



## Disciplinary Barriers between the Social Sciences and Humanities

**Current debates about the construction of knowledge  
in the social sciences and humanities and the impact  
of these on disciplinization in eight European  
countries**

### Comparative Report

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## Table of contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 The usefulness of knowledge: What kind of knowledge is demanded? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Education: liberal studies or vocational training?.....	7
1.1.1 Market led education – UK, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Hungary .....	8
1.1.2 Educational autonomy and the market – Germany, France and Spain .....	10
1.1.3 Integration of the humanities in vocational training as a modernisation of a ‘Humboldtian’ heritage? .....	11
1.2 Research: knowledge for knowledge’s sake or for profit? .....	12
1.2.1 The tradition of the ‘problem-centred approach’ and the recent trend towards ‘academic capitalism’ in the Scandinavian countries .....	13
1.2.2 ‘Autonomy’ or ‘ivory tower’ – the case of France, Spain and Germany ...	15
1.2.3 Humanities and social sciences in the context of the European research policy - First Conclusions .....	19
<b>2 The construction of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences from an interdisciplinary perspective: What do the social sciences and humanities have in common? .....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Opening up the social sciences .....	23
2.2 Opening up the humanities .....	24
2.3 Tendencies towards the integration of the humanities and social sciences .....	25
Excursus: Media Studies in Germany and Hungary .....	25
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## Introduction

This report focuses on current debates about the construction of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities and the impact of these on disciplinization in eight European countries: Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the UK. All these countries except Norway are members of the EU, and all are signatories to the Bologna Agreement. They are partners in a specific targeted research project (STREP)<sup>1</sup> on ‘Changing Knowledge and Disciplinary Boundaries Through Integrative Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities’, funded under the European Commission’s Framework 6, Priority 7: ‘Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Based Society’. A key objective of this project is to understand the barriers to interdisciplinarity in the social sciences and humanities. This report therefore and specifically centres on the question of how current constructions of knowledge impact on the social sciences and the humanities, and on possibilities for interdisciplinarity within these.

The role of the university is widely discussed in contemporary Europe due above all to political and economic, but also to socio-cultural changes. There are discussions regarding what kind of knowledge should be produced by whom and what role academia should play. A key term in these contemporary (political) European debates on higher education and research is ‘applicability’ (i.e. social and/or economic ‘utility’) which is to be found in official reports and papers on both research and teaching. This key term has not remained fixed but is undergoing processes of negotiation and contestation, as we can show especially in the debates going on in Spain and Germany about the ‘crisis of the humanities’.

The reasons seem to be clear. The main changes which affect the current debates on knowledge production are economization, privatisation and internationalisation, which are closely related to each other. All these aspects are more or less manifest both in the infrastructural (re)definitions of academia (restructuring of funding, organization of universities) and in a general thinking and talking about knowledge. This ‘circulation’ of the key word ‘utility’ in the context of education and research also provokes in the academic world never-ending statements on the legitimisation of the speakers’ disciplines. This can be read positively as a period when the disciplines are engaging in more self-reflection. On the other hand, the engagement in the legitimisation debate seems to reinforce the hegemony of a (short-sighted) utilitarian approach to knowledge production.

In all European countries, the public sector has been reorganised according to economic criteria, but differences can be noted both in the degree to which this development has taken place in the various countries and in the reaction to it. This reorganisation is for example related to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (AGCS/GATS), one of the three contracts of the World Trade Organization signed by the members of the OECD in 1994. This has had, and will presumably continue to have, consequences for the whole education and research system. These consequences can only be assessed in a preliminary way. One outcome, though subject to some variation, is (at least indirectly) a privatisation of public services, including education (Belli 2005: 1).

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration](http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration) for further details.

This economisation goes together with economic and political internationalisation, both on a global and a European level. One key word connected to it is ‘competition’ (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 39) as knowledge production in both research and teaching is seen in the context of a global ‘market’. As far as internationalisation is concerned, an important factor in the changes taking place in education is the ‘Bologna process’. The main aim of this higher education reform is to produce a transparent European university system, which promotes mobility and should ‘increas[e] the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education’ (Bologna Declaration 1999). With Bologna, the question of applicability (employability of graduates) is raised concerning both teaching contents and methods. Although economisation and privatisation are not direct aims of the Bologna process, it still can be seen as an indirect contribution to privatisation (see *Studentinnenschaft der Universität Bern* 2003: 3). By orienting contents of education increasingly towards the market, universities become more interesting for private investment by corporations (ibid: 3).

Related to economic globalisation, but also to the political process of integration in the European Union, the role of the national state has shifted. This is another factor which contributes to the discussion about contents and purposes, especially of the humanities, which have been connected to national policies designed to construct a collective national identity in the last two centuries. This identity policy has undergone changes and has been questioned not only due to the unification of Europe, but also in the context of post-colonial debates or related to the experiences of fascism and National Socialism. The traditional humanities with their tendency to use a set canon have been criticised from the perspective of class, race and gender since the debates of the 1970s.

The idea of ‘applicability’ as a criterion for university research is laden with conflict in terms of its socio-political significance – it could signify an emancipatory ideal or the reduction of the university to short-term usability or total dissolution. The humanities were discussed in a similar way in the 1960s and 1970s in terms of social change rather than economic usefulness. The bottom-up process of the 1960s and 1970s on this issue has increasingly become a top-down procedure during the 1990s. The Germanist and cultural scientist Georg Bollenbeck (2002), for example, has commented on the influence of economic pressure on tertiary education policies in the weekly German (left-wing) newspaper *Freitag*. In his article on ‘the reorganisation of the meaning of the university in terms of market and business rhetoric’ he refers to the ‘planned objectives’ of the 1970s and the initiatives that are described in *Geisteswissenschaften heute: Eine Denkschrift* (Frühwald et.al.1991). Bollenbeck differentiates between them and the contemporary market oriented ‘neoliberal trend’ of higher education and research politics. From our point of view one can note within this trend signs of problematic shifts in the meaning of concepts such as ‘social reflection’ (and ‘transdisciplinarity’). Concepts that were first formulated from a critical scholarly perspective in the context of new social movements (anti-nuclear movements, environmental movements and women’s movements), are becoming increasingly technocratic: for example, ‘social reflexion’ has been rearticulated with a focus on ‘extra-scientific mechanisms for generating consensus and for quality

control', which includes economic usability (see Wenk 2001 and 2002 for further details).<sup>2</sup>

The implications of and reactions to these general tendencies differ in the various countries described in the national reports. It seems that these differences are closely connected to different national traditions. They can be seen in the context of two or three main university models to which the European debates refer, namely the 'Anglo-Saxon', the 'French (Russian)'<sup>3</sup> and the 'Humboldtian' model. Both the Swedish authors Holm and Liinason (2005: 3) and the Norwegian authors Widerberg et al (2005: 6) point to two 'traditions' which their university systems have been influenced by. The Swedish researchers refer to the German and the American tradition, the Norwegian authors call it 'the Anglo-American and the German-Continental, the first representing social usefulness (*samfunnsnyttten*) while the other represents social intellectualism (*samfunnsdannelse*)' (2005: 6). In the cases of both Norway and the Sweden, the Anglo-American model has gained the upper hand in the second half of the twentieth century, after World War II (as the Norwegian authors describe it) or at least since the 1960s.

While in some countries the recent university reforms do not seem to imply a significant change in their understanding of knowledge production, in other countries the current *Leitmotiv* of 'usefulness' has resulted in a controversy about the legitimisation of the disciplines. While the Scandinavian countries seem to have undergone these changes earlier on, and Great Britain had been evolving towards such a system for years, other countries like Spain, Germany and France have been less involved in these developments. Accordingly, in the latter countries the changes are being received in a much more controversial way. How and what kind of knowledge should be produced is being interpreted differently, depending on the role academics have. This role defines the interactions of academics with their social surroundings, and also the purpose of their work. It can be traced back to particular historical backgrounds, as we can see when comparing for example the roles of Norwegian and French academics. Our main questions are what national differences can be noted in the European debates? And what kind of impact do they have on the social sciences and humanities, and their subjects and methodologies?

## **1 The usefulness of knowledge: What kind of knowledge is demanded?**

A redefinition of the role of research and education to aim at 'applicability' is evident in the different countries participating in our research project. This is expressed in the '3<sup>rd</sup> task' in Finland (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 3), or the 'third priority' in Sweden (Holm and Liinason 2005: 3), formulated in the 1990s, which stressed the need for the university to have an impact on the economy and society. Holm and Liinason name as

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<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Sabine Hark talks of 'strange alliances of discourses' with regard to the use of 'interdisciplinarity'. These 'alliances of discourses' can be observed between university reformers oriented towards the market and management, and critical science and Women's and Gender Studies. (Hark: 2004, 356)

<sup>3</sup> (Jakab et al 2005: 3) A common feature of the French and Russian university systems is the stricter division between institutions of higher education and research institutes and the university as a highly centralised and state defined academic institution. (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 6).

one of the key issues of the Swedish educational reform of 1993 the ‘accentuation of applicability’ (2005: 4). The goal of the reform was ‘to increase competitiveness and economic growth’ (Holm and Liinason 2005: 4). The Finnish authors Keskinen and Silius refer to a so-called ‘academic capitalism’, when describing the recent changes of university research which introduce market-based interests ‘through applied research and closer contacts with trade and industry’ (2005: 39). At the World Science Forum organized 2003 in Budapest, the increase of ‘applied research’ as opposed to ‘basic research’ was seen as a characteristic of science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Jakab et al 2005: 46).

The Spanish National Research and Development Plan of November 2003 included (in contrast to the preceding national plan) the humanities and underlined their importance. Still, it defined priority themes with a ‘weight [...] towards the applied and profit-rendering side of the social sciences and humanities’ (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 22). Additionally, the Spanish authors also point to the restructuring of degrees according to the ‘new ‘European’ orientation’, which is based on ‘employability’ (ibid: 35), thus applicability.

Related to the question of the role of academic research in present-day society, some authors speak about a shift from ‘academic’ to ‘post-academic’ scholarship (Bammé 2004) or ‘mode 2’ (cf. Nowotny, Gibbons and Scott 2001), where knowledge production inside the university must increasingly deal with knowledge production outside the university. Bammé (2004) analyses this as a progression of academic research (especially in the sciences) from relative autonomy to an application-orientated status founded in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> He explains the application-oriented development since the 1970s in terms of the growing ‘scientization’ (*Verwissenschaftlichung*)<sup>5</sup> of society (2004: 16-17). Thus ‘society’ is increasingly interested in ‘exerting control over science’ (ibid). According to Bammé, the university as an institution has become dated and knowledge production is increasingly located in areas outside the university. It is clear that this form of applied research, which no longer subscribes to the ideal image of autonomous research established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is most feasible in economically exploitable disciplines. Without talking about the consequences this has for basic research in the natural sciences, one might consider this trend as a threat towards the humanities and parts of the social sciences or at least as a tendency to force them towards a specific (re)orientation.

Applicability or employability seems to be a main focus which dominates the view of the structuring of our future landscape of knowledge production. But what does it actually mean in the different European countries? And what are the reactions to it within the respective university traditions?

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<sup>4</sup>He bases his thesis on the scientific-historical interpretations of Gernot Böhme; Wolfgang van den Daele and Wolfgang Krohn (1973) and Peter Weingart (1976).

<sup>5</sup> If not marked differently all following translations are made by Rebecca Krebs.

## 1.1 Education: liberal studies or vocational training?

In the context of debates about higher education, ‘application’ often means professionalization, especially in the sphere of influence of the Bologna process, which will have to be concluded in 2010. This means the internationalisation of a specific education concept, even if the notion of ‘professionalization’ can be interpreted in different ways:

Jean –Luc de Meulemeester, an economist at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, sees the educational reform as a ‘cultural revolution’. He perceives a *consensual* evolution in Europe toward a utilitarian (‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number’) and reductive understanding of education, under the validation of flexibility and individual responsibility. [...] To Meulemeester, such a utilitarian approach to higher education has come to replace the idea of the ‘university as a site of critical distancing, where young people prepare themselves for their professional life by learning critical research’ (Belli (2004).

This quotation refers to two different levels of the complex we describe as refocusing of higher education towards the ‘utility criterion’. We suggest that one should differentiate between

- a) a market-led organisation of education (as is common in Great Britain), the ‘market’ being the ‘student-market’ and partly the labour market,
- b) a ‘market-led definition of higher education contents, which are oriented towards the needs of an imagined ‘employment market’. These differences are to be made in the actual situation, where till now only in the British system the survival or existence of disciplines and degrees depends to a large extent on the number of students. Nevertheless in other countries too there is a tendency to define basic funding in terms of average student intake, for example in Norway (Widerberg et al 2005: 32) and in Germany.

Belli refers to two different ideas about the purpose of education, which also affect the way in which education is being financed, as ‘a benefit to society at large’ and therefore ‘an essential public service’ or ‘whether its profit is only demonstrable at the individual level’ and ‘thus considered a private responsibility’ (Belli 2005: 4). The political changes towards a growing privatisation of public services foreshadows a development towards the second concept. If we look at our respective European examples, we note that this second concept has not really taken root, except in the British university system. Therefore we shall consider only Britain as an explicit example of the second concept, described by Belli (type a). The more common change we describe, which can be noted in all other European countries, is a change of content towards a so-called ‘professionalization’ of students (type b).

The way in which this trend is discussed in the different countries varies. These variations can be explained by the specific country’s academic history, but also the current political position in the European Union. Here one can distinguish roughly between the cases of the Scandinavian countries, which are similar to each other; Hungary as a post-socialist new member of the European Union; and Spain, France and Germany that have all had a less vocationally-oriented university system. Again we notice that in the debates on the concept of higher education, there are references made to two imagined ‘poles’, that is ‘liberal studies’ versus ‘vocational training’ (Agéllii 2003: 17), ‘school based knowledge’ versus ‘street based

knowledge’ (Jakab et al 2005: 46) or a ‘classical humanist notion’ versus ‘the pragmatic engineering vision [which] values applied knowledge’ (ibid: 46).

Agéllii distinguishes between ‘vocational training’ and ‘liberal studies’ (2003: 16), connected to the Swedish terms *Utbildning* and *Bildning*. The first can be defined as ‘a learning process aimed at a clearly-defined actual or practical goal’ (Liedmann, Sven Eric 1993: 90 quoted in Agéllii 2003: 17) and the second as ‘a learning process which is less narrowly ‘useful’ and where the subject’s own learning and interests play a substantial part in discerning what is to be learned’ (ibid.). This differentiation corresponds to the German notion of *Ausbildung* versus *Bildung*. The Hungarian authors Jakab et al (2005: 46) provide similar descriptions to the Swedish author Agéllii when they write: ‘The implicit aim of education in the first mode is the cultivation of personality, while in the second mode the aim is achieving goals. This concept parallels the traditional notion of the aim of education and science and the new objectives now being defined in terms of social needs and labour market demands’.

### 1.1.1 Market led education – UK, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Hungary

As a specific British phenomenon, one can note that the Bologna process has ‘not had the impact observed elsewhere of raising debates about the nature and substance of disciplines’ (Griffin et al 2005: 62). That can be explained by the fact that the Bologna process has not been perceived as creating the need for a substantial change of the British degree system. The kind of controversy occurring elsewhere about Bologna is not observable in Britain. As already stated, the content of education is to a large extent influenced by the demands of the student market and dependent on initiatives of academic personnel, and is thus a ‘bottom-up approach’:

Where disciplines face recruitment problems and do not get the highest research rating they effectively become financially untenable for contemporary UK universities which regard education provision as a matter of the market rather than of non-economic concerns such as ‘knowledge for knowledge’s sake’, a Humboldtian ideal of education, or other similar notions underlying what kinds of education one might or might not seek to preserve (Griffin et al 2005: 25).

Differing from the concept followed by most of the countries involved in the Bologna Process, the Bachelor degree, especially in the humanities but also in many social sciences, is not conceived as a concrete indicator of ‘professionalization’, aiming at specific professional knowledge. The Masters degree, however, is often aimed towards a professionalization or specialisation.

Unlike those from other countries (such as Germany or Spain), UK graduates with a B.A. are meant to professionalize *on* the job. This openness of the employment market has to be considered as a necessary pre-condition for such an education system. However, in recent years more emphasis has been laid on the incorporation of so-called ‘transferable skills’ (skills that are supposed to be useful for employment purposes) into undergraduate curricula, and this trend looks set to increase.

In the Scandinavian countries the discussion of ‘vocational’ versus ‘liberal’ studies no longer seems to be a very important issue.<sup>7</sup> This can be explained by the renunciation of the ‘Humboldtian model’ and the relatively early restructuring of the education system towards ‘Bologna’. As is the case for Norway and Finland too, Sweden first oriented its higher education system to the Humboldtian university model. This was given up in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Swedish author Agéllii (2003) writes: ‘During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Humboldtian mission of Swedish higher education was rapidly replaced by orientation towards vocational training’ (Agéllii 2003: 16). This development was completed after World War II and then again in the 1960s (Widerberg et al 2005: 12; Holm and Liinason 2005: 16).

Referring to Svante Nordin (1985) Agéllii explains why ‘liberal studies’ (*bildning*) ‘have become a taboo subject in the Swedish debate on education’ with two dominating ‘ideologies’:

One is the ‘social justice ideology’, which depicts universities as upper-class schools and bastions of class-dominated bourgeois values and ideals, and the other is ‘the ideology of social functionalism and social technocracy’, which when applied to education gives rise to quantitatively planned vocationally-oriented programmes and state-regulated ‘utilitarian’ research (Agéllii 2003: 18).

Norway changed its higher education system towards a comparable international standard early relative to other European countries. This was caused by the general feeling that Norwegian students were too old in comparison (for example) to British students. Apart from the intense restructuring of degrees on an interdisciplinary level, the other change was the particular goal of higher education ‘to educate students to fit into [the] labour market’ (Widerberg et al 2005: 55). The Norwegian authors describe it as a ‘popularization of the universities’ (id.).

Hungary as a post-socialist country has to be considered as a different case. As a country in transition, its middle European, formerly Communist and strictly state-defined structure now seems especially directed towards economic criteria. As a small country, similar to the Scandinavian countries, it has been ‘navigating’ between different university models. In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Hungarian university system has been oriented towards three ‘models’: first, the German university model at the beginning of the twentieth century; secondly, to reflect the principles of ‘the Russian (and French) model’ (Jakab et al 2005: 3) after the Second World War; and thirdly towards some kind of (implied) ‘Anglo-Saxon–European’ model. Jakab et al assert that ‘The debate on knowledge is closely linked to the process of institutional reform’ (2005: 44), thus especially to the ‘Bologna Process’. The Hungarian higher education reforms carried out since the political changes from a communist to a democratic and capitalistic system have two goals: ‘to provide employers with appropriately trained professionals as well as to ensure that students can make use of the possibilities of mobility between institutions and to other countries’ (Jakab et al 2005: 5). The process of accreditation of higher education programs in Hungary is therefore ‘to satisfy market demands’ (ibid: 7). Its achievement is assessed by the Hungarian Higher Education and Research Committee

<sup>7</sup> None of the Scandinavian reports mention similar debates.

<sup>9</sup> Concerning expressed criticism in Hungary Jakab et al write ‘Representatives of higher education worry about institutional autonomy, and how they will retain it if market demands influence professional, educational and organizational decision-making.’ (2005: 56)

(HERC). The Bologna process, too, points in the same direction, as it was conceived to exert ‘pressure to determine the skills and competencies and the objectives of university training in terms of employment’ (ibid: 11) This may have consequences for the concept of the ‘role of the humanities’, as the authors of the National Report on Hungary (2005) claim. This change seems to be only to some extent an object of critical debate in Hungary<sup>9</sup>, while similar developments have been received more controversially in countries like Spain, Germany or France.

### 1.1.2 Educational autonomy and the market – Germany, France and Spain

The university systems of Spain, France and Germany are similar insofar as they all have been state-defined or at least state-financed and less market led than education in the Scandinavian countries, the UK and Hungary. In the case of Germany, the ideal of research and teaching has been connected to the concept of autonomy from economic and social influences, thus the notion of the Humboldtian ‘*Lehr- und Lernfreiheit*’ (freedom of teaching and learning). Given this background, public debate and resistance is more evident in these three countries.

The current change of curricular goals towards ‘more employability’ in the context of the Bologna process is considered by the Spanish authors Carrera Suárez et al as a threat to the humanities, ‘which have been obvious targets for suppression and reduction’ (2005: 35). However, the different European countries have different ideas of when a degree can be considered a qualification for the labour market. The Spanish, having had a longer period of study leading to the first degree in higher education, are not fully ready to accept the 3-year B.A. This can be seen in the statement of the CRUE (Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities) in 2004 concerning the length of undergraduate studies in the restructuring process: ‘We regard it as out of the question, that a 3-year degree could be considered from now on in Spain as a professionalizing degree par excellence, a substitute for the *licenciado* or *ingeniero* degree. It is simply not possible’ (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 40). The move towards 3-year Bachelor degrees and towards employability is viewed in the Spanish public debate as a threat to the humanities and at the same time is not easily accepted as a way of ‘professionalizing’ higher education.

In France, even before Bologna, there were changes in curricula towards more ‘application’ through the ‘creation of more vocational training degrees (*Licences professionnelles*) within universities’ (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 14). Interdisciplinarity has been seen mainly in the context of searching for possibilities to adapt university education to the ‘current demands of the employer market’ and thus above all connected to the newly created degrees. (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 49). This new tendency has been reinforced by the Bologna process which ‘has tended to increase the professionally and technologically oriented component of the degree courses within the institutions of higher education’ (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 48). The ‘widespread protest by students and teachers’ mentioned by the authors can be interpreted as an indicator of the traditionally sceptical attitude in French academic culture towards the ‘the utilitarian orientation of the reforms’ (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 48).

In Germany an effect of the Bologna process has been the introduction of accreditation for the new Bachelor and Masters degrees. This is at different stages of development in the different *Länder* (German states). ‘Professionalization’ in

Germany is also becoming increasingly important in the restructuring of education. In the accreditation process professionals are also taking part.<sup>10</sup> Among others, a ‘field of professionalization’ (*Professionalisierungsbereich*) is being integrated in the new courses of study. The exact qualification required to work in a professional field remains an object of debate. While one position pleads for a general academic education which enables students to adapt to different and quickly changing market situations as useful higher education, another claims that the humanities should teach more specialised and pragmatic professional skills. While some argue that the humanities do not fulfil the requirements of a ‘solid’ education, that is, teaching ‘basic skills’ (related to key qualifications), others maintain that they have succeeded in doing this (Spiewak 2004: 45-46; Greiner 2004: 46).

What has, more than any other factor, probably maintained the primary orientation of German education towards more ‘theoretical’ knowledge, is the idea of the unity of teaching and research. According to Kaube, one main problem for the humanities is the question of the relationship between ‘imparting knowledge qualifying for a job, and the humanities as a field of research’ (2003: 22).<sup>11</sup> A change in the educational system oriented increasingly towards vocational training could therefore endanger the Humboldtian concept of education. On the other hand, this again depends on how you define ‘professionalization’ and whether you separate it from a reflective, scientific approach or not.

Langewiesche defends the idea of ‘*forschendes Lehren und Lernen*’ (research-based learning and teaching), a concept which he thinks can be achieved, especially in the humanities (2003: 40). That is probably why he pleads for an ‘academic training’ at universities, as opposed to the German polytechnics (*Fachhochschulen*), which should offer more vocational training (Langewiesche 2003: 35). This idea of the university is opposed, as Langewiesche writes, to the ‘entrepreneurial university’. It has been criticised that the unity of research and teaching, the Humboldtian ideal, has been extinguished in the mass university. In contrast, Langewiesche thinks that the actual form of universities, above all in the humanities, is even closer today to this idea than it was in the past. The primary goal of university teaching was to develop autonomous thinking, as formulated by Wilhelm von Humboldt in his memorandum from 1809-1810, published not before 1903 (Langewiesche 2003: 39). What distinguishes universities from research centres and what should be considered as their strength according to Langewiesche is the unity of teaching and research. Although pleading for a university based on a traditional idea, Langewiesche (2003) still argues for a changing university, where the disciplines should be flexible and also creates units with other disciplines that were once distinct.

### **1.1.3 The integration of the humanities in vocational training as a modernisation of the ‘Humboldtian’ heritage?**

An interesting trend we came across was evident in various initiatives to include parts of the humanities in vocationally-oriented higher education institutions (for example

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. the SAK (*Ständige Akkreditierungskommission: Permanent Accreditation Commission*) of the ZEvA (*Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover: Central Agency for Accreditation and Evaluation Hannover*) is composed out of representatives of the academic community and of the professions (Krebs et al 2005: 8).

<sup>11</sup> ‘*Vermittlung des berufsqualifizierenden Wissens und der Geisteswissenschaft als Forschung*’.

in the business sector), but also in applied social sciences. Two examples of this are the Jönköping International Business School and the Carlos III University in Madrid. Earlier on (1.1), we quoted Agélii who differentiated between ‘vocational training’ and ‘liberal studies’ and explained why ‘liberal studies’ has been less successful in the last few decades. These points were discussed in Sweden as part of an evaluation of an initiative by the Jönköping International Business School. The idea was to integrate humanities courses into commercial law degrees. Called a ‘core curriculum’ the humanities courses were meant to be connected to the idea of ‘liberal studies’. Agélii sees a ‘revived interest [...] in the concept of liberal studies’ in Sweden, connected to the European policy of promoting life-long learning and democratic citizenship (Agélii 2003: 18). ‘Liberal education’ is seen as a possibility for stronger personal development. The changing policy the author points to is related to the concept of liberal education, as it has been practised in the college programmes in the United States (ibid.: 19).

A similar initiative can be noted in Spain at the Carlos III University in Madrid. Suggestions for the integration of humanities into different degrees were articulated in the Spanish ‘Bricall Report’ (see 1.2.2 in this report). Their implementation can be interpreted as either a revaluation of the humanities or ‘as an attempt to suppress the varied, widespread, more specific humanistic degrees’ (ibid: 16), as it has been perceived for example in the case of the Carlos III University in Madrid. Founded in 1989 with a ‘clear professional orientation’ (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 17), its policy has been to include humanities credits in every course. Still, only one very general ‘Humanities degree’ can be studied, but many more (applied) degrees in the social sciences are offered.<sup>12</sup> Here a general tendency can already be seen, which affects both the relationship between humanities and social sciences and the internal disciplinary orientation in the two fields, shaped by the current policy towards applied research and teaching. What is interesting, is that two different voices in the debate about higher education can be distinguished: on the one hand, the claim that students are being prepared for the labour market by providing them with specialised and ‘practical knowledge’, but on the other hand the need to provide transferable skills, which are required in a fast-changing societies. Maybe the trend towards including parts of the humanities in vocational courses is a reaction to these claims. It remains to be seen how far the humanities will be reduced in their variety and which parts of the humanities will be included in such educational programmes.

## **1.2 Research: knowledge for knowledge’s sake or for profit?**

Similar to the process of European higher education, research is increasingly directed towards ‘application’. This can be explained by the fact that in countries where university research was predominantly financed by the state, third party funding has

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<sup>12</sup> Examples are the various postgraduate courses offered in the form of Masters, Specialisation and Expert Courses such as ‘Contemporary European Political Culture’, ‘Foreign Trade’, ‘Science and Technology Analysis and Management’, ‘European Union Law’, ‘Industrial Economics’, ‘Territorial and Urban Policy Studies’ etc. (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 17, Table 9).

become more important as strapped governments have reduced funds. Additionally, an increasing amount of research is done in the business sector, part of a worldwide shift from university-based research to business-sector based research (cf. *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* 2004: 489).

These changes are having an impact not only on the natural sciences, but also on the humanities and social sciences. One consequence is an orientation of the disciplines towards ‘problem-centred’ approaches. This might bring the humanities and social sciences closer together, as a current understanding of interdisciplinarity is related to ‘problem-centred research’. It might also cause a fragmentation both inside the social sciences (as we can show with the example of Norway later on) and between the humanities and the social sciences. Finally the increasing focus of research on ‘application’ is discussed in France, Spain and Germany as a threat both to the humanities (and to some extent the social sciences) and to academic autonomy in general.

These debates create an opposition between ‘basic research versus applied research’ (Widerberg et al 2005: 46), ‘benefit research’ versus ‘curiosity research’ (Holm and Liinason 2005: 38), ‘social usefulness versus social intellectualism’ (Widerberg et al 2005: 6). In the last case they relate to two different university models (Widerberg et al 2005: 6), to which some of the countries refer as the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ versus the ‘Humboldtian’ model (see the introduction in this report).

### **1.2.1 The tradition of the ‘problem-centred approach’ and the recent trend towards ‘academic capitalism’ in the Scandinavian countries**

As in the case of education policy, there are similarities between the research policies of the Scandinavian countries Finland, Norway and Sweden. A stronger economic orientation of research can be noted in the whole Scandinavian region, compared to the rest of Europe. The recent official papers refer to the natural and technical sciences in the context of national research and development. This trend is viewed as a threat to basic research and as a development which might result in a further fragmentation of the social sciences. Still, the academic orientation towards problem-centred research occurred in the Nordic countries earlier than in other European countries as for example in the case of Norway.

This can be explained by factors other than the recent prevailing development towards economisation or ‘commercialisation’. Widerberg et al describe the relatively young tradition of the social sciences and humanities in Norway (compared for example to France and Germany) as a ‘grassroots-oriented development’ (2005: 7), which has produced a ‘problem-oriented empiricism (in contrast to positivistic empiricism)’ (ibid.). ‘Characteristics of the Norwegian situation’ like the ‘lack of a long disciplinary history, lack of a feudal hierarchy, close connections between politics and science, few people with higher education, scarce financial resources etc.’ (ibid.: 6) may be reasons for this specific academic approach. Since World War II, the structure of Norwegian research has been oriented towards the Anglo-American model. This means that several institutes for applied research have been established outside the universities. While universities primarily occupy themselves with basic research, research institutes are meant to deliver research that is immediately useful to society or commerce (Widerberg et al 2005: 6).

Even if the orientation towards applied research seems to be more established in both Scandinavian academic structures and the academic attitude, recent developments towards applied research are tightly connected to economic interests. The Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish National Reports (2005) highlight slightly different issues critics raise in this context.

The current debates in Norway, outlined by Widerberg et al, are primarily based on the 'discipline-notes' (*fagnotater*), i.e. survey reports on the current situation of the disciplines, written by members of the disciplines in 2000 for the Research Council of Norway. One of the main points stressed by these reports is the 'battle' between basic and applied research. Most of the money (three quarters of the funds of the Research Council for Sociology) goes to applied research in the institutes. This double division both structurally and in the funding furthers the 'fragmentation [...] between the theoretical and metatheoretical stance on the one hand, and the more empirical and descriptive stance on the other' (Widerberg et al 2005: 46). This division, and especially that basic research has lost ground in comparison to applied research, is seen as a major problem for sociology and political sciences by the 'discipline-notes'.

Sweden experienced educational reform in 1993, aimed at decreasing administration and increasing 'competitiveness and economic growth' by 'decentralisation, deregulation and accentuation of applicability' (Holm and Liinason 2005: 4). Accompanying the discussion of interdisciplinarity, there has been a 'recent and heated debate on research policy, knowledge in regard to basic, applied and interdisciplinary research [...] expressed in the phrase "money or knowledge" (ibid.: 40). Headlines in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* ran 'Let the needs of the economy rule research!' (11 April 2004) and 'The economy will get new research money' (Thomas Östros, 15 June 2004).<sup>13</sup> In Sweden, interdisciplinarity is connected (as is the case in most of the recent debates in different European countries) to applied research, called 'benefit research' by the Swedish government (Holm and Liinason 2005: 41).<sup>14</sup> 'Benefit research' is in this case connected with natural science and technology while 'curiosity research' is seen as the opposite, connected to subject fields such as the humanities and the social sciences. The humanities and the social sciences thus seem to be excluded when it comes to the distribution of research funding for interdisciplinary research in these fields: 'when it comes to the distribution of means, the research councils focus on excellent basic disciplinary research and/or on so-called benefit research, which aims at quick trouble-solving, rather than research that deals with questions of fundamental understanding not problematized within traditional disciplines' (Holm and Liinason 2005: 38).

An exclusion of the social sciences and the humanities can also be detected in the official Finnish papers on research and development. These fields have not received attention in the current debates around the issues of international competition concerning structure and funding policies. Instead 'the recent discussion on higher education has [...] mainly focused on the Natural Sciences, Medicine and Technology' (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 39). Two important governmental reports, the 'Rantanen Report' (2004) and the report of the 'Globalisation Group' (2004) focused on the possibilities of enabling Finnish research to be successful in global competition. The

<sup>13</sup> Personal communication by Ulla Holm 23 March 2005. See Holm and Liinason 2005: 37.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Education (2000) *Forskning och förnyelse* 2000. Prop. 2000/2001: 3, Stockholm: 101.

'Rantanen Report' favoured the division of Finnish universities into 'top universities' able to compete on an international level and smaller regional university (networks) focused on local issues and needs. This has been controversial. The report of the 'Globalisation Group' focused even more on economical issues and asked for additional funding for fields of research which 'enable economic growth and prosperity' (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 38). The 'new ways of organising research', referred to as 'academic capitalism' (ibid. 39) have been addressed by a Finnish research project (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 39). It 'came to the conclusion that many of the dangerous developments described in academic texts on academic capitalism had not occurred, but the changes had brought about several new pressures and discrepancies' (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 39). Discipline-specific values and working preferences continued even under changing circumstances. However, the report mentioned that it was more difficult to continue 'basic research' or independent working under such conditions.

### 1.2.2 'Autonomy' or 'ivory tower' – the case of France, Spain and Germany

Similar to the differences we have stated for the European debates on teaching in higher education, France, Spain and Germany can be distinguished from the Scandinavian countries, the UK and Hungary. The extent to which cutbacks have taken place in these countries differs. This might explain why a 'crisis in the humanities' is discussed in Spain and Germany, but not in France, where cost-cutting-measures have been less drastic than in the other two countries. The three countries resemble each other in their academic culture, insofar as they understand research basically as 'autonomous' from extra-academic influences. This can be criticised as an ignorant attitude towards the needs of society, but also seen positively as resisting a complete invasion of short-sighted market strategies.

The awareness of a 'crisis' in both Germany and Spain can be explained by specific national disciplinary traditions but also a specific academic culture connected to these traditions. But in the question of 'applied versus pure or basic research' the case of France seems to be a quite specific. The authors Le Feuvre and Metso (2005) state that French academics at universities are not concerned with higher education policy and 'the need for interdisciplinary approaches able to provide practical solutions to identified "social problems"' (ibid.: 46), for two reasons: a specific research structure in France, that is the 'existence of the *grandes écoles*' and a particular 'professional culture of French academics' (ibid.: 46). Not the universities but the '*grandes écoles*' are responsible for state advice and expertise (even if neither seems to be very favourable to applied research, according to Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 47). The 'particular professional culture of French academics' has 'traditionally [...] rejected the involvement of outsiders in their area of expertise' (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 47). This is the opposite of the academic culture described by the Norwegians. French academics are, according to Le Feuvre and Metso, not willing (and until now have not been forced by external circumstances either) to 'sacrifice their autonomy to meet the requirements of private firms and their employees' (ibid. 47). The 'general fear that political influence or market forces might "corrupt" scientific research endeavour' is criticised by the authors as 'a significant barrier to the development of more cooperation between the universities and civil society' (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 47). Le Feuvre and Metso note a 'hierarchical division between applied research and "pure" research' (2005: 47). This again points to two 'poles' of

knowledge production. According to Le Feuvre and Metso 'French universities are probably less market-oriented than universities in other EU member states (such as Great Britain, for example)' (ibid. 48). Unlike Germany and Spain, it seems that the pressure of the market has not yet been felt as much in France.

Nonetheless, some moves towards a more applied research in the humanities, in the sense of an orientation towards natural sciences, are described in a newspaper article on the policy of the *CNRS*. The contemporary policy of the *CNRS* (National Scientific Research Centre),<sup>15</sup> the most important national research centre in the public sector outside universities, can be seen as increasingly oriented towards 'scientization'. Accordingly a French website article (published previously in the newspaper *Libération*)<sup>16</sup> talks of '*La crise des science humaines et sociales au CNRS*' (The crisis of the humanities and social sciences in the *CNRS*). Zarka (2004) suggests that the actual policy of the *SHS* (Sector of the humanities and social sciences of the *CNRS*) is dominated by a 'scientist ideology' (*idéologie scientiste*) which endangers disciplines such as History, Geography and parts of Philosophy and at the same time privileges the parts of the humanities and social sciences, which are most closely related to the 'hard sciences' (such as the Cognitive Sciences or Applied Informatics in Linguistics). He calls it a '*déshumanisation*' ('dehumanization') of the humanities to question the 'historical, critical and reflective disciplines' (*disciplines historiques*). In his opinion, the following should be done in relation to the current policy concerning the humanities and social sciences:

1. To question the transfer from criteria in areas like research and evaluation from the 'hard sciences' to the social sciences and humanities<sup>17</sup>
2. To re-establish the 'historical, critical and reflective character of the humanities and social sciences'<sup>18</sup>
3. To bear in mind the book as most important medium of publication in the humanities and social sciences, a medium which seems to be difficult to assess with the actual evaluation methods (Zarka 2004: 1-2).

His article illustrates how the financial and research policy described above provokes reflections on the 'nature' of the humanities or statements on their legitimisation.

Similar reactions are even more pronounced in the other two cases, Spain and Germany. The historian Mériam Belli (2004) asks if one could speak of a European (and not only a German) 'crisis' of the humanities related, among other things, to cost-cutting measures. She refers to the case of the *CNRS* as similar to the huge cost-cutting measures at the University of Hamburg. The French university reforms which would have caused similar changes were put on hold in 2003 through strikes and demonstrations (Belli 2004: 2). On the whole, in contrast to Germany (and Spain), 'not all French humanities scholars perceive a clear and present danger to the humanities' (ibid. 2004: 2). The debates on the 'crisis of the humanities', which seem

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<sup>15</sup>The *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* is the largest in the French public research sector outside a university. It 'accounts for about two-thirds of research staff in public sector establishments outside universities' (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 22).

<sup>16</sup>Published on 27 July 2004 under the title '*Dérive scientiste au CNRS*'.

<sup>17</sup>*Il importe en premier lieu de remettre en question le modèle scientiste, c'est-à-dire l'idée que sur le plan de la recherche, mais aussi du fonctionnement des laboratoires et des modes d'évaluation, les sciences humaines et sociales doivent se conformer à des critères valables pour les sciences dures*' (Zarka 2004, 1) Similar critiques are made in Germany, cf. Böckenförde 2003, 48-50.

<sup>18</sup>*Il convient de rétablir le caractère historique, critique et réflexif des sciences humaines et sociales ...*' (Zarka 2004 : 2)

to be most prevalent in Germany, respond amongst other things to a changed understanding of knowledge production. German debates on the humanities seem to be obsessed with discussing their role and function in society. The image of the humanities under construction is connected to the recurring theme of the 'crisis of the humanities'. Different authors (Nyiri 1996, Kaube 2003, Spiewak 2004) refer to the so-called 'crisis' of the humanities as a long-lasting and therefore almost paradox phenomenon. Spiewak (2004) claims 'that nothing seems to be more stable in the humanities than the crisis'.<sup>19</sup>

In Spain a supposed 'crisis' of the humanities in terms of social esteem and in terms of the demand by students is apparently being discussed primarily in the context of European higher education reform (which threatened the existence of several degrees in the humanities, see above) and less in terms of research (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 35; see 1.1 in this report). The authors point out that the 'social and academic prestige lies with technology and science' (id.: 35). The 'Bricall Report'<sup>20</sup> (2000), an evaluation of the university reforms of 1983, reflects on the importance of the humanities. It suggests incorporating contents from the humanities in all kinds of subjects to eliminate the traditional barriers between the 'so-called humanistic and scientific disciplines' (36). Additionally it proposes the creation of specialised centres which would study the relationship between the humanities and the 'positive sciences' (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 36). Research in the humanities is defined as 'basic research' in the report and therefore as useful:

By this means, a new vision of the relationship between basic research and innovation processes is established and, in consequence, a new role for the State funding and protection of basic research. Basic research can rarely be associated with immediate economic results. However, it shall be considered an extraordinarily important starting point for other kinds of projects (Bricall, Josep M. (2000) 234-5<sup>21</sup>, quoted in Carrera Suárez 2005: 36).

Increasing governmental cutbacks are changing the German university system as well. This forces research even in the social sciences and humanities (traditionally involved less in third-party-funded research) to orient themselves towards applied research in order to obtain funds, and could have an impact on the borders between the humanities and social sciences.

The question of 'application' and 'utility' is a controversial issue in Germany.<sup>22</sup> Since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, two factors have again heated the German discussions on the legitimisation of the humanities. They can be related to an international context, which Donaldson, Professor of English at the University of Cambridge describes as follows: 'The crisis of the humanities, as I'll argue, is not primarily an intellectual crisis, but one of morale and funding'

<sup>19</sup> 'Nichts ist für die Geisteswissenschaften so beständig wie die Krise.' (Spiewak 2004, 45)

<sup>20</sup> The Report was ordered by the CRUE (Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities) in December 1998. It was then produced by a group of experts. 'The main objective of the Report was to reflect on the various problems and issues concerning the Spanish universities' (personal communication by Laura Vinuela Suarez, 7 April 2005).

<sup>21</sup> On line at <<http://www.crue.org/informeuniv2000.htm>> 17 Oct. 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Quantitative criteria such as the amount of publications and third-party funding obtained have been transferred from the natural and technical sciences to the humanities (Böckenförde 2003). They have become evaluation criteria which now affect the salary of a professor.

<sup>23</sup>(Donaldson 1996: 43). Discussions about the ‘crisis’ of the humanities and social sciences in Germany are responding to the growing financial pressure i.e. cost-cutting measures, but also to a more general debate on the legitimisation of knowledge production at universities. The university system as a whole is questioned more than it has been questioned in the past (Spiewak 2004).<sup>24</sup>

Belli (2005) mentions both factors in her article on the contemporary role of history in European academe. She refers to the recent cost-cutting measures in the Humanities Department in Hamburg, where the senator for research and health, Jörg Dräger, followed recommendations of a reform commission. This meant a reduction of student numbers and ‘the reduction by half of the faculty in humanities and language departments’. Critics fear, that this could serve as an example of ‘a nationwide trend toward market- and production-oriented educational politics, in which there is little room for the humanities’ (Spiewak 2004).<sup>25</sup>

According to Wolfgang Frühwald (*Denkschrift*: 1991, 85), the recurrent crisis of legitimisation of the humanities (referring to the debate in the early 1990s in Germany) is a historical phenomenon, which has appeared earlier on in ‘phases of strengthened importance of rational objectives [. . .] in which the practical orientation of the sciences and their usefulness for political, social and economic needs is called for’. These phases could be observed during the founding period of Berlin University, the ‘period of realism’ at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and finally during the debates at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s (Frühwald 1991: 85f.). On the other hand Kaube (2003) notes that the humanities do not seem to be in a ‘crisis’ considering the student numbers which have been growing considerably. He also points to the research funding (above all from the DFG) which according to him has not completely been exploited by research projects (ibid. 21). The resentments of academics in the humanities towards third party funding have been criticised (cf. Spiewak 2004: 46). Still, one has to consider that it takes personnel resources to write funding applications, which fields such as the natural sciences as a ‘traditional’ area of third-party funding have more of. One problem is that ‘funding follows funding’.

Two positions referred to frequently in the debate about the possible function of the humanities in contemporary society are the ones expressed by Odo Marquard (1986) and by the memorandum ‘*Geisteswissenschaften heute: eine Denkschrift*’ (The Humanities Today: A Programmatic Essay 1991). Marquard defines the modern function of the humanities as ‘compensation’, compensating for the ‘problems of modern times’, problems due to the fast tempo of technological and scientific developments. This view connects the humanities to ‘tradition’. It has been criticised by the memorandum ‘*Geisteswissenschaften heute*’ (1991), for example, because

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<sup>23</sup> On the whole, Donaldson explains more the problem of funding than what he calls the ‘moral crisis’. Donaldson points out the less privileged situation of the humanities concerning funding relative to the natural and (less) the social sciences (he refers to Australia and the UK).

<sup>24</sup> ‘Heute muss Wissenschaft etwas nützen und dafür den Beweis erbringen. Das war früher anders. Da stellen Staat und Gesellschaft ihren Forschern Stellen und Räume zur Verfügung, ohne dafür Rechenschaft zu verlangen. Man vertraute auf die inneren Spielregeln des akademischen Systems und meinte, dass Wissenschaft dann den größten Gewinn für die Allgemeinheit bringt, wenn man sie mit sich allein lässt. Dieser ‚Gesellschaftsvertrag für Wissenschaft‘ steht heute zur Disposition, sagt der Bielfelder Soziologe Peter Weingart.’

<sup>25</sup> Still, the humanities and social sciences together receive 17,6 % of the whole state budget on research (and teaching, which can not be separated), as the German Federal Report on Research, the *Bundesbericht Forschung 2004* states, 197.

according to the authors it reinforces the divisive myth of the ‘two cultures’ – humanities and social sciences versus natural sciences. In the memorandum Jürgen Mittelstraß (1991) opposes the idea of ‘compensation’ by referring to the role of the contemporary humanities as a disciplinary field which can produce ‘orientation’, meaning that the task of the humanities is not only to archive and to remember and therefore to focus on the past, but also to raise and reflect upon contemporary questions and to find possible visions for the future of society.

### **1.2.3 The humanities and social sciences in the context of the European research policy -First Conclusions**

In sum we think that European national research policies (including the humanities and social sciences) are increasingly directed towards the criterion of application. This often goes together with indirect or direct cutbacks. This change corresponds to the research policy of the European Union. Ideas which do not meet the demands of utility are not successful in getting funding. An example of this is France, where research objectives at universities have been different until now. Referring to the specific French academic culture, Le Feuvre and Metso write: ‘It also explains the difficulty French researchers have experienced with the “applied” research objectives of the European Research and Development programs’ (2005: 47). In all of the European examples we looked at, there has been some criticism of this development. Exceptions to this are the United Kingdom (and perhaps to some extent Hungary). Even though the Scandinavian countries have oriented themselves towards more ‘problem-centred’ research in the last few decades, the recent developments involving more and more applicability as a criterion are discussed critically.

The different reactions to a relatively similar phenomenon in Scandinavia on the one hand and Germany and Spain on the other hand can be explained by the differing academic traditions, that is the specific understanding of the university, the different disciplinary traditions and the academic culture. How these differ becomes apparent in a comparison of Norway and France. In some countries academic traditions are questioned by recent developments more than in others. This explains why we can note a ‘crisis of the humanities’ in Germany and Spain (and less pronouncedly) in France, but not in the other countries.

What is perceived as problematic in the move towards the utility criterion? Which research is considered useful is a matter of perspective. What has changed in the last few decades is who defines which knowledge as useful. In general we can state that definitions of ‘usefulness’ are connected to interests and differing criteria. The increase of the importance of scholarship in society has led to a growing interest of different parties to define which knowledge should be produced for what purposes. This process has been described by Bammé as a ‘scientization’,<sup>26</sup> of society (2004: 17).

The debate on usefulness is a process of negotiation which is described by Nowotny et al as ‘mode 2 knowledge production’. In *The New Production of Knowledge* (Gibbons et. al. 1994) and *Re-Thinking Science* (Nowotny et. al. 2001) they address

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<sup>26</sup> In the original ‘*Verwissenschaftlichung*’.

the question of a changed relationship between academic knowledge production and society. Their thesis is that more actors are participating in the process of knowledge production or the negotiation of purposes and contents than in previous decades. Apart from the growing importance of knowledge production in society, this is also a product of the 'development of mass higher education systems' (ibid.: 5). As principal characteristics of 'mode 2' knowledge the authors name (1) 'the context of application', (2) 'transdisciplinarity', (3) 'the diversity of the sites at which knowledge is produced', (4) a higher grade of reflexivity produced by the replacement of a 'neutral view from nowhere' by 'multiple views', and finally (5) 'novel forms of quality control' (Nowotny et al 2003: 3-6). The authors reacted with their description to recent developments we touched on in our description of changes in knowledge production, namely the 'commercialisation of research' (ibid.). Their aim was to surmount two positions which have been maintained towards this phenomenon. One view is that it is a 'threat to scientific autonomy' (Nowotny et al 2003), while others see the development towards 'application' as a necessary 'revitalisation' of research (see Nowotny et al 2003). These two positions can be traced in the various debates we described above. Our description of trends in European research policy and the reactions towards it delivers only a part of the picture, which Nowotny et al (2003) describe as a negotiation process (as we focused mainly on official policy papers and their reactions to it, and to some notes on a general 'discourse'). This is perhaps why slightly contradictory assessments of the consequences of the process of 'application oriented' knowledge production can be made. One possible view of the impact of the changes on the humanities and social sciences is that they threaten or diminish these fields of knowledge and lead to fragmentation. In all cases the changes provoke reflections on the self-understanding of the disciplines as well as on the external understanding of what their characteristics are.

With the increase of third-party funding from the business sector, the European Union or various foundations, research is increasingly results-oriented. But not all research is carried out with a clear purpose in mind. This is above all a characteristic of basic research (including in the natural sciences). Aspects such as curiosity and reflection could be named as parts of an open process, where the end is not entirely clarified. Such a mode of knowledge production might be described as 'curiosity research' or 'knowledge for knowledge's sake'. In this context we quote again the Bricall Report, which relates the humanities to basic research and its 'usefulness': 'Basic research is rarely associated with immediate economic results' (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 36). A last aspect we would like to underline with regard to the question of 'problem-centred approaches' is: problems are a question of definition and power. Some problems may become clear only in the course of a critical and reflective knowledge production. Nowotny et al on the other hand think that *especially* the humanities play an important role in 'mode 2 knowledge production' because of their high grade of 'reflexivity':

The conventional view is that the humanities are the most scholarly and detached disciplines, furthest removed from the turmoil of application and contextualisation. Their "uses" are almost entirely internalised. Our account in *The New Production of Knowledge* challenged that view. Instead we saw the humanities as the most engaged of all disciplines, not simply because they flow through culture industry (for example through novels or popular history) but because they comfortably and inevitably embody notions of reflexivity which the natural, and even the social, sciences distrust normatively and methodologically (Nowotny et al 2003: 6).

## 2 The construction of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences from an interdisciplinary perspective: What do social sciences and humanities have in common?

If we ask which impact recent developments in higher education have had on the social sciences and humanities, we encounter two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, the increase of applied research in a narrow sense may reinforce the fragmentation of the social sciences and the borders between the social sciences and humanities. On the other hand, if we look at it more optimistically, we note an increasing opening up of both fields towards each other since the 1970s. This might be due to the fact that disciplinary notions have been challenged by an increasing ‘contextualisation’ (Nowotny et al 2001), that is, interaction between different actors in the arena<sup>27</sup> of knowledge production. As we have described in our conclusions to section 1.2, Gibbons et al (1994 and Nowotny et al 2001) call this ‘mode 2’ (cf. 1.2.3). Connected to a broader understanding of application, they argue that the humanities are central in the recent changes of knowledge production, as they ‘embody’ (Nowotny et al 2003) the central aspect of ‘reflexivity’. As we will show in our subsection (2.2) on the social sciences, this creates a connection between the two fields.

If we return to the criticism noted above of the dominance of applied research in modern scholarship, we see a possible domination of certain research methodologies. Applied research might be oriented towards methods which claim to deliver facts. Research highlighting interpretation might be less in demand in this context. Comments (see 1.2) by Zarka (2004), Widerberg et al (2005) and Holm and Liinason (2005) suggest that the ruling hegemony of the natural sciences influences the way in which the social sciences and humanities try to legitimise their work. With regard to the question of legitimisation Sprondel (2003) states that the social sciences are able to ‘pass the utility test’<sup>28</sup> easier than the humanities if they direct themselves towards empirical methods. The consequences of an orientation towards exclusively empirical methods are not only a fragmentation of the social sciences (Widerberg et al 2005: 46), but also possibly a fragmentation between the social sciences and humanities. This can be illustrated by the difference in definition of the ‘nature’ of the two fields. Humanities can be defined as ‘the sciences of language and history, culture and human ways of thinking and behaving’ (Søren Kjörup 2001). And a dictionary definition from the 1980s reads: ‘*Geisteswissenschaften*’ are ‘academic disciplines that focus on how life is regulated by the state, society, law, custom, education, science and technology, and on interpretations of the world through language, myth, religion, art, philosophy and science.’<sup>29</sup> There is hardly any discipline that does not fall under this definition that is not part of the ‘natural sciences’ (which is generally

<sup>27</sup> They call it ‘agora’ (id.: 2001).

<sup>28</sup> ‘*So gibt es denn auch zahlreiche Bereiche der soziologischen Forschung, die den Nützlichkeitsstest, auch nach den eingeschränkten Kriterien bestehen können.*’ ( Sprondel 2003: 165).

<sup>29</sup> dtv-Lexikon in twenty volumes, 1st edition 1982, fourth edition 1997, Vol. 6. – translated by Judith Inggs.

seen as the opposite: e.g. *Wahrigs Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 1986).<sup>30</sup> The separate entry ‘*Sozialwissenschaften, Gesellschaftswissenschaften* (social sciences)’, however, allows for further differentiation: ‘scientific disciplines, which are directed at investigating the conditions and organisation of human cohabitation, and which in their applied form serve to develop alternative models and criteria for rational political decision-making for social and community change.’ (dtv-lexikon, Vol. 17). ‘Regulation’ and ‘interpretation’ are thus opposed to ‘application’ and political counselling. Concerning the methodological differences between the two fields, Wikipedia connects the humanities with a ‘qualitative approach’ and describes the social sciences as a field which ‘comprise[s] the application of scientific methods to the study of the human aspects of the world’. A division in terms of subject matter is made in the *New Encyclopædia Britannica* (1984) which relates the humanities to ‘human values’ and the ‘human spirit’ and the social sciences to the study of ‘human behaviour’ and the ‘social order’. This differentiation points to similarities with the German term *Geisteswissenschaften*, which focuses on the ‘spirit’.

Despite the barriers between the social sciences and the humanities expressed in these definitions, there are movements towards a growing integration. There are debates in the academic discourse of the humanities and the social sciences which clearly underline the interpretative aspects in the natural sciences (and social sciences), thus promoting ‘qualitative approaches’. As we will show in our second section, a movement towards the humanities has occurred, especially where the questions of interpretation and construction are raised, concerning for example narrative and visual representation.

These intra-academic debates have been tied to more general social changes. The questions of subject and methods have been central issues in the epistemological debates in the social sciences and humanities. These debates have resulted in an opening up of the two fields to each other. The 1970s and 1980s were important for both fields as the university was critiqued by both internal and external academic groups, such as the student, women’s and ecological movements. Jauß (1991) refers to this as a ‘worldwide crisis of the humanities’ (Jauß 1991: 69). This might be exaggerated as it primarily affected the ‘western’ part of the world. Griffin et al characterise the epistemological debates in the UK as follows:

Significantly for Britain, but not specific to it, those wars were partly fought on class terms, on the basis of who/what had been excluded from a canon designed to promote certain forms of assumed scientific objectivity on the one hand (leading to the pre-eminence of quantitative methods in the social sciences) and ‘high culture by men’ on the other (leading to curricula in the humanities that excluded popular culture, work by women, by diverse ethnic groups, by working-class writers, etc) (Griffin et al 2005: 50).

One of the ideological backgrounds of these debates was the ‘challenge’ of Marxism to which the Norwegian report refers (Widerberg et al 2005: 45). Both subject (canon) and methods (quantitative versus qualitative) were questioned in various western universities, affecting the social sciences and the humanities. While the debates have occurred in all of Europe, the response to this criticism has differed in the respective countries, depending on their national traditions.

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<sup>30</sup> In the Grimm dictionary of 1897 the “*Geisteswissenschaften*” were defined as follows: “newly regarded as opposite to the natural sciences, and hence philosophy, history, philology, cf. “*Geistesphilosophie*” (philosophy of mind).

## 2.1 Opening up the social sciences

Wolf Lepenies (1985) refers to the social sciences as a differentiated ‘third culture’, ‘in which, since their emergence, scientific and literary disciplines have been at odds with each other’ (Lepenies 1985: 11).<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Jauß (*Denkschrift* 1991) defines the foundation of the social sciences as a product of the conflict between the natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was further differentiation between subjects and subject fields, with the natural sciences splitting away from the faculties of philosophy<sup>32</sup>, a split that was continued to effect higher education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly the social science subjects (such as sociology and political science) have been located mostly in the law faculty or in a specialist social science faculty since the end of the 19th century (Kjørup 2001: 35-6). If one agrees that the social sciences are positioned between the natural sciences and the humanities, one might speak of the ‘two faces’ of the social sciences. In the context of cutbacks (see section 1 in this report) and a growing demand for ‘usefulness’, the social sciences might orient themselves towards the ‘hard sciences’ focusing on quantification and statistical description. However, there are evidently different, ambivalent undercurrents in the social sciences (see above Nowotny et al 2003). The methodological critique of the 1970s and 1980s around the term ‘objectivity’ especially concerned the social sciences. The rise of qualitative methods might be considered as a move towards the humanities.

The questioning of objectivity was emphasised again in the debate about post-structuralism in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>33</sup> Here the Norwegian authors claim that this debate left ‘the humanities to set the terms’ (Widerberg et al 2005: 45). Concerning Norway, they assume that post-structuralism has not been of very much importance for the disciplines. However, the sociologists who wrote the ‘discipline notes’ (presented to the Norwegian Research Council in 2000, see section 1.2 above) stated that they had become more aware of their role as interpreters (Widerberg et al 2005: 46). The Norwegian reference to the post-structuralist debate can be related to the British debate of the last twenty years concerning the question of ‘science’ as a construction of ‘partially situated knowledges’ (Griffin et al 2005: 51). Griffin et al refer in this context to feminist critics such as Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding, located in the United States.

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<sup>31</sup> Transl. by Judith Inggs

<sup>32</sup> The unification of the natural science disciplines took place in Germany for example between ca. 1830-1880 (partially also located in medical faculties). From the 1860s the natural science disciplines gradually began to split away from the faculties of philosophy (Palatschek: 2001, 85). Müller (1990, 85) speaks of a process of independence of the natural science faculties during the second half of the 19th century in accordance with the ‘Strasbourg model of 1871’.

<sup>33</sup> In the context of our argument it is perhaps interesting to quote a paper which points briefly to the relationship between change in academe and the economy and the appearance of postmodernism: ‘it may be justifiably assumed that postmodernism would be impossible without advanced market conditions. In many cases the shift towards postmodernist discourses has been accompanied by a change of the predominant conditions of production within academia. Thus the crisis of the humanities in the 1970s and 1980s accelerated the development of more market-related modes of knowledge production’ (Angermüller 1998: 5).

The so-called ‘science war’<sup>34</sup>, primarily concerned with the opposing positions of the humanities and the natural sciences, also affects the position of the social sciences, moving between the two (imagined) poles of the ‘two cultures’. Since the 1980s a ‘linguistic turn’ has occurred in the social sciences (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 43): methodological approaches such as narrativity, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis have been adopted by the social sciences. This, according to Keskinen and Silius, led to a growing interest in research in the humanities. However, it seems that the methodologies used in various disciplines are used in a discipline-specific manner.

## 2.2 Opening up the humanities

Growing out of issues discussed in the 1970s, the questioning of the canon has changed the humanities. In some countries like the UK to a greater extent, in others such as Germany to a lesser, the humanities now include topics that were excluded before. The relation between academic production and society was at the heart of the discussions: social context (such as class structure) was seen as relevant for the exclusion and inclusion of certain fields and methods of knowledge construction. In relation to this, the question of the social impact of knowledge construction was asked.

The social sciences have traditionally had ‘social questions’ as a core. Therefore, one might perhaps agree with the thesis of Widerberg et al 2005: 45 that in this debate the social sciences have ‘got the upper hand in relation to the humanities’ (ibid.).

The discussion of exclusion through a defined canon has been connected to the question of power. It resulted in an opening of the disciplines to new subject areas such as women’s art, non-western and popular culture and new media. Additionally the humanities, especially disciplines such as literature and art history, began increasingly to include the question of the social conditions under which, for example, ‘art’ is being produced. All this amounts to an opening towards questions traditionally dealt with by the social sciences.

This reorientation of the humanities since the 1970s might be described as a renaming of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities) as *Kulturwissenschaften* (cultural sciences), demanded at the beginning of the 1990s in Germany in *Geisteswissenschaften heute: Eine Denkschrift* [Humanities Today: A Programmatic Essay] (Frühwald et. al. 1991). It signals a different development in Germany from in the UK. While in the UK the results of the debates in the 1970s were incorporated much earlier by the academic institutions, the essay mentioned above, reformulating positions similar to the debates in the 1970s, signals a lower level of institutionalisation in Germany (on women’s studies, see for example Krebs et al 2005). The explanation for such differences can be found in differences in both academic tradition and structures, such as idealism in the case of the German *Geisteswissenschaften*: ‘The concept of the *Geisteswissenschaften* [in Germany] was first named in the systematic scientific context of the Schelling school: ‘natural philosophy’ was supplemented by a ‘spiritual

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<sup>34</sup> Bammé (2004) speaks of a process of ‘taking the magic from science’ which started in the 1980s and which led to a ‘science war’ in the 1990s. The paradigm conflict reached its high point in the American media with the ‘Sokal affair’. Bammé sees this process against the background of the transfer of science out of the universities and the opening up of research for ‘external purposes’ (Bammé 2004: 16, 17).

philosophy' also described as the 'science of the spirit' and as '*Geisteswissenschaft*' (Mittelstraß 1991: 26, author's italics). This division emerged around 1825 (Kjørup 2001: 1). At the level of the university, however, the concept was broadened by the 1849 translation of John Stuart Mills' *System of Logic* in which the term 'moral sciences' was translated with *Geisteswissenschaften* and 'thereby placed in an idealistic system' (Mittelstraß 1991: 27). While Mills' concept encompassed both the 'normative-oriented 'practical' disciplines of morals, politics and aesthetics' and the descriptive and nomologically-oriented disciplines of psychology, ethnology and sociology (Mittelstraß 1991: 27), the latter broke away from the idealistic scientific knowledge of the German *Geisteswissenschaften*. Mittelstraß thinks that idealism remained decisive for the identity of the *Geisteswissenschaften*: 'It is not only the terminology that continues to have an effect [...]; it is also the idea that culture is a product of the mind, and the *Geisteswissenschaften* are themselves a part of this culture which they investigate, allowing their idealistic origins to remain' (Mittelstraß 1991: 31).

### **2.3 Tendencies towards the integration of the humanities and social sciences**

The academic debates since the 1970s have resulted in an opening up of both the humanities and the social sciences. There is, for example, the phenomenon of so-called 'bridging figures': authors, who have come to prominence in both the humanities and the social sciences (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 43; Griffin et al 2005: 57; Widerberg et al 2005: 24). New disciplines which involve both disciplinary fields have been established in the last decades. Examples include:

- area studies (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 28 refer to East-Asian Studies, established in 2003, substituting 'Language and Culture of the Far East');
- Roma studies (Jakab et al 2005: 49)<sup>35</sup>;
- Communication and media (Jakab et al 2005: 50-51)
- Cultural anthropology (Jakab et al 2005: 50)
- Cultural studies (Griffin et al 2005: 53; Keskinen and Silius 2005: 31-2; Krebs et al 2005: 21, 34, 40).

#### **Excursus: Media Studies in for example Germany and Hungary**

Media Studies relate the social sciences and humanities to each other. The subject's history illustrates the different positions from which the two disciplinary fields approached the subject of new media. While in the social sciences new media was above all addressed as *mass* media and its effects on the structures of communication, the humanities, traditionally distanced from 'mass culture', now confront the impact of media development on the construction and dissemination of knowledge. One principal question is how communication media have influenced 'culture' as education, understanding and concepts of art, aesthetic perception, historical identities etc. (Steinwachs 1991: 142). Another question concerns the pre-conditioning of academic content, presentation and approaches through new 'communication contexts' (Steinwachs 1991: 142) like the internet, computer editing, reproductive technologies etc. The priorities mostly vary with the discipline and their respective paradigms, but there are many interfaces between them, which may force social

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<sup>35</sup> This is offered as a multidisciplinary degree program at the University of Pécs.

sciences and the humanities to cooperate (and with other disciplines as well, as for example computer science). Interesting and maybe symptomatic are the developments in Germany and in countries like Finland and especially in Hungary.

Clearly, the study of mass communication as a proper subject started in sociology in the USA during the 1930s in order to analyse the propaganda of the First World War and the impact of the mass media on democracy in general. It was Paul Lazarsfeld, who emigrated after the Nazi occupation of Austria, who developed an empirical sociological concept of mass communication research. He saw the risk that empirical positivistic data analysis might neglect the political implications of the mass media. Habermas in his work opened the sociological analysis of the mass media to a philosophical analysis of the transformation of the public sphere in the course of the development of capitalism (Apitzsch 1980).

The case of Germany shows how the specific disciplinary (and cultural) tradition of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities) excluded the study of the mass media, which was (and is) connected to popular culture. Frühwald et. al. (1991) criticised the 'decades-long distancing of the [German] humanities and the cultural sciences' from the consequences of the new media technology 'for our culture', a distancing which was cautiously narrowed only at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>36</sup> According to the authors, this remoteness can be explained by the specifically German tradition of the *Geisteswissenschaften* whose 'elitist stigmatizing of popular forms of communication and spectacles of mass culture'<sup>37</sup> continues (Steinwachs 1991: 153). Moreover, the critique of the 'culture industry' by the Frankfurt School, regarded within German academe as both 'astute' and 'fundamentalistic', explains German academic reservations with regard to the mass media (Steinwachs, *Denkschrift*, 1991: 153). Other serious traditions – such as the works of Walter Benjamin – were for many decades suppressed or at least pushed into the background (Steinwachs, *Denkschrift*, 1991: 151-3).<sup>38</sup>

The German confrontation with media culture took place first and foremost in the social sciences. There is scarcely any other field in the social sciences that has experienced the kind of growth we have seen in 'research into the impact and use of the media' (Steinwachs, *Denkschrift*: 1991, 144; reference to DFG 1987). Not only disciplinary traditions, but funding policy too can influence how much disciplines open up to particular fields. According to Steinwachs the considerable 'backlog in the field of media research in the *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Kulturwissenschaften*' results from a lack of available research capacity, caused by too little funding. This is 'because its results are neither directly related to application nor economically usable' (Steinwachs 1991: 144).<sup>39</sup> The 'increasing visualisation and dematerialisation of media communication' (Steinwachs 1991: 152) requires reflection and analysis of the

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<sup>36</sup> Advertisements for professorships of 'media science' support this (mostly redesignated empty positions in philological faculties) as well as a series of research organisations and the establishment of media centres (Steinwachs, *Denkschrift*: 1991, 142f.).

<sup>37</sup> All translations of the memorandum by Judith Inggs.

<sup>38</sup> The authors also refer to Ernst Cassirer, for whom 'medium' was a central idea.

<sup>39</sup> A generally equitable relationship between media research in the empirical social sciences and in the *Kulturwissenschaften* is described by the author as existing, for example, in the USA, Great Britain, France or Sweden (*Denkschrift*: 1991: 144).

‘forms of mediation and presentation’ by the *Geisteswissenschaften* – in both teaching and research.<sup>40</sup>

The analysis of the reciprocity of media development and research in the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Kulturwissenschaften* – from printing to digital media – is, however, difficult to deal with in a single subject called ‘media studies’. The methodological backlog of media studies requires ‘institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation’ – the ‘establishment of research associations with, for example, semiotics experts, cognitive scientists, perception psychologists, ethnologists and cultural anthropologists’ (Steinwachs 1991: 157).<sup>41</sup> ‘A media science, which investigates the culture of communication in terms of its structures and functions, impact and history, could be a model for regenerating science by crossing the growing barriers between disciplines, and for reorienting the *Geisteswissenschaften* towards the cultural sciences (*Kulturwissenschaften*)’ (Steinwachs 1991: 159). In the meantime, some of these ideas have become reality but nevertheless have lost none of their importance. One field of research where the gulf between the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences may be bridged are visual studies (in German *Bildwissenschaften*).

The Finnish authors Keskinen and Silius state that: ‘new disciplines such as Media Studies have a very close connection to Cultural Studies as a theoretical approach and a research field’ (2005: 31). Keskinen and Silius underline the fact that ‘communication is a discipline which moves between the humanities and the social sciences’ (2005: 12). At the University of Turku, for example, it was first divided between Speech Communication, Film and Television Studies in the Faculty of Humanities and Journalism/Media Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences. But these were ‘merged into Media Studies and placed in the Faculty of Humanities’ (ibid.).

A similar process can be observed in Hungary where, in the last few years, programs in communication and media studies have been established. The Hungarian case shows the ‘in-between position’ of this field, which is sometimes located in the faculty of humanities, sometimes in the social sciences. Media Studies may integrate different disciplinary backgrounds, of which the case of the University of Pécs is exemplary. Its Department of Communication and Media Studies ‘undermines the idea that one discipline corresponds to one department. While communication is the main discipline, there is a specialization in cultural anthropology.’ (Jakab et al 2005: 16) Students can pursue three possible specialisms in communication and media studies in the Faculty of Humanities: ‘theory and practice of mass communication covering editing and journalism, social communication covering social and cultural theory [and] network communication concerned with the social and cultural consequences of open computer systems’ (Jakab et al 2005: 37, 50). Both disciplinary backgrounds, the social sciences and humanities, structure the contents of the courses: The ‘roots [of communication studies are] in this case [...] in the humanities with linguistics and ethnology’ (ibid. 38). But the program, as an attempt to distance itself

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<sup>40</sup> Reference is here made to the scientific historical studies of the practice of visualisation in the natural sciences and the effects of developments in the media (Nikolow 2002) as well as to studies of the interdependence of methods in art history, photography and slide projection (Dilly 1976; Wenk 1999 et al).

<sup>41</sup> On the possibilities and limitations of ‘art theory’ with regard to these tasks, see also Frühwald et. al. 1991: 158f.

from traditional concepts of ethnology and linguistic ‘has moved towards conceptualising its subject area as a social science’ (Jakab et al 2005: 37). The authors note ‘easy access to the various fields [...] and methodologies [which] may provide a concept of flexible boundaries between the fields of humanities and social sciences’ (ibid. 50). The orientation towards the social sciences may be due to the role which sociology plays in contemporary Hungarian culture: ‘The historical background explains the particular role of sociology in the state socialist era as opposed to traditional disciplines in humanities with a firm institutional background.’ (Jakab et al 2005: 18) The institutionalisation of the social sciences has created a new field where ‘new initiatives can be realised’ (ibid.). Communication and media studies are located in the social sciences (if there is a faculty of social sciences, as it is not always the case at Hungarian universities). One could maybe see this as a possible indicator for the willingness of disciplines as for example communication and media studies to distance themselves from the traditional disciplines.

## Conclusion

The role of universities in knowledge production has been discussed at least since the 1970s, and from different perspectives. Whether related to earlier social movements or to the economic reasoning in the 1990s, these debates have questioned academic autonomy. Academic knowledge production has been increasingly obliged to explain its usefulness. What is useful is evidently a matter of discussion. The influence different actors have on this process is connected to questions of power.

The ‘Bologna’ process is restructuring higher education in Europe. In consequence national discussions about changes in the education system show similarities. A kind of capitalist thinking dominates ideas on education. Criteria of capitalist thinking are applied in the knowledge sector: students are regarded as ‘consumers’, defining educational content (especially in the UK), or as ‘human resources’ who have to be made fit for the employment market (as is the case in most other national systems). In both cases, the actors (the students or state and to some extent private companies) are considered ‘entrepreneurs’ (Masschelein and Simons 2005: 23) who regard education as an ‘investment’. The role of the humanities in this process is discussed in contradictory terms: while on the one hand Bologna is used to cut costs by declaring humanities degrees not useful (e.g. in Spain), on the other hand some argue for the humanities as a field where ‘professional’ qualities such as ‘flexibility’,<sup>42</sup> towards different issues, ‘personality’ and ‘individuality’ can be acquired. The latter view might also be expressed by integrating more ‘general’ humanities courses in vocational courses. Here the aspect of the humanities connected to a quasi ‘moral education’ is underlined and connected to the European policy of ‘lifelong learning’ and the ‘promotion of personal development’ (Agélii 2003: 13, 18). Both views of the humanities suggest that these degrees will be reduced in their specialisations and variety (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 17). Disciplines without any immediate application, in Germany so called ‘*Orchideenwissenschaften*’ (‘orchid studies’), are seriously endangered by the Bologna process (eg. the case of the *Byzantinistik* [Byzantine Studies] Jostmann, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2005: 15). This trend is contrary

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<sup>42</sup> Connected to the so-called ‘key-qualifications’.

to any concept of the long-term importance of research, which can be illustrated with the case of Islam Studies. This discipline had been threatened with closure at several universities. After September 11<sup>th</sup> there was a sudden demand for knowledge about Islam. Here it became evident that knowledge production can and should not (only) fulfil short-sighted needs.

What we see is a contradictory picture of the actual state of the humanities and social sciences: the recent changes might lead to greater separation or more integration of the two. 'Quantitative approaches' have increased in the context of the 'scientization' of knowledge production. Knowledge production in both fields is circumscribed by funding policies oriented towards 'results', connected to the dominating criterion of 'applicability'. A greater approximation towards the 'hard sciences' is evident. Frequently this is associated with quantitative methods. This may lead not only to a fragmentation in the social sciences, but also reinforce the barriers between the social sciences and humanities. It also reduces the importance and role of the humanities. Earlier debates in the 1970s and 1980s led to an integration of both fields, as the humanities opened to social issues and the social sciences integrated qualitative methods and a stronger reflection on interpretation.

The debates about the function of the humanities in particular veer between pessimism and optimism: 'The various roles, functions and possible uses of the humanities are apparently attracting new attention at the end of the second millennium. This state of affairs is a reflection of both concern for the continued existence of the humanities – which might be termed a 'multilayered anxiety' – and paradoxically, a new and powerful seduction, a genuine challenge which offers new prospects, even in relation to the natural and social sciences' (Focus Group Humphreys and Klaniczay 1999/2000: 1). This has also been pursued in new fields of research that integrate not only the humanities and social sciences with regard to both subject matter and methodology, but the natural and technical sciences, too.

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