



Disciplinary Barriers between the Social Sciences and Humanities

Comparative Report on the Infrastructural Definitions of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Eight European Countries

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Introduction

The present comparative report on *Infrastructural Definitions of the Social Sciences and Humanities in Higher Education and Their Impact on (Inter)disciplinarity* is part of the European research project *Challenging Knowledge and Disciplinary Boundaries through Integrative Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, funded by the European Commission under Framework 6 (CIT2-CT-2004-506013). The project deals with the constitution of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in eight European countries: Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

In the first stage of the project, we described and analysed the main characteristics of the disciplinary barriers between social sciences and humanities of the participating countries (see *National Reports on the Disciplinary Barriers Between the Social Sciences and the Humanities*¹).

This present comparative report is primarily based on the information and results drawn from the eight national reports on Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK that were published on the project website.

Our report is divided into four main sections. In the first section we present some methodological remarks. In the second section, we look at the historical institutionalisation of the humanities and social sciences by describing the development of the national administrative-organisational university structures and discussing their impact on the barriers between the social sciences and humanities. In the third section, we analyse the existing degree structures and their implications and potential for (inter)disciplinarity at European universities. In the fourth section, we shift our perspective from the organisational-structural level to an actor's level. Thus we discuss the increase in student numbers at European universities and the impact of the students' choices on (inter)disciplinary developments.

¹These reports have been published on the website of the project: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration/reports.htm>

1. Methodological remarks

The national reports which are the basis for our comparative report are interpretative reports. The data used for the national reports present different protocols of social reality. In addition to academic literature we used official documents, web sites, expert interviews, and single case studies. The data also include statistical information. The methodological question which arises is how it is possible to compare the national reports in respect of certain transnational topics (in our case infrastructural definitions in the social sciences) and which methodological framing would be appropriate.

First of all, we have to define the area in which we are working. We see higher education (development) in Europe as an arena of multiple actors, and we focus in what follows on organisational structures and also on processes and actors.

We decided to use as one underlying concept a set of procedures that are offered by and rooted in the concept of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Glaser 1978, Strauss 1987, Strauss and Corbin 1990).² Thus, we decided in favour of the principle of open coding procedures. In the initial coding process, we broke the data down into incidents to be closely examined and compared for similarities and differences. For the minimal and maximal comparisons, we used central topics and dimensions which were then examined in the specific national cases and reports. By using this constant comparative process, we aim to develop emergent new categories and properties of these categories.

²In the comparative report, we cannot and do not follow all the procedures of the Grounded Theory methodology. The concept was originally developed at the beginning of the 1960s by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, two sociologists from different but complementary backgrounds. The starting point of the concept is a critique of existing empirical social research. At the centre of their model is the anchoring of theory in the empirical material and the process of developing a meaningful hypothesis. For those who are interested in the concept of Grounded Theory as a methodology which can be used in different disciplines, we recommend Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss 1987, and Strauss and Corbin 1990.

2. The institutionalisation of the division between the social sciences and the humanities

In this section we will focus on the institutionalisation of the division between the social sciences and the humanities in the European university system. Thus we are going to describe organisational structures by looking at how the social sciences and humanities are positioned within university structures in Europe today, and how subjects are positioned within these structures. Our aim is to describe similarities and differences, including the national specificities of the European higher education landscape, and their impact on barriers between the social sciences and humanities. The results of the national reports on the infrastructural definitions in relation to higher education are one starting point for our analysis in this section.

In order to understand how the humanities and social sciences are defined by the universities, the national teams analysed the university structures by considering 5-10 institutions as case studies in each country (see the national reports on the project web page, at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration/reports.htm>). In this context, the question arises of what is a case, and what the single cases in different countries represent. Each single case represents a specific institutional structure. They can be seen as exemplary cases of certain organisational structures in each country. Each case is representative in certain respects. It is important to mention that the 'sampling strategy', the way of disclosing a field and selecting the single universities in each country, did not follow a quantitative logic. The aim was to integrate as wide a range of cases as possible. Thus we have universities in the sample with varied histories, profiles and structures. The selection criteria were the type of university (traditional or new, state or private) and the types of degree courses offered in the social sciences and humanities.

2.1 The 'historical dimension': the impact of the history of universities on the division between the social sciences and humanities

Administrative-organisational university structures are embedded in history. The historical dimension therefore has to be taken into account in the analysis of nationally specific university structures and their impact on the barriers between the social sciences and humanities.

In all European countries, the humanities predate the social sciences. Humanities (disciplines) were taught at the universities before social science subjects were introduced into the European university systems. The emergence of the division between social sciences and humanities has its roots in the division between the natural sciences and philosophy. It is reflected, according to Wallerstein, in the history of the structure of the university system and especially in the organisation and reorganisation of the faculties (Wallerstein 1996, 1999).

In the medieval European university four faculties existed: theology, medicine, law, and philosophy. From the beginning of the 16th century onwards theology became less important, and in many places it had disappeared completely by the 19th century. Medicine and law became more narrowly technical. In the 18th century, new

institutions of higher learning emerged inside and outside the faculties of philosophy. The series of specialisations which we today call disciplines were established. The disciplines were no longer part of a single faculty of philosophy, but usually located within the faculty of humanities or arts or the faculty of sciences (Wallerstein 1999: 2). The humanities expanded in the administrative university structure. The social sciences became part of the university structure in the late 19th century, when the institutionalisation of the social sciences started. The three core or principal disciplines that were created were economics, sociology, and political science. The disciplinization of the social sciences had reached a point of clarity and simplicity by 1945. According to Wallerstein (1999: 2), the situation had been very confused between 1750 and 1850. Many names were used as the appellations for proto-disciplines, and none or few of them seemed to command wide support. Then, in the period 1850-1945, this multiplicity of names was effectively reduced to a small standard group where every discipline was clearly distinguished from the others. The most significant step for the organisational structuring of the universities was the split between history, economics, sociology, political science, anthropology, and oriental studies.

After 1945 this clear structure started to break down for several reasons. 'The rise of area studies led to the incursion of the "west"-oriented disciplines into the study of the rest of the world and undermined the function of anthropology and oriental studies as the special disciplines for these areas,' (Wallerstein 1999: 3) The worldwide expansion of the university system led to a considerable expansion of social science faculties.

In the following, with the help of a comparison of the faculty and department structure we will see how university entities are organised and influenced by the particular history of the establishment of the social sciences, and also by the specific history of the individual university.

2.2 The division of the universities into disciplinary fields: organisational university structures

The general tendency is for universities to be organised on disciplinary lines in a manner that is reflected in departmental structures. Traditionally, universities have been organised into faculties. Faculties, in the traditional university model of the 19th century in Europe, were entities which corresponded more or less to fields of science. In the 20th century, the smaller entity of the 'department' was introduced into the university system. Departments reflect the restructuring of the universities into smaller entities, often corresponding to disciplines. If we consider the administrative structure which divides the European universities into social sciences and humanities, the logic of the structure seems to be the same. Universities are usually divided into four kinds of entity: faculties, schools, departments, and institutes. The naming and composition of faculties is an internal decision and is usually made by each university. The definition of the term 'faculty', as in the traditional university model of the 19th century in Europe, as a field of science, varies nowadays in the national contexts. Usually, a faculty covers a range of distinct but disparate disciplines. In some cases the term 'faculty' is synonymous with 'department' and covers one discipline. However, in order to understand the barriers between social sciences and humanities, it is necessary to focus on the formal structure of the faculties and the question of how disciplines are defined and structurally organised within European

universities in different countries with different higher education systems. Within the framework of regulations and laws decreed by the individual governments, universities quite often have a good deal of freedom to decide on their structural organisation. In Hungary, France, and Sweden, governmental bodies with responsibility for education also codify the disciplines and assign them to the social sciences or humanities.

We will therefore present a short review of the specific national differences and similarities and their structural implications.

Sweden

In Swedish universities which are highly autonomous, the disciplines are still conceptually divided in a conservative manner. In Sweden there exists a national register of the National Agency of Higher Education, which defines which subjects are included in the humanities and which belong to the social sciences. According to this register, historical-philosophical subjects, journalism and communication, philology, linguistics, and theology are included in the humanities, while economics, behavioural sciences, computer sciences, law, practical pedagogic and all the other subjects within the social sciences (for example political science and ethnography) belong to the social sciences (Holm, Ulla and Mia Liinason 2005: 8). According to Holm, the borders between the humanities and social sciences appear sharper in this register than they are in reality, but they are still dependent on the type of university.

The definitions used in the register correspond only to the structure of established, old universities, for example the universities of Lund, Göteborg and Uppsala.

The old universities have a conventional, disciplinary faculty structure. In contrast to the old universities, the new universities and the university colleges have a structural organisation of disciplines, which is different and quite diverse (Holm and Liinason 2005: 9). They have unconventionally constituted large faculties, which combine social sciences and humanities and could be seen as an indicator of a desire to promote interdisciplinarity (Holm and Liinason 2005: 15).

Hungary

The Hungarian university system is still influenced by the political transformation of 1989. The relationship between the state and education has become more decentralised. Universities have the right to set up their own internal organisational structures. 'If there are several departments dealing with different branches of the same field, they are gathered under the structural unit of a institute. Departments and institutes correspond more to disciplines and subdisciplines' (Jakab et al 2005: 13).

The Ministry of Education (*Oktatási Minisztérium*) codified the fields of science and the disciplines in a governmental decree 2000, and determined the disciplinary structuring of Bachelor degree programs in a draft decree in 2004. According to the 2004 draft decree, the social sciences are divided into the following disciplines: political science, sociology, cultural anthropology, library and information science, communication, media studies, social work, and social psychology. The other disciplines, (e.g. philology, pedagogy, psychology, history) are assigned to the category of the humanities. In addition to the ministry's codification, the structural division of the research units and institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Science also affects disciplinary boundaries.

there also exists a codification of the Hungarian Academy of Science. A comparison of the three disciplinary divisions shows that the disciplines included in each category are different in higher education institutions, in the respective decrees, and in the system used by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Jakab et al 2005: 10, 27). In practice, the analysis of university structures in the Hungarian national report demonstrates that the division of the disciplines into the social sciences and humanities laid down by the ministry is not followed by the institutional or organisational structure of higher education institutions. The fact that the category of social science, for example, does not occur everywhere as a faculty, is connected with the development and the specific history of the social sciences in Hungary. However, at small universities where only a faculty of social science exists, this faculty may include disciplines which fall under the category of humanities in the ministerial policy paper. In some cases, social science disciplines in Hungary are institutionally integrated into the faculty of humanities (Jakab et al 2005: 10, 57).

France

A reform of the French university system was implemented in 2002. Before that and after the higher education reforms in 1968, the old faculties and schools were reorganised into modern university departments (Le Feuvre, Nicky and Milka Metso 2005: 27). The French university system is organised along strongly codified lines. The Ministry of Education is responsible for defining the disciplines through its institutional body, the *Conseil national des universités* (CNU) (Le Feuvre, Nicky and Milka Metso 2005: 17). The CNU is a centralised decision-making body which is also responsible for managing the recruitment and promotion procedures for academic staff. The CNU is composed of 11 subject areas, which are divided into sections. The ministry recognises five main subject areas, called *grandes disciplines*. The sub-groups which pertain to the humanities and social sciences are law, political sciences, economics and management, literature and foreign languages, and social sciences (including philosophy and art). In practice, 'a clear distinction between the social sciences and the humanities only really survives for organising university departments' (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 17).

UK

In Great Britain, the universities are broadly regulated by the state through higher education acts which are implemented by the governmental Department for Education and Skills.

The universities were traditionally divided into faculties and departments. The term 'schools' came into use in the last two decades of the 20th century. This term refers to entities which are larger than a department but smaller than a faculty. Thus, universities in Great Britain may have faculties, schools, and departments. Faculties usually house multiple subjects and they can vary in size from one university to the next. Schools may be single-subject or multi-subject. Departments are most commonly based on single disciplines (Griffin et al 2005: 16). However, the universities are very autonomous in the way they arrange their organisational structures. British universities do not follow a narrow national pattern but are instead determined by the histories of the institutions concerned, the ways in which they configure funding arrangements, the number of core staff in a given discipline, and

other such matters which are internal and specific to the institution (Griffin et al 2005: 18, 19). There is no 'nationally valid' structure as it exists in some other countries (Griffin et al 2005: 18). Nevertheless, in British universities disciplines like sociology and history are more likely to be found under humanities than humanities subjects are to be found under the social sciences. Griffin et al (2005: 16) argue that this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that humanities disciplines were taught before social science subjects. For Griffin and her colleagues, part of the key to where subjects are positioned within university structures is the age of the university itself. Universities that were built as part of the expansion of higher education in the 1960s and 1970s were more likely to start life with humanities and social sciences faculties in place than older universities such as London, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, which started life with the equivalent of humanities subjects only (Griffin et al 2005: 16).

Germany

The federal structure of Germany leads to considerable local variations among university organisational structures. Even though the universities are controlled by the ministries of education (of the federal *Länder*), and regulated by legislation on higher education, the universities define their administrative structure more or less autonomously. However, a clear trend can be discerned. While the traditional division of German universities into disciplinary fields was characterised by a division into faculties, in the 1980s the universities tended to split their organisational structure into smaller entities called *Fachbereiche* (departments) und *Institute* (institutes). In some cases, e.g. at the University of Frankfurt am Main, the traditional faculties were split and reduced to one discipline. In the 1990s the reorganisation or complete overhaul of university structures unified disciplines into larger entities, without any uniform system. Sometimes the new entities were again called *Fakultäten* (faculties) (Krebs, Rebecca et al. 2005: 12). The way in which disciplinary fields are linked together in one entity also varies greatly from one university to another. A structural combination of humanities and social sciences may exist in some cases, for example, the Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences at the Universität Hannover or the integration of the humanities and social sciences, at the Faculty of Cultural Studies in the Europa – Universität Viadrana (Frankfurt an der Oder), but it is strongly dependent on the type of university. This relates to the distinction between a 'reform university', founded or restructured since the 1960s, and an old university with a traditional faculty structure. It is obvious that the combination of social sciences and humanities in individual universities depends on the specific university history. Thus in older universities, like the Universität Heidelberg or the Universität Köln, humanities and social sciences are strictly divided into different faculties, but social sciences and economics are closely connected. This connection is rooted in the institutionalisation history of the social sciences in German universities. It is absent in some of the universities that have been founded since the 1970s in the context of major restructuring. However, the German national report identifies two clear tendencies, one tendency to underline and continue the combination of disciplines in faculties according to the traditional university model, and another to create new forms, which does not emphasise this division (Krebs et al 2005: 12-17).

Finland

When looking at Finnish university structures, we also observe considerable variety in the way disciplines are placed into the faculties within different universities: 'Some disciplines are rather tightly bound institutionally to the humanities or the social sciences, whereas other disciplines are placed in different faculties depending on the universities.' (Keskinen, Suvi and Harriet Silius 2005: 11) However, Finnish universities seem to be structured in a more uniform way than other European universities. Thus one can identify disciplines that have a 'self-evident and legitimated existence within the humanities and social sciences' (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 15). According to Keskinen and Silius, the core disciplines in Finnish university structures within the humanities are language studies, art studies, and cultural studies. These disciplines include the study of different languages, literature, art history, musicology, folklore, ethnology, and anthropology. History also belongs to a large extent to these disciplines. Sociology, political science, economics, social policy, social work, and social psychology can be regarded as the core disciplines within the social sciences. The disciplines of communication studies, philosophy, and psychology can be placed within either the humanities or the social sciences (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 15). Especially interesting in the Finnish case is the fact that there are in Finland departments called 'Department of Methodology'. This is the case, for example, at the University of Lapland. The administrative structure of this department is in fact interdisciplinary in character, and it serves both the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities within this university (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 15).

Spain

The Spanish university system is very centralised and uniform. Major decisions on educational matters are made by the Ministry of Education which is responsible for policies at local and national level. The *Ley Orgánica de Universidad* from 2001 states that Spanish universities must be organised into *Facultades* (faculties), *Scuelas* (university schools), Technical and Polytechnical Schools, Polytechnical University Schools, as well as into *Departamentos* (departments) and *Institutos Universitarios de Investigación* (university institutes of research) and centres for distance learning.

The teaching units in Spanish universities are called *Facultades* if they teach *Licenciaturas* or higher degrees lasting 4 or 5 years, or university schools if they teach the shorter 3-year degrees called *Diplomaturas*. Faculties and schools are organised according to degrees granted, while departments are organised according to disciplines. The *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (LRU), passed in 1983, was a decisive step in organising universities into research units (departments), but the dominant structure of the faculty still exists at Spanish universities. There is a relative uniformity in the classification of social sciences and humanities, with some subjects like geography moving between them (Carrera Suarez et al 2005: 18).

Norway

The Norwegian university system was completely reformed in 2003 in line with the Bologna process. Especially interesting in this case is the fact that the internal organisation of the universities seems to be identical (Widerberg, Karin, Eva Sigrid Braaten, and Ida Hjelde 2005: 49).

The five universities in Norway still have faculties, departments, and centres. Faculties and departments are administrative and disciplinary entities, even though different disciplines might belong to the same department (Widerberg et al 2005: 16). All the universities have departments of social sciences and humanities, with different structures. Traditionally, humanities disciplines like languages, linguistics and literature, philosophy, archaeology, and history have been administered as part of the humanities. There is one exception, the University of Tromsø, where history, religion, archaeology, and philosophy are classified under the social sciences but declared as 'humanities subjects' (Widerberg et al 2005: 20).

2.3 Summary

The cases of the university structures in different national contexts demonstrate that different disciplines are often linked together quite unsystematically by the internal administrative-organisational structures of the universities. Individual universities have their own ways of structuring departments. It is obvious that in cases where governmental bodies responsible for education codify the disciplines and assign them to the social sciences or humanities, there is frequently a discrepancy between the definition of disciplines by the governmental bodies and the administrative-organisational structures operating in practice.

Even if the universities have the right to structure their faculties in a more interdisciplinary way, it is obvious that formal barriers between the social sciences exist due to the structural organisation of universities. Especially at the universities where there are separate faculties of both humanities and social sciences, one can assume that this kind of faculty structure hinders cooperation in teaching and research. In other cases (especially in France) it is equally obvious that new formal university structures which seem to be interdisciplinary (because of the multi-disciplinary constitution of the departments) are in fact reproducing disciplinary boundaries. The formal combination of social sciences and humanities in one unity, as in the French case, does not necessarily contribute to crossing disciplinary boundaries. The development toward larger entities which include both humanities and social sciences could be an ideal type of organisational structure which might facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary work at European universities. However, it is difficult to make generally valid statements based only on the description of the organisational structure. Thus, we will focus in the next section on the degree structures and contradictions in contemporary European university developments.

3. Degree structures and their potential to cross disciplinary boundaries

In this section we focus on the role of degree structures and their implications in relation to (inter) disciplinarity. The Bologna process is still ongoing. We therefore do not have a very clear picture of the formal structures in every country and their consequences. However, we try in this section to identify the implications of the new degree structures. First, we look at conditions of access to degrees and ask whether and how access is dependent on the subjects studied at school. Secondly, we discuss the potential for interdisciplinarity in the existing degree structures at European universities and the contradictions arising out of the Bologna process for contemporary university development.

3.1 Access to university degrees in the social sciences and humanities

The prerequisite of access to a degree in the social sciences or humanities at European universities varies from one national context to another. Spain seems to be the only case where access to university courses and degrees in the social sciences and humanities is still strictly dependent on the choice of subjects or scientific areas at secondary school level. In Spain, students have to complete the university entrance exam, the *Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad*, before they can begin to study for a university degree. The entrance exam is based on the subjects studied in the *bachillerato*. The national curricula are fairly uniform, and students are not free to choose subjects until the final years of secondary school. Carrera Suarez et al (2005) report that the compulsory subjects at this stage are mainly humanities-based (philosophy, history, Spanish language and literature, the co-official language in the relevant regions, one foreign language, physical education). Students must choose a specialisation from four 'scientific areas' determined by the Ministry of Education. These four areas are: Arts, Natural Sciences and Medical Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Technology. The 'scientific areas' chosen in the *bachillerato* determine university studies and the degrees students have access to. Selection for access to universities is dependent on the grade point average (the marks of the *bachillerato* and the entrance exams are added together), and the average determines admittance to courses where there is high demand. According to Carrera Suarez et al (2005), the plans of the Spanish higher education system for restructuring the degree system seem to include granting students more freedom to choose subjects and to design personal itineraries in the *bachillerato*, and fewer restrictions in their subsequent choice of degrees (Carrera Suarez et al 2005: 7).

The situation in Hungary is similar. In Hungary the type of secondary school chosen already predetermines specialisation, although it is possible to enter any higher education institution by passing the entrance exam. The compulsory exam at secondary level (*érettségi*) is also subject-dependent. Since 2005, with the beginning of the new degree programmes, the access procedure for Hungarian universities has been changing. Secondary school exams and the entrance examination for universities have been amalgamated, and new comprehensive exams following secondary education are to be introduced (Jakab et al 2005: 40).

In contrast to the Spanish and Hungarian cases, the other six European countries have selection procedures where the qualification entitling someone to study at a university is independent of the school programmes and subjects taken at school. The subjects chosen at secondary school do not determine or exclude choices for access to university courses and degrees in the social sciences or humanities. This is especially obvious in the case of Germany. In order to study at German universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, a potential student needs a university entrance qualification (general or subject-specific), generally acquired after 13 years of school on the basis of an examination giving the right to be admitted to higher education (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*). For access to universities of applied science (*Fachhochschulen*) an entrance qualification (*Fachhochschulreife*) confirming 12 years of school education plus a period of practical training is needed (Krebs et al. 2005: 35). The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in Germany enables students to study any subject at university, irrespective of the subjects taken at secondary school (*Gymnasium*). However, in the natural sciences there are a few university degrees like medicine and pharmacy which demand special subjects in secondary school. The situation in Norway is similar. Here a general entrance qualification for higher education (*generell studiekompetanse*) is necessary for access to universities. All social sciences and humanities subjects are in principle open, irrespective of the subjects taken at school (Widerberg et al 2005: 12, 41).

In Finland there is only one “matriculation examination” which is the main gateway to university. Originally the matriculation examination could be passed only by students in a *Gymnasium*. Today also some students in professional secondary schools can participate. Within the humanities and social sciences, every student who is eligible for higher education can take the entrance exams, irrespective of the subjects studied at school (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 6, Silius 2005).

In France the *baccalauréat* is the qualification required for access to higher education institutions. There are three kinds of *baccalauréat* in France. In addition to the ‘general’ Baccalaureate, which exists in a variety of subject areas, for example humanities, languages, mathematics and sciences, and economics, there is also a ‘professional’ and a ‘technical’ Baccalaureate. The kind of Baccalaureate and the chosen fields of study at university are independent of one another, so there is no direct link between the subjects studied at school and at university (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 10). In Britain, A levels are the equivalent of the German *Abitur* and French *baccalauréat*. This is the qualification needed for access to universities. The entrance requirements are often set by the individual universities (Griffin et al 2005: 8).

In sum, there are then different entrance examination systems in operation across, and sometimes even within, the various national higher education systems in Europe.

3.2 The implementation of the Bologna process at the level of degree structures³

In 1999, the Ministries of Education signed the Bologna agreement on initiatives to be promoted. These include:

- the adoption of a system of easily comparable degrees, and also the implementation of the Diploma Supplement
- the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles
- the establishment of a common European credit system and modularisation
- the promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement
- the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance.⁴

In accordance with the Bologna process, the European governments introduced legislation for the introduction of three new degree cycles: 3-year Bachelor, 2-year Master, and 3-year PhD. The most important feature of the Bologna process in relation to the degree structure is the change to a structure based on two main cycles. The first main cycle is the undergraduate level, and the second the postgraduate level. The new programmes and degrees will be expressed using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), a system of credits which is already established in European universities. The ECTS system was initially established under the Erasmus programme (1989-1996), and was tested over a period of 6 years in a pilot scheme involving 145 higher education institutions in all EU member states.

The new academic qualifications are to be conferred in the form of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), Master of Arts (M.A.), and Master of Science (M.Sc.). The aim is that study at undergraduate level should lead to a degree with professional qualifications for the European labour market, while study at postgraduate level will lead to a Masters qualification, which is the prerequisite for the PhD.

In the following we will compare the potential for interdisciplinarity in the degree structures. Our assumptions are primarily based on the statements in the national reports relating to the countries where the implementation of the new degree structures has been introduced at faculty level.

Even if the systematic structural reform of degree programmes at European higher education institutions has begun, according to the national reports the new degrees in line with the Bologna guidelines have not yet been fully introduced in Hungary, Spain, or Sweden.

In Hungary, where the two-cycle training started at the beginning of 2005, the Bachelor programmes have to fit into the disciplinary division of the governmental

³ We focus in this section on degree structures. For more information on the implementation of the Bologna process, see the comparative report and the results of the national reports (especially section 8 of the national reports), at: <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration/reports.htm>>. An overview of the European process can be found at <<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de>> and <<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>>, also at <<http://www.eurydice.org>>

decree (Jakab et al 2005: 31). The present dual structure of colleges and universities is being replaced by a linear structure. By the end of December 2004, only the Bachelor degrees had been elaborated. The Masters programmes will be elaborated during the next two years (Jakab et al 2005: 53). The plans for the Masters degree programmes which will start in 2006 are that they should offer training in not yet institutionalised areas of study or multidisciplinary programmes (Jakab et al 2005: 30, 31).

In Spain, the conditions for a later adjustment of the Spanish degree structure of studies to a two-cycle structure were created by law in 2001. Before the Bologna implementation, there were two main degrees, the *lincenciatura* and the *diplomatura*. New courses of study can only be set up if permission is given and the traditional courses of study are stopped at the same time. The ministry has announced the reduction of the over 150 existing degree courses to 60. This must happen by October 2006. The adaptation process is still in progress. As in other countries, it requires some adjustment because the existing traditional first degrees are, with five years in most cases, fairly long. There might be a tendency in Spain to understand the Masters degree as corresponding to the current *lincenciatura* and the Bachelor degree to the *diplomatura* (Carrera Suarez et al 2005: 40, 41). In Sweden, comprehensive changes are not expected before the autumn of 2007. The implementation of the Bologna process has started through the ECTS credit system, the mobility of students, and the quality assurance programmes (Holm and Liinason 2005).

In contrast to these examples, in Norway the new 3-year Bachelor (or 4-year at the national colleges of art) and 1-2 year Masters degrees were introduced in 2003 at all five Norwegian universities. The traditional degrees, *candiatu magisterii* (*cand.mag.*) and *Høgskolekandidat*, have been replaced by the two-cycle structure. However, there is still a *Høgskolekandidat* (university college degree), which is offered at state university colleges and a few private institutions after 2 years of study. It can be enhanced with additional courses to obtain a Bachelor degree. In addition to the *Høgskolekandidat* there are also various professional qualifications which are awarded by all the state higher education institutions and a number of the private higher education institutions. These programmes and degrees are of four to six years' duration, and cover both regulated and non-regulated professions (Widerberg et al 2005: 13, 14, 20-25).

In Germany the new graduation system was established on a trial basis by an amendment to the HRG in 1998. The period of study and degrees at undergraduate level have become shorter and more discipline-oriented. Today, in addition to the new Bachelor and Masters degrees, the traditional 'einstufige Studiengänge', the state examination (*Staatsexamen*), diploma (*Diplom*), and Magister degree (*Magister Artium*) are still in existence. Degrees in humanities and social sciences subjects were characterised in the traditional degree structure by a differentiation according to the way the degree was completed. While humanities degrees were always completed with a *Magister Artium* degree or state examination, social science degrees could be concluded in the same way as humanities degrees, with a magister or state degree but also with a diploma degree. Even if the diploma degree structure was characterised by an emphasis on one main discipline, mostly with a focus on empirical research, students had the possibility of combining subjects according to their own preferences. Thus, especially in the *Magister* degrees, students could introduce interdisciplinary

combinations into their degrees. However, this is changing with the implementation of the new degree structure after Bologna (Krebs et al 2005: 35, 50).

In France, the new degree structure with two cycles was adopted in 2002. The *Licence* (180 ECTS points) is now a French version of the Bachelor degree. Although the two-year BTS and DUT (two-year technological training course), and DEUG (university diploma) qualifications have not been scrapped, they are now supposed to be more fully integrated into a three-year degree programme. The Masters degree has been adopted for all intermediate postgraduate degrees, and it is the first qualification to be offered at both the universities and the *Grandes écoles* (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 7).

The introduction of the new Bachelor and Masters (Bologna) degrees is an enormous undertaking for most European universities, because they have to introduce a completely new structure quite unlike the traditional degree structure in their national contexts. This is not the case in UK and Finland, where the systems already resemble the planned structure. In the Finnish university system, Bachelor degrees were introduced at the beginning of the 1990s (Keskinen and Silius 2005: 44). The UK has, according to the national report, no need to alter current structural arrangements as these are broadly in line with the Bologna recommendations (Griffin et al 2005: 58). In the UK the new (Bologna) degree structure seems to be a traditional and integral part of the higher education system. Modularisation took place in the 1990s (Griffin et al 2005: 48). However, there are some obvious differences, like the existing one year Masters degree. In general, the UK has never had a single system of higher education characterised by uniform degree structures. The most common forms of BA and BSc in social sciences and humanities are discipline-bound, known as a *single honours degree*. In addition to the *single honours degrees* there are *joint honours degrees* and *combined studies degrees*. These kinds of degree enable students to study two or more disciplines, often not in the same depth. Usually, these degrees have been taught in a multi-disciplinary manner (Griffin et al 2005: 50).

3.3 The potential for (inter)disciplinarity in the degree structures

While the former system was much more focused on thematic fields than on disciplines at the undergraduate level, the new Bologna degree structure is much more focused on one main discipline. Thus, generally speaking, according to the national reports on the countries where the new structure has been adopted in the higher education system, BA degrees usually reduce the courses to one main subject (Krebs et al 2005: 51; Jakab et al 2005: 55, Widerberg et al 2005: 31; Le Feuvre 2005: 46). However, in some cases it is possible to complete a Bachelor degree not only in a discipline but also in an interdisciplinary programme. This is especially mentioned in the Norwegian national report, with the example of the interdisciplinary Bachelor programme on Gender, Feminism and Equality offered at the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Oslo (Widerberg et al 2005: 32-5).

With the exception of the Spanish case, where it is suggested that the changes are unlikely to lead to greater interdisciplinarity (Carrera Suarez et al 2005: 42), the other national reports do see a potential for interdisciplinarity at MA degree level.

According to Griffin et al (2005), MA degrees in the UK are often sites of greater specialisation and focus on a sub-area of a discipline (52). In Germany, it is suggested that the *Hybrid Master* will not only add new disciplinary perspectives but also provide the possibility of interdisciplinary combinations with other disciplines (Krebs et al 2005: 52).⁵

Thus opportunities for interdisciplinarity occur mainly at the postgraduate level. The newly created Masters degrees might produce new interdisciplinary fields of knowledge, and it seems (this is already the case in Norway) that a variety of interdisciplinary programmes will be created and established in the next few years. In addition to the MA degree structure there is another form of institutionalisation with potential for interdisciplinary work, namely the PhD schools. Even if the PhD school is based in one department or faculty at a single university, multidisciplinary topics are often included. However, there are different assessments in the different national reports of whether these schools observe strict disciplinary boundaries. Jakab et al (2005) point out that the multidisciplinary PhD schools in Hungary, which exist in both the social sciences and the humanities, were set up to meet formal requirements and not for the purpose of real cooperation. This implies that disciplinary boundaries are still very strong because of the difference between the formal setup and the goal of real cooperation (Jakab et al 2005: 50, 51). Indeed, in practice most of these schools are located within a department and involve teachers from one discipline. However, if we look at research, there are often PhD programmes which are essentially research programmes and are offered by university institutions. This is especially the case in Norway and Germany. It seems that in the area of doctoral studies, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research is supported through funding of multidisciplinary doctoral programmes and interdisciplinary work at PhD level.⁶ In practice, it seems that through research it is possible to cross disciplinary boundaries and write an interdisciplinary dissertation if one has two supervisors from different disciplines. However, even if interdisciplinary work is done, the dissertation must be registered and submitted in one department and usually results in the award of a PhD degree in a traditional discipline.

3.4 Contradictions in contemporary university developments

Contradictions in contemporary university developments have been identified by Widerberg et al (2005), especially in the case of the University of Oslo. But it seems that these contradictions are true for almost all universities in Europe. Widerberg et al (2005: 21, 52) identified the following contradictions:

- Degrees have, relatively speaking, become more disciplinary
- Degrees are now shorter than before, which means that there is less of every discipline
- There is at the same time more emphasis on interdisciplinary degree programmes on the part of the departments and faculties

⁵ The expression “*Hybrid Masters*” (*Hybrid Masterstudiengänge*) is used to denote degree courses which provide an additional perspective to an existing disciplinary base, while the “*Genuiner Master*” is supposed to continue a single disciplinary perspective (Wex 2002: 47).

⁶ On this point, see especially the results of the national reports on Research Funding under section 2, at <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration>>

One discrepancy which stands out is the fact that there are now more interdisciplinary programmes at postgraduate level, but there have been no changes in the administrative-organisational structures of universities (on this point see section 2 of this report). It is clear that traditional university structures are not designed to administer interdisciplinary programmes. Thus the question arises of how this challenge will be met in practice. The process of conversion has developed its own dynamic, with nationally specific problems and possibilities.

In order to handle the contradictions in contemporary university developments, the state is playing a more decisive role in regulating actual curricula after the implementation of the Bologna process than it did before.⁷ Before the Bologna process, the state laid down general rules for degree structures without regulating teaching in detail. Today, with the new accreditation and evaluation processes, one can interpret every new university degree at undergraduate and graduate level as 'state regulated'.

However, the universities and faculties are responsible for putting the programme into practice, and they have to change the large compulsory curricula to modularisation at faculty level. They thus have an opportunity to foster interdisciplinarity at the formal-organisational and degree-structural levels.

⁷ To this point, see Le Feuvre and Metso (2005), *The Impact of the Relationship between the State and the Higher Education and Research Sectors on Interdisciplinarity in Eight European Countries*, <<http://www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration/reports.htm>>

4. The impact of the increase in student numbers on disciplinary developments

In our final section, we shall focus on the question of whether an increase or decrease in student numbers has an affect on (inter) disciplinary development in terms of degree courses. This is a difficult question to answer, because we do not have updated statistics from all countries recording the increase or decline in student numbers in the humanities and social sciences and the degree courses available. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 3, the process of transformation of the new degree structures is still under way in most of the countries examined, and will not be completed until 2010. In this section we therefore discuss the increase in student numbers in general terms, and also look at the specific national trends and possible future scenarios.

According to the findings of the reports of the countries participating in this project (see www.hull.ac.uk/researchintegration) and of the national reports on the implementation of the Bologna process,⁸ there has been an increase in student numbers in all the countries examined. This is connected with the expansion of universities since the 1960s-70s. It seems that student numbers have exploded in most countries in recent years, apart from Spain.

In Spain the development is uneven. On the one hand, the number of students has also increased in recent years. In 2004 there were a total of 1,551,000 students. More than 90% were studying at the 48 public universities, the rest at the 22 non-public institutions (*Spain. National Report on the Bologna Process 2004-2005: 2*).⁹ On the other hand, in some cases, the student numbers dropped (Carrera Suárez et al 2005: 7). The reasons for this development in Spain, which differs from the other European countries, should be further investigated.

In France, there were 1,511,000 students studying at 82 universities in the academic year 2004 (*France. National Report on the Bologna Process 2004-2005: 2*). According to Le Feuvre and Metso (2005), the recent explosion in student numbers has been largely concentrated in the middle-range institutions, with relatively little change in the number of students entering the most prestigious levels of the HE sector, i.e. the *Grandes écoles* and their preparatory classes (Le Feuvre and Metso 2005: 14). The number of students has also increased in the UK and Germany. In the UK, almost 1,800,000 students were enrolled in the 117 higher education institutions in the academic year 2004 (Griffin et al 2005: 6, 21, 22).

In Germany, a total of 2,020,000 students were enrolled in the 365 higher education institutions (of which 174 are universities) in the academic year 2003-2004. In the period between 1993 and 2003, the number of students attending non-state institutions doubled from 33,200 to approximately 65,100. In the same period, the number of non-state institutions rose from 62 to 101 (*Germany. National Report on the Bologna Process 2005: 2*).

⁸ <<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>>

⁹ <<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>>

According to the Hungarian *National Report on the Implementation of the Objectives of the Bologna Declaration in Hungary* (2003), one of the most important characteristics of Hungarian higher education is the huge increase in student numbers. Between 1990 and 2002, the number of students in higher education increased from 101,000 to 382,000 (*Hungary. National Report on the Implementation of the Objectives of the Bologna Declaration in Hungary* 2003: 4). In the academic year 2004, the number of students at Hungarian higher education institutions reached 409,572. 233,948 students were studying at the 25 colleges (13 public and 12 private), and 133,827 at the universities. Of 26,703 students at postgraduate level, 7,875 were PhD students (*Hungary. National report on the implementation of the Bologna process* 2005: 3).¹⁰ According to Jakab et al (2005), the number of students at the 19 Hungarian universities (18 public and one private) has increased by approximately 400%. Nearly half of them have been studying at non-state funded institutions. Thus the number of students applying for places in the faculties of humanities is also still rising (Jakab et al 2005: 11).

In Sweden, Norway, and Finland, student numbers in general have increased since the 1970s with the expansion of the higher education systems, but not as dramatically as in other countries in recent years. In Finland and Norway the increase has not taken the total above 200,000 students. In Sweden there are more than 300,000 students registered at the 50 higher education institutions, of which 14 are universities (*Sweden. National Report on the Bologna Process 2004- 2005*: 3; Holm and Liinason 2005: 4).

Even if all universities have registered an increase in student numbers which might continue in the years to come, the increase is dealt with differently in the different national contexts. In the British case, the increase seems to be a result of strategic planning and national policy, and is an integral aspect of university finances. In the other countries, the expansion is seen as a problem. One way of coping with the increase in numbers is the restriction of access to first-year courses, a procedure known as the *numerus clausus*.

Griffin et al (2005) highlight that in the UK the rise in student numbers is in part connected with the explosion of taught postgraduate courses, especially at new universities (6, 11). The British case seems to be distinctive in a number of respects. In the UK, the Bologna process has not been perceived as requiring a substantial change in the degree system of the universities. Thus, the process has 'not had the impact observed elsewhere of raising debates about the nature and substance of disciplines' (Griffin et al 2005: 62). However, the influence of student numbers on disciplinary development is obvious at degree structure level, even if it started before the Bologna process. In Norway, it seems that the increase in student numbers at postgraduate level could have been caused by the implementation of the two-cycle system.

British universities are not under the direct control of the state, and in comparison with other European universities have a higher degree of autonomy. Furthermore, the internationalization of British universities, which has been part of their financial policy since the beginning of the 1980s, plays a key role in this context. After drastic

¹⁰ <<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>>

cuts in national allowances for British universities, the budget cuts were accompanied and moderated by new principles for the calculation of the fees paid by foreign students for their studies in Great Britain. This income did not go to the state, but remained in the hands of the individual universities and the university system as a whole. As a consequence, in the first phase of active internationalization British universities tried to attract the maximum number of foreign students interested in studying at a British university. In this context, curricular and study structures have been changed, especially since the 1990s, in order to make them more attractive for certain target groups of prospective student customers. The British universities have advanced the internationalization and marketization of the courses they offer by a variety of measures, so that these have become a recognised indicator of the efficiency and attractiveness of the individual universities in a competition-oriented university system. They have therefore also become an important component of strategic planning on the university level.

In comparison to the UK, the idea that universities should play a pro-active role in attracting students to particular courses is totally foreign to French academic culture, at least before postgraduate level and certainly in the humanities and social sciences. According to Le Feuvre and Metso (2005), this attitude can be explained by the fact that student fees are relatively low in French universities, and academics have tenure and are not assessed on their teaching at all. Thus, bringing more students into the universities could only have negative effects on academic working conditions, for both students and teachers.

In Germany, the negative attitude towards increased student numbers is more or less the same as in France. The increase in student numbers, which is historically strongly connected with the growth of higher education institutions, is in practice associated with negative effects on academic working conditions. The introduction of fees for students as a way of regulating student numbers has been a matter of heated debate at the political level in the different federal states. First degree courses are currently exempt from tuition fees, but some federal states have opted to levy tuition fees for long-term students and for students taking a second degree. Thus, in ten of the sixteen federal states, students who exceed the standard period of study or are completing their second degree are now charged fees.¹¹

If we compare British universities with the other countries, especially Germany and France, it seems that the 'active marketing for overseas students' (Davies 1995: 4) and the increase in student numbers have not, until now, had any obvious influence on degree structures. This is partly because universities here are probably less market-oriented than in Britain, and partly because the individual universities are less autonomous. Even if increasing international attractiveness has not played a very important role until now, this is changing in the context of the Bologna agreement. In terms of internationalization, the aim is to produce a transparent European university system which promotes mobility and an increase in the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education (Bologna Declaration 1999).

¹¹ According to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany, the fees are between 500 and 650 euros per semester <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/national_impl/00_Nat-rep-05/National_Reports-Germay_050118.pdf>

The influence of internationalization and economisation on the development of universities will be a central issue in future. The question of how student numbers will develop in general, and if numbers in the humanities and social sciences will fall or rise, will also be important. In both scenarios, the question arises of whether the (sub-) disciplines will survive if there is no student demand for degree courses in certain areas. The case of the British university system illustrates how the survival or existence of disciplines and degrees depends to a large extent on their number of students, but similar tendencies are clearly at work in other countries, especially in Norway and Germany.

However, during the implementation of the Bologna goals we will be able to see whether students, as actors, actually want to take the new Bachelor and Masters degrees. For the 2005 to 2010 period, we can probably expect an even stronger demand, at least in the first cycle. It therefore looks as though we will see ‘mass education’ at the BA level, as is already the case with the BSc degree, but less so at the MA level.

Conclusion

In this report, we have focused on infrastructural definitions in the social sciences and humanities and compared organisational university structures, degree structures, and the impact of the increase in student numbers on (interdisciplinary) developments in eight European countries. Our aim was to find out how these infra-structural aspects impact on the disciplinary barriers between the social sciences and humanities, and if they foster interdisciplinarity.

Starting with the institutionalization of the division between the social sciences and humanities in the European university system, we compared organisational structures by looking at how the social sciences and humanities are positioned within university structures. On the basis of this comparison between faculty and department structures in eight countries, we realised that there are often significant differences between institutions even within the same country. However, another finding of our comparative analysis is that in all countries, the way faculties are structured is affected by the age and type of individual universities and influenced by the particular individual university tradition. In old or traditional universities, the reproduction of disciplinary barriers is characterised by a more visible, rigid, formal-organisational separation between humanities and social science disciplines than in new universities. At degree structure level, as another aspect of institutionalization, we found that the introduction of the new two-cycle system in the implementation of the Bologna process shifts and crosses disciplinary boundaries and fosters interdisciplinarity at postgraduate level in most European countries. In the context of degree courses and disciplinary developments, the increase in student numbers has had a less visible impact on disciplinary developments in most countries than it did in the UK before the Bologna process started.

One discrepancy which stands out in contemporary (inter)disciplinary university developments is the fact that interdisciplinary courses at postgraduate level are being

offered, but the administrative-organisational structures of universities remain more or less the same. Thus, changes at the organisational level seem to be necessary. Therefore, a development towards larger or smaller organisational entities which include both humanities and social science subjects, as well as the introduction of methodology departments and interdisciplinary centres serving and combining humanities and social science disciplines, could facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary work at European universities in the years to come.

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