

Higher Education Policy in the Age of Knowledge Societies

Credits: 2

Course Co-ordinator: Liviu Matei

Assessment: 30 % seminar participation; 30% seminar presentation; 40% one 3000-word final paper

Teaching: Lectures and Seminars

Course Aims

The talk, or discourse, about the knowledge society is omnipresent in different areas of public policy. “Knowledge society” remains one of the most influential policy narratives of our times and it often translates into ambitious practical policy initiatives. There are scores of policy projects inspired by it. The United Nations and several of its agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, scholars, civil society activities and intellectuals speaking on behalf of the “Arab region”, national governments around the world, from South Africa to Finland and from India to Saudi Arabia, international professional associations and many others propose and attempt to implement “knowledge society projects”.

The primary motivation for major policy endeavors under the umbrella of the knowledge society is most often economic and political, with no declared interest in higher education. Traditionally, knowledge society projects, whether at the global, regional, national, or local scale, are not, or not primarily, about higher education. Yet, they always end up by proposing very specific higher education policies and models regarding the role of higher education institutions. Although usually not intended, higher education policy and higher education institutions become key to any knowledge society project.

In the age of the knowledge society, higher education policy is a key area of public policy. Higher education becomes a matter of concern for the society as a whole, not just for those directly involved in the work of higher education institutions. Moreover, higher education policy is not even primarily and exclusively the making of the individuals and groups directly involved in higher education (students, professors, university administrators). It is rather others, from the outside, that make higher education policy. Higher education policy, in turn, has a significant impact -- economic, political, cultural -- on the life of society beyond the walls of universities.

This course provides a conceptual framework to analyze how the powerful discourse on the knowledge society translates into higher education policies. Furthermore, it explores the rationale for various policy actors to walk deeply into the territory of higher education, even when they have no direct interest or mandate in this area (e.g. ministries of finance, economy, or commerce; international and intergovernmental organizations of various types - from those promoting international security to those promoting regional economic integration or sustainable development; professional associations in fields ranging from industrial lobbying to human rights, etc.). It introduces students to the applied study of who exactly makes and implements higher education policies “for the knowledge society”. It investigates the connections with other policy areas and what is the impact of higher education policies and policy making “for the knowledge society”.

The course uses an interdisciplinary comparative approach and combines theoretical perspectives and empirical material, including a selection of remarkable case studies. The readings will be primarily from sociology (including sociology of education) and political science, with elements of history, international relations, economics, and management. Policy documents will be used frequently throughout the course.

Course objectives

This is a graduate seminar designed:

- ★ To develop an understanding of the policy discourse on the “knowledge society”.
- ★ To develop an understanding of the relationships between this discourse and public policy, in particular

higher education policy, including how they are formulated, implemented, and evaluated.

- ★ To understand the emergence, impact and limitations of major knowledge society projects and corresponding higher education policies at the global, regional, and local level.
- ★ To understand how higher education institutions position themselves, respond to and are influenced by the policy discourse on the knowledge society.
- ★ To form an understanding, more generally, of the main approaches to elaborating and implementing higher education policies at the global, regional, national, and institutional level.
- ★ To acquire concepts and techniques useful for research, including applied research, in higher education policy.

Provisional Curriculum

1. The knowledge society narrative and the global picture of knowledge society projects

- Conceptual clarifications: knowledge society, the knowledge society narrative, knowledge society projects.
- From Castells to Drucker: theoretical approaches to the study of the knowledge society and knowledge society projects.
- The place of policy in the talk about the knowledge society. Knowledge society and governance. The utopia of the knowledge society as ultimate liberation and the angst of “being left out forever.
- A taxonomy of knowledge society projects

2. Knowledge society discourse and higher education policies

- From the knowledge society talk to higher education policies. A model of how knowledge society projects translate into higher education policies at global, regional, national, or institutional level.
- Actors and processes. The economic drive. The impact of ideology and politics. Any place for culture?
- The emergence of “universities for a modern Renaissance” model. Policy projects and blueprints regarding the role of universities (*e.g.* African reconstruction, Arab Renaissance, the “European dream”).

3. Higher education policies “for the knowledge society” at work : the global level

- Higher education policies of major international organizations promoting knowledge society projects with a global scope: the UN and its agencies (UNDP, UNESCO), the World Bank, OECD.

5. Higher education policies “for the knowledge society” at work: the regional level

A. European-wide knowledge society projects

- The Lisbon and Europe 2020 strategies as the EU’s overarching strategies to cope with the challenges of globalization in the 21st century. The European Research Area.

- The project of the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process as a knowledge society project.
- The place of higher education and higher education policy in the European construction. Higher education as an instrument of economic integration at continental level. The EU does have a higher education policy!
- Higher education policy as an instrument of political construction: comparative analyses (U.S. and Europe, the historical role of universities in the consolidation of national states vs. European construction)
- The Europe of the knowledge society and the rediscovery of universities in Europe.

B. Arab Human Development Reports as a blueprint for bridging the “knowledge gap” and building a knowledge society in tin the Arab world

- The prospects and reality of an Arab knowledge society and the place of higher education.
- Knowledge society as a practical utopia.

C. Experiences from Asia.

- Knowledge society projects and projects and higher education policies in South East Asia and the Far East: Korea, Myanmar, Japan.

6. Higher education policies “for the knowledge society” at work: the national level

- The “education Gospel” in the U.S.
- When universities propose a national model: Scotland
- Translating global and regional models into national policies: the UK
- Between aspirations of regional integration and national indecision: the Balkans
- The impact of the international intervention and aid: the World Bank in Africa; international organizations and foundations in Central Asia
- The shaping of national higher education policies in the context of the knowledge society talk: who sets the agenda, how policies are shaped and implemented, the impact of non-national players and processes
- Lessons from a comparative analysis of national experiences

7. Higher education policies “for the knowledge society” at work: the institutional level

- How individual higher education institutions participate in the discourse about the knowledge society.
- The dialogue with the State, external “stakeholders” and peers.
- Development of internal institutional policies in connection with the knowledge society talk. The impact on curriculum, research and outreach.
- The entrepreneurial or academic enterprising university
- Universities as actors in knowledge regions

Recommended readings:

- Bell, D. (1976). *The coming of post-industrial society. A venture in social forecasting*. Harmondsworth, Peregrine
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society. The information age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Blakwell Publishers
- Castells, M. (1998). *End of Millenium: The information Age*, Vol. 3., Oxford: Blakwell Publishers
- De Wit, K. (2003) The consequences of European Integration for Higher Education. *Higher Education Policy*, 16
- Drucker, P.F. (1994). *Knowledge work and knowledge society. The social transformation of this century*. Godkin Lecture at J.F. Kennedy School of Government, May 4, 1997
- Grub, W. N. & Lazerson, M. (2004). *The Education Gospel. The economic power of Schooling*. Harvard University Press
- Nybom, T. (2003). The Humboldt Legacy: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of the European University. *Higher Education Policy*, 16,
- Stone, D. and Maxwell, S. eds., (2005) *Global knowledge networks and international development : bridges across boundaries*, New York : Routledge
- Wilson, E.J. III (2003). Scholarship and practice in the transition to a knowledge society. *Items and Issues. Social Research Council*, Vol. 4. No 2-3, Spring/Summer
- (2004). *The Knowledge Society*. A submission to the Scottish Higher Education Review. Universities Scotland.
- (2005) *Towards an integrated knowledge ecosystem: a Canadian research strategy*. Report submitted to the Canadian Association of Research Libraries

EU and EU-related Documents

- (2004). *Facing the challenge. The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment*. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok
- *Commission recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*
- *Communication from the Commission –The role of universities in the Europe of Knowledge* /*COM/2003/0058final*/
- *Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in education and training*. Commission staff working paper. Brussels 2005
- *EUA Response to the Communication from the Commission “ The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge”*, May 2003
- *The Bologna Declaration*, 19 June 1999
- *Sorbonne Joint Declaration*, 25 May 1998
- *Communiqués of the Conferences of Ministers responsible for higher education*; Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005)

Council of Europe documents

- Resolution 1393 (2004). *Parliaments and the knowledge society*

World Bank documents and studies

- Samoff, J. & Carrol, B. (2003). *From manpower planning to the knowledge era: World Bank policies on higher education in Africa*. UNESCO forum on Higher Education Research and Knowledge
- *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*. A World Bank Report, Washington D.C.

UN, UN agencies documents and studies

- *United Nations Millenium Development Declaration, 2000*
- *Declaration de principes. Construire la societe de l'information: un defi mondial pour lenouvesu millenaire. Sommet mondial sur la societe de l'information. 2003 Definir des societes de l'information centrees sur les besoins des etres humainews. Declaration de la societe civile au Sommet mondial sur la societe de l'information (2003)*
- Tunnermann Bernheim, C. & Souza Chaui, M. (2003). *Challenges of the university in the knowledge society, five years after the world conference on higher education*. (UNESCO Forum Occasional Paper Series. Paper no. 4, 2003)
- Lynn Meek, V. (2003). *Coordination, research management ad the future of higher education in the post-industrial era*. UNESCO Forum Occasional Paper Series. Paper no. 4
- *Building a Knowledge Society, UNDP Arab Human Development Report. Vol. 2 2002*

