st century we, as academics, researchers and engaged citizens, are most critical of.

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Neoliberalism and Coloniality are Two Sides of the Same Coin

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Zusammenfassung

In Anlehnung an Vertreter:innen des Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality-Projekts schlage ich vor, dass Kritik am Neoliberalismus in der europäischen Hochschulbildung mit Fragen der Kolonialität zusammengedacht werden muss. Die Kapitel in diesem Sammelband konzentrieren sich zwar auf den europäischen Kontext, ihre Analysen sind jedoch von weitaus größerer Bedeutung. Der Neoliberalismus ist ein globaler Prozess, im Rahmen dessen Universitäten eine Schlüsselrolle in der „Globalisierung des Wissenskaptalismus“ spielen. Gleichzeitig sind diese Universitäten auch durch einen epistemischen Kolonialismus gekennzeichnet, bei dem nur bestimmte Arten westlicher Epistemologien als „richtige wissenschaftliche“ Wissensformen anerkannt und andere Wissensformen delegitimiert werden. Ich lege dar, wie es zu diesem Delegitimierungsprozess gekommen ist, indem ich Beispiele für das Schicksal verschiedener Wissensformen im Kontakt mit westlichen universalisierenden Erkenntnistheorien aufzeige. Aufgrund der engen Beziehung zwischen Kapitalismus und Kolonialität vertrete ich die Auffassung, dass es zur Lösung der durch die Neoliberalisierung der Universitäten aufgeworfenen Probleme notwendig ist, sich gleichzeitig mit der epistemischen Kolonialität zu befassen, die von Universitäten aufrechterhalten wird.

Schlagwörter: Modernität/Kolonialität/Dekolonialität, Globalisierung des Wissenskaptalismus, Epistemizid, unterschiedliche Wissensformen, Pluriversalismus

Abstract

Drawing on Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars, I suggest that critiques of neoliberalism in European higher education also need to grapple with issues of coloniality. While the chapters in this volume zoom in on European contexts, their analyses have much wider relevance. Neoliberalism is a global process, where universities are key factors in ‘globalizing knowledge capitalism’. At the same time, these universities are also characterized by epistemic colonialism, where only certain kinds of Western epistemologies are consecrated as ‘properly scholarly’ ways of knowing, and other ways of knowing are delegitimized. I outline how this process of delegitimization has come about through examples of the fate of different ways of knowing in contact with Western universalizing epistemologies. Due to the intimate relationship between capitalism and coloniality, I argue that in order to address the issues raised by the neoliberalisation of universities, it is necessary to simultaneously address the epistemic coloniality perpetuated by such universities.

Keywords: Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality, globalizing knowledge capitalism, epistemicide, different ways of knowing, pluriversalism

I.

From the 1990s anthropologists began to raise the alarm about the neoliberal direction universities had begun to take. For instance, Marilyn Strathern's 2000 book *Audit Culture* gathered essays that outlined and analysed the increasing bureaucratization and corporatization of academic work. In that volume, Chris Shore and Susan Wright (2000) give examples showing how anthropology departments in the UK were being required to standardize their practice. Various national educational policies required disciplines to model themselves on corporate organisations and to aim for internal homogeneity of practice and theory (ibid.). Within the European Union this intensification of neoliberal policies shaping the university is attributed to the results of the Bologna process, where in 1999 education ministers from twenty-nine countries signed the Bologna declaration. The Bologna process is mostly known for its aim and attempt to standardise tertiary education across EU member states, purportedly to facilitate the recognition of academic degrees. However, like the situation in the UK, both the driving force and the result, has been a neoliberalization of universities. Anthropologists have been at the forefront of critiques of this shift. Examples include the 'Reclaim the University' movement which began in Aberdeen in 2016, and the efforts examined in this book.

As the contributions to this book attest, this process has further intensified in recent years across Europe (Potkonjak/Škrbić Alempijević, Wolf-Knuts). Even so, anthropologists find ways to critique any romanticization of universities 'back then' (Wolf-Knuts) or of 'folklorism' (Schönberger); they creatively subvert it through developing community-engaged research (Büyüksaraç), designing preferable community futures (Kalkreuter) or finding the possibilities that lie in developing research across university and broader publics (Barkhoff). And while these chapters zoom in on European contexts, their analyses have much wider relevance. This is because the process of neoliberalization itself is a global process. It can be found throughout formal education and its beginnings are situated much earlier than the turn of the 21st Century, when anthropologists began taking note. In this essay I will outline the intimate relationship between capitalism and coloniality. Drawing on Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars, I argue that critiques of neoliberalism in European higher education also need to recognise the inseparability of neoliberalism and coloniality. The reasoning behind this is that it has been persuasively argued by scholars from the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars that capitalism, and its contemporary globalized and hyper fluid development in neoliberalism, and colonialism/imperialism are actually inextricably linked.

South African-based, Cameroonian historian, political theorist and public intellectual Achille Mbembe (2016: 39) notes how the intensification and spread of neoliberalism in universities is a trend that can be observed already at the beginning of the 20th Century in the U.S. There an educational commentator writing in 1918, a certain Thorstein Veblen, identified the business principles shaping the educational environment. Indeed, the late educationalist Ken Robinson argued that the entire formalised school system, which became established in the second half of the 1800s was designed to create docile workers for the then expanding industrial system. According to Robinson formal education was designed both in the image and the interests of industrialism, so that school education becomes a factory for manufacturing workers.¹ Of course, until the 1990s it may have seemed that universities were separate from primary and secondary schooling, especially in terms of faculty members who jealously guarded 'academic freedom'. However, as we will see this separation and supposed freedom is overstated.

Returning to Mbembe, he argues that the neoliberalization of universities is part of a global process. In this, universities are key factors in 'globalizing knowledge capitalism', where

[c]ontemporary changes in higher education are based on the deepening of functional linkages between higher education and knowledge capitalism at a time when capitalism has become thoroughly transnational and ruling classes worldwide have become partially denationalized (Mbembe 2016: 39).

Mbembe goes on to describe neoliberalism as a new governing rationality, one in which everything is 'economized'. This means that every sphere of activity is understood and treated as a market; humans become nothing more than market actors, and importantly every entity is governed as if it were a firm, including universities (ibid.: 40).

It is important to note that even with the spread of globalised knowledge capitalism, and the neoliberal policies that shores it up, critical movements have also emerged around the world. An important example is the *#FeesMustFall* student-led movement that started in South Africa in 2015. The *#FeesMustFall* movement is crucial in this story; it grew out of the *#RhodesMustFall* movement, which called for the decolonisation of the university. These activists noted that for decolonising the university to become a reality, access to university education also needs to be democratised and uncoupled from profiteering interests. However, in the same way the history

1 https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms, accessed 9th Feb 2024.

of the neoliberalization of universities can be traced to an earlier origin, so can the beginnings of this globalising trend, which serves the interests of a specific elite.

II.

The Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) project is a scholarly movement arising in South and central America that gained momentum in the 2000s. Key figures in the MCD project are Argentine-Mexican writer and philosopher, Enrique Dussel, the Peruvian Sociologist, Anibal Quijano, the Colombian Philosopher, Santiago Castro-Gomez, the UC Berkeley-based Sociologist, Ramon Grosfoguel, and the Rutgers University-based Philosopher, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Duke university-based scholars Walter Dignolo and Catherine Walsh, and Colombian-American anthropologist Arturo Escobar. The MCD scholars argue that modernity needs to be understood in the same frame as coloniality, and not separately. By extension this implies that critiques of neoliberalism also need to attend to their relationship with coloniality. In MCD analyses coloniality is distinct from colonialism, and decoloniality is distinct from decolonisation. While decolonisation was the political process of formerly colonised states gaining independence mostly happening in the second half of the 20th Century, decoloniality is an ongoing and plural process. Dignolo explains that while decolonisation, and the various schools of scholarship that analysed the process and aftermath, address the content of colonisation, decoloniality questions the very premises those contents assume. The MCD project explores the ontological/epistemological assumptions and power matrices that generate a colonial mindset.

The MCD scholars highlight how Eurocentric histories tend to separate the development of modernity in Europe from colonialism, where colonialism is portrayed as an unfortunate secondary aspect of modernity (Dignolo 2018: 110). In this Eurocentric narrative, colonialism is not causally related to modernity (Shephard 2018: 3). Instead, the MCD project scholars highlight that the flow of resources, people, and ideas from North and South America towards Europe from 1490 onwards, needs to be recognized as essential elements in the development of modernity itself. 'The flow of wealth, people, ideas, new exploitable plant and animal species were key drivers of European Modernity' (Shephard 2018: 4). Dignolo, for instance, writes that because of this modernity and coloniality cannot be disentangled, that coloniality was in fact a co-present factor in the development of modernity itself, and that coloniality is therefore the inescapable darker side of modernity.

There are key differences between earlier post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said, Homi Bhaba, and Gayatri Spivak and the MCD project. While post-colonial

scholars drew their critiques from the experience of French and British colonialism, MCD scholars shifted attention to earlier imperialism of Spain and Portugal. Basing their arguments on a different historical period they target ideas of European exceptionalism. European exceptionalism states that ideas which are central to modernity, as well as modernity itself, were developed entirely and uniquely by Europeans in Europe. It is this European exceptionalism that legitimises further modern/colonial narratives of Europe bringing ‘civilization’ to different peoples around the world. The MCD calls for the acknowledgment that the knowledge and culture claimed to be uniquely European results from ongoing intellectual and cultural exchange with myriad others, and this undoes any claim to European superiority. Increasingly there are studies which show that advances in, for instance, modern pathology (Herrera 2018), botany and geography (Gruzinski 2013; Safier 2010) and Scottish Enlightenment philosophy (Metze 2011), grew from engagements with non-Europeans and learning the knowledges they developed.

Another relevant narrative of European exceptionalism relates specifically to the University, which in Eurocentric discourse is also claimed to be a unique European invention from the early Modern period (Goody 2006: 222). Jack Goody, however, shows how universities thrived in ancient Greek and Roman empires, with schools in Alexandria, Antioch, Athens, Beirut, Constantinople, and Gaza. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, although universities and schools of higher education vanished from Europe, philosophy continued to flourish in Athens and Alexandria, a city still extant in present day Egypt. In Alexandria the institution of the Museum ‘functioned as a University, with an accent on research’ (ibid: 227). Across the Muslim world the *madrasa* shares more similarities than differences with European universities. Although, many Eurocentric scholars discount *madrasas* as examples of universities developed beyond Europe because of the emphasis on theology, this was not different to most European universities which also focused on religion. Furthermore, Goody notes how not all higher education happened in universities.

Institutes of higher education and learning had existed in the Ancient Near East at temple ‘research institutes’, in the Classical world, in ancient Persia, and virtually wherever higher literacy was installed. Like towns, universities were only European from a very narrow point of view, strongly tinged by teleology (Goody 2006: 229).

A second difference between post-colonial and decolonial scholars is the latter’s emphasis on knowledge. Said (1978) already defines Orientalism as a systematic science that organizes Western imaginaries of the ‘Orient’ through repeated images and ideas in both academic and popular communications. Mignolo argues that postcolonial scholars, such as Said, dwelled mostly on cultural representation

(2018). Instead, the MCD project focuses on coloniality as an epistemic project. In other words, the expansionism characterised by imperialism/colonialism is at heart also a move to universalise European knowledge and ontology (Shepherd 2018: 4).

III.

In the historical encounter between the ‘West’ and others two things happen. First, ‘Westerners’ appropriated elements of local knowledge that were deemed useful to Western interests. Such appropriation most often obscured the source of this knowledge, and always included forms of editing to remove the radical aspects of such knowledge. In this editing, any aspects of such local knowledge that might have destabilized Western onto/epistemologies were excised. This continues today. Julie Cruickshank (2012), for instance describes one such project where glaciologists sought to include in their reports the ‘Traditional ecological knowledge’ of Indigenous inhabitants in the Yukon territory in north-western Canada. The climate scientists and glaciologists tasked with writing up scientific reports included Indigenous descriptions of glacier changes over the years. However, the reports completely omitted that in such Indigenous knowledge, the glacier is animate, that the behaviour of the glacier is contingent, and that glacial changes can only be understood in the light of the glacier’s sentience (Cruickshank 2012: 242). While the elements of ‘information’ that are compatible with Western knowledge systems were incorporated into the glaciologists’ reports, the ‘magic’ was left behind (Leach and Davis 2012: 214). In other words, ‘Western knowledge appropriates core elements of local knowledge, in the process reframing these elements and claiming them for its own’ (Shepherd 2018: 5).

Second, a crucial aspect in the encounters between Western knowledge, when it is framed as universal, and other ways of knowing is the destruction of these very knowledge practices, which Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) refers to as ‘epistemicide’. This is typically done through a process where non-European knowledge traditions and practices are defined as ‘culture’, ‘tradition’ or ‘belief’, in other words as forms of ‘non-knowledge’. ‘As such they become the object of study of the discipline of anthropology’ (Shepherd 2018). Santos (2014) notes that this Western universalist knowledge is operationalised around sets of binaries, which he refers to as ‘abyssal thinking’. In this form of thinking, an ontological abyss divides different types of knowledge into two ontologically separate categories, and thus prevents things placed on opposite sides of the line from co-existing. For instance, reason is placed on one side of the abyss, and on the other side there are ‘the dark world of passions, intuitions, feelings, emotions, affections, beliefs, faiths, values, myths, and the world of the unsayable’ (Santos 2014: 5). Other dichotomies include subject

vs. object, reason vs. emotion, mind vs. body, nature vs. culture, white vs. black, male vs. female, head vs. heart, present vs. past (Shepherd 2018: 6). These appropriations and dichotomies are the basis upon which most current academic disciplines are based.

Another, third, characteristic of Western Science that follows this abyssal thinking – the rhetoric rather than the actual practices that go on in laboratories (Latour 2003) – is that knowledge can be abstracted from the ways of living through which it emerges. The dissociation of *knowing* from *being* treats the world as an object of knowledge ready to be grasped, an understanding that parallels the colonial/capitalist extractivism of resources. In fact, Anishabee and Haudenosaunee scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) critiques Donna Haraway's use of the notions of the Coyote or the Trickster. On the one hand, Watts appreciates how Haraway's feminist anti-essentialism works to undermine universalist depictions of knowledge. On the other hand, in the way Haraway uses concepts from localized knowledge, Watts notes that the Indigenous histories and protocols around such knowledge and stories are absent. In this, definitions of 'knowledge' remain dictated by Western principles and Indigenous stories become abstracted tools. Essentially what this does is 'to erase the embodied, practised, and legal-governance aspects of Indigenous ontologies as they are enacted by Indigenous actors' (Todd 2015: 17).

Important proposals by Indigenous scholars include redefining knowledge as emplaced. Watts proposes a principle of 'Indigenous Place-Thought', in which knowledge is effectively relational and situated (cited in Todd 2016). Dwight Conquergood (2002), similarly argued for knowledge to be redefined as located, engaged and in solidarity, rather than transcendent, abstracted, and separated off from daily life. In a similar vein, Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli-Meyer (2008, cited in Magnat 2020) proposes that Hawaiian epistemology is relevant beyond the confines of the geography where it originates, that it has universal relevance. However, the conception of universality she works with is based on the notion of specificity: a place-specific understanding of universality (*ibid.*). I understand this to mean that it is essential to acknowledge the specific emplaced source of different understandings of the world, so that such understandings do not get imposed on others as universal or necessary. However, these understandings of the world can be relevant or put to work in other places too. This reminds me of what Joel Robbins (2010) calls 'proposals for universals', where ideas or practices emerging from specific localities and socialities can be proposed for wider application and relevance. In my understanding, this approach to 'universality' is processual and social: there

is no assumption that one way of knowing is the correct one, to be imposed on others, but it can be argued that notions and practices from one place can be of much wider value.

IV.

The dichotomies that compose the Eurocentric, colonial understanding of knowledge itself begin to indicate that they produce forms of internal epistemicide, where ways of knowing that originate geographically in ‘Europe’ are also exiled to the non-knowledge side of the ontological abyss. Here we have an instance of Occidentalism, or at least of one of the ways in which Occidentalism is defined. When the ‘West’ subjects ‘others’ to the image of ‘Orientalism’ it is simultaneously projecting a mirror image of itself, equally fallacious (Santos 2014). In this definition of Occidentalism, Europe itself is flattened and homogenized, and differences are papered over (see also Chakrabarty 2000). Over the past five hundred years, any way of knowing that didn’t fit the universalizing, logocentric, androcentric epistemology of this Occidentalism was also silenced (Santos 2014). Here, I offer a different example: Goethean Science.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is nowadays most revered for his poetry, on par with Shakespeare in English literature, and Cervantes for the Spanish. Less known today is that Goethe also developed a distinct empirical scientific approach. This example is especially interesting because Goethean Science is slowly growing in significance, especially in the sphere of ecology and sustainability, which signals the sorts of changes already afoot that critique and offer alternatives to the coloniality and neoliberalization of knowledge and research (see Escobar 2020).

Goethe understood the human perceiver as inseparable from the phenomena they wanted to observe. He argued that nature permeates everything, including the human mind and imagination. Therefore, to study the world, Goethe proposed methods that were deeply participatory, that envisioned knowledge as a relational process between person and different aspects of the world (Holdrege 2005). This stands in stark contrast with Cartesian-Newtonian methods which presuppose a clear separation between observer and observed. Goethe’s concept of science is one in which ‘not only the object of observation changes and moves but also the subject of observation’ (Wellmon 2010). Since Goethean science explicitly challenges Cartesian-Newtonian epistemologies, and in its specifics challenges the dualities of subject/object, it is held in contempt by mainstream science (Ingold 2013).² The fate of

2 See Ingold 2023 for an analysis of Goethe’s critique of Newton’s optics.

Goethe's science exemplifies Santos's argument that any way of knowing, whether originating in 'Europe' or elsewhere that does not fit with a specific universalizing, colonialist, extractivist epistemology is externalized and so de-legitimised.

V.

Going forward, two principles can be drawn from this discussion. First, I have suggested that to address neoliberalism at the university it will be necessary to simultaneously address coloniality. This is because, as the MCD project and scholars such as Mbembe have shown, neoliberalism and coloniality are inextricably linked aspects of the contemporary capitalization and globalization of knowledge. In addition, although the relationship between neoliberalism and coloniality is elided in most Eurocentric narratives, coloniality nonetheless shapes the sorts of epistemic exclusion that characterizes universities anywhere, even in Europe. It is the coloniality of knowledge that maintains, for instance, the hierarchy of the natural sciences over the humanities; a situation where disciplines such as gender studies are widely dismissed as political projects rather than valid scholarship (Pereira 2017), and the myth of 'objectivity'.

Second, therefore, coloniality subjugates different ways of knowing across the world including, even within the geographical and ideological area referred to as 'Europe'. The elites that benefited, and continue to benefit, from imperial and colonial domination, also benefited from what is sometimes called 'internal' colonization. This takes many forms, whether it is the crushing of different languages in the process of nation-building (Magnat 2020), the silencing of gendered ways of knowing and, by means of the theory/practice divide, relegating countless knowledge practices to scholarly irrelevance, class divisions and so on and so forth.

Considering its history, it might be the very fabric of the Eurocentric, globalized university which will need to be reformed. A fabric woven by twin threads: the notion of knowledge as universal, abstractable and free floating; and the notion of capital as a universal vessel for exchange value, and one that, ideally, is also abstractable and free flowing. Due to ongoing coloniality and racism, Jobson (2021) makes the case for letting anthropology burn. Having reflected on the deep involvement of the institution of the university with coloniality, neoliberalism and the subjugation of different ways of knowing, I wonder whether there is a case to let universities, as well as anthropology, burn and rebuild entirely new institutions from the ashes. Such renewed institutions could build on the decolonial relational and pluriversal imaginaries being developed both within and outwith universities around the world. But that needs to be a story for next time.

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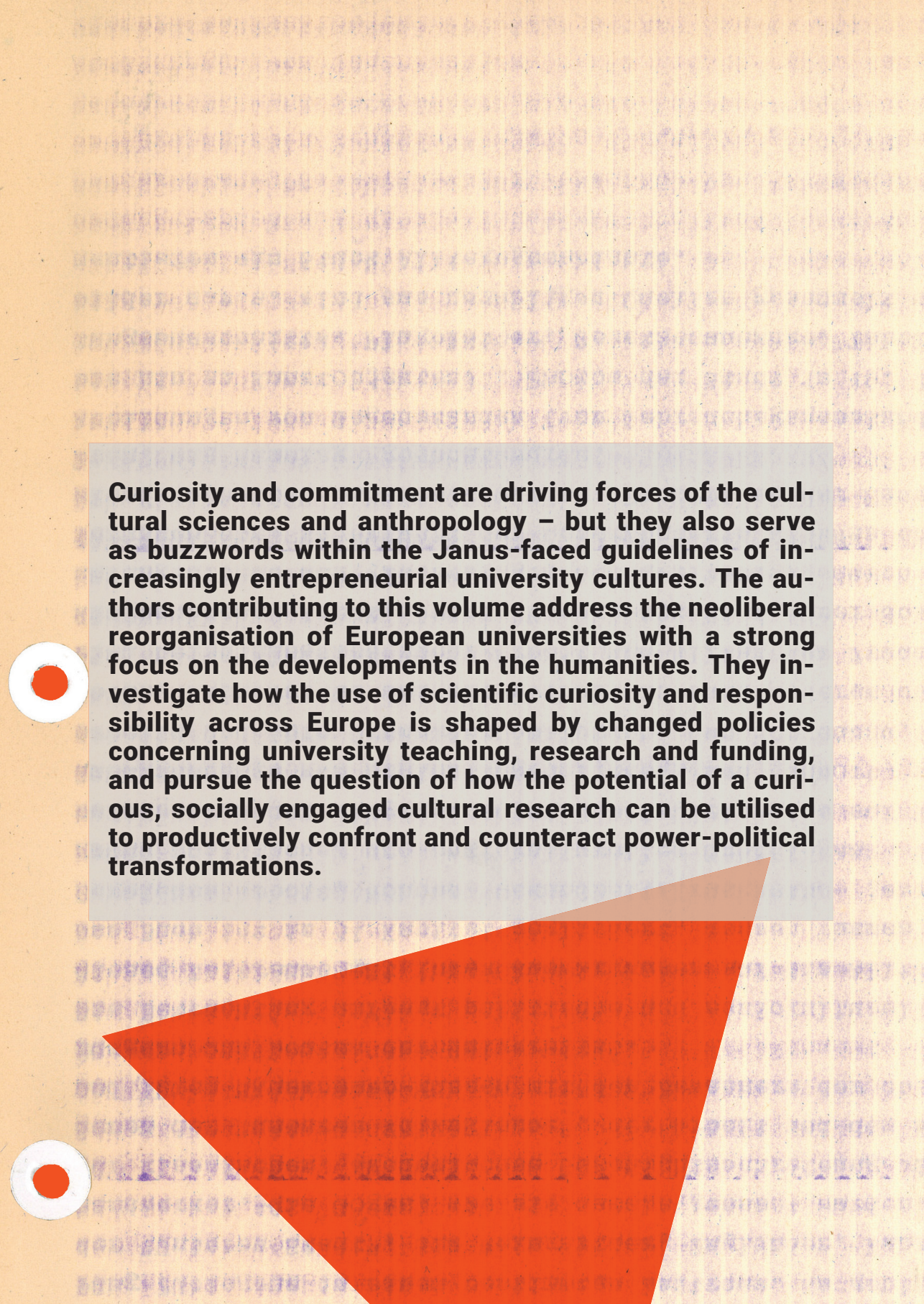
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Curiosity and commitment are driving forces of the cultural sciences and anthropology – but they also serve as buzzwords within the Janus-faced guidelines of increasingly entrepreneurial university cultures. The authors contributing to this volume address the neoliberal reorganisation of European universities with a strong focus on the developments in the humanities. They investigate how the use of scientific curiosity and responsibility across Europe is shaped by changed policies concerning university teaching, research and funding, and pursue the question of how the potential of a curious, socially engaged cultural research can be utilised to productively confront and counteract power-political transformations.