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DEVELOPING THE EDUCATED CITIZEN: CHANGING FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE AND ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores questions of citizenship and the role of universities in the context of the policy changes in the UK and in Europe over the last two decades. Twenty five years after the political transitions in Eastern Europe, and 70 years since the end of the Second World War, Europe is more united than ever before. New political, social and economic configurations across the continent are bringing expectations and pressures to its citizens and institutions, with universities at the front of many economic and social projects. What do these new conditions mean for citizenship in the context of European universities, and how do member states respond to this changing context? The article will use England as a national case study within the EU to illustrate the tensions between the humanistic visions still carried out by many universities, although interpreted differently across the sector, and the pressures for the creation of the 'knowledge economy' that are shared at the national and transnational levels.

Key words: citizenship, European Union policy, English higher education, labour market and universities

FORMAZIONE DEL CITTADINO ISTRUITO: QUADRI IN CAMBIAMENTO NELL'AMBITO DELLE UNIVERSITÀ IN EUROPA E INGHILTERRA

SINTESI

L'articolo tratta le questioni, legate alla cittadinanza e al ruolo delle università nel contesto dei cambiamenti politici in Europa e nel Regno Unito negli ultimi due decenni. Venticinque anni dopo la transizione politica nell'Europa orientale e 70 anni dalla fine della II Guerra Mondiale l'Europa è più unita che mai. Le nuove condizioni politiche, sociali, economiche sull'intero continente creano nuove pressioni e attese che si trasmettono sui cittadini e sulle istituzioni, mettendo le università a capo di numerosi progetti economici o sociali. Ma che cosa rappresentano in realtà queste nuove condizioni per la cittadinanza nel contesto delle università europee e come gli Stati membri dell'Unione Europea rispondono alle condizioni che cambiano? L'articolo tratta queste tematiche sull'esempio dell'Inghilterra come sistema di istruzione devoluto del Regno Unito all'interno del territorio comunitario. L'esempio dell'Inghilterra presenta le tensioni tra le idee umanistiche all'interno di alcune università e le pressioni riguardanti la creazione dell'"economia della conoscenza", che caratterizzano il territorio nazionale e transnazionale nel campo dell'istruzione.

Parole chiave: cittadinanza, politiche europee, formazione superiore Inghilterra, mercato del lavoro, università

INTRODUCTION

The last 25 years have seen great political changes across Europe, followed by the collapse of the post-war order, the enlargement of the European Union (EU), but also the increasing deepening and widening of the EU integration project. The EU is no longer merely an economic body with tighter links over trade between independent nation states. It is a political transnational entity with a distinct set of governance instruments, its own institutions, and strong links between the EU and national institutions. By moving beyond the economic construction of the Common Market, the EU attempts to build itself as a political entity. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht conferred European citizenship to all citizens of EU member states. The criticisms of the early post-Maastricht period focused on the emphasis of citizenship placed on the 'market liberties of the economic citizen' (Leidfried, 2000, 45) as opposed to developing the social dimensions of the project. The prioritization of political and economic rights has taken precedence since there is no European welfare state as such. Social policy follows market integration, but there is no short or medium term view that political responsibilities for welfare reforms should pass from the national to the European level. Twenty years later, the EU initiated the 2013 European Year of Citizens, in celebration of the achievements of citizenship and to highlight the positive progress since. Constitutional reforms have reinforced citizens' political (mainly) and social (to a lesser extent) rights through Treaties but also the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the constitutional status of citizenship has been strengthened in Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (European Commission, 2013).

At the level of the EU, building a shared identity, and Union citizenship, has been a core project concerned with issues of the monetary union and the free movement of people, but also of political legitimacy and social cohesion (Laffan, 2004; Etzioni, 2013). But, even though the EU is keen to mobilize legitimating power and support from citizens for the integration project, it is primarily concerned with solving the more instrumental (and imminent) problems related to economic growth. Enlisting institutions that will carry the functions of promoting a particular model of economic growth (the creation of the 'knowledge economy') and citizenship is important. Education institutions are obvious candidates for dealing with both aspects of the project, and universities are seen to play a key role in bringing together the politics of identity and citizenship, and the politics of managing an increasingly volatile and fragile economic system.

These two contemporary issues, often seen to be in tension, i.e. creating a competitive economy, while promoting other forms of citizenship (legal, social, ideational and cultural) and ensuring social cohesion, are experi-

enced by the majority of nation states within Europe. They have shaped our changing expectations from, and understanding of the roles that universities play. This article reviews some of the core issues surrounding the tensions and links between citizenship and employability discourses as part of the knowledge economy agenda. We view these as they are articulated within two policy frames: the European one, and the national – using the English higher education debates as a case study.

CONSTRUCTING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION: EUROPEAN DIMENSIONS

Education has always had a role in shaping people's sense of their place in the world and helped to bestow 'citizenship'. The term itself has been continuously evolving both at the level of European international institutions but also in various European countries and their 'official' education discourses. In all of its definitions, citizenship brings together social, economic and political discourses about principles and values that permeate the relations between the individual, institutions, the state, and global levels. The configurations of these discourses place emphasis on different values across time and space, with some citizenship education valorizing the creation of patriotic citizens (Deželan, 2012), while other models promote a more cosmopolitan and post-national view of citizenship that draws on national, regional, and global dimensions of 'belonging' and responsibility (Faas, 2011; Schissler and Soysal, 2005).

At the level of European institutions, such conceptualizations of citizenship have been evolving over time. Keating (2014, 171) identified three main periods during which citizenship debates have contributed to education policy at the European level: the early period 1949-1970, when the Council of Europe (CoE) was leading cooperation initiatives. In this period, CoE was producing initiatives but also teaching materials that imitated the "nation-state-building model" citizenship education, although with distinct elements of a "cosmopolitan model of citizenship" emphasizing human rights and their universality. This period was characterized by a liberal communitarian view of citizenship with a Eurocentric approach to constructing ideas about "a common cultural heritage".

The second period of citizenship policy in education (1970-1990), saw European Union institutions taking a more active and central role, although the emphasis was similar to the first period. Ideas about Europe as a community defined by common history and cultures were put forward, and citizenship education was seen as a way to cultivate a sense of European identity through 'belonging' (*ibid.*). Finally, the more contemporary view on citizenship according to Keating breaks away from the earlier periods in quite radical ways. That is, the citizenship agenda post-1990 emphasizes distinct post-national discourses where European education policies

aim at the creation of active citizens who will co-construct the European project of the future:

European citizens are bound by a desire to participate in social, political and economic spheres and a commitment to shared universal rights, civic values and educational skills and competences. Indeed, the EU education policies in this vein suggest that the (ideal) European Citizen is the 'Educated Citizen', one that has been schooled and skilled for participation in postmodern and globalized societies. (Keating, 2014, 173)

This shift of emphasis coincides with the more systematic construction of the social dimension of the EU throughout the 1990s and the related education developments. But, what about the role of the EU in higher education for citizenship? While the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship has sponsored an investigation into how universities in both America and Europe embed, apply and encourage citizenship (Bleiklie, 2000), the precise terms of this construct are relatively unexplored. What has this been, how has it impacted on the nature of the balance between educating for employment, fostering transferable skills, or emphasizing a more cosmopolitan view of citizenship in a rapidly changing job market which is defined beyond the nation-state boundaries?

Education and higher education in Europe

Up to the end of the 1990s, both the Council of Europe and the European Union were active in encouraging cooperation in education through Community Action Programs. But, it was after the Lisbon Council of 2000 that this cooperation was integrated to the 'Lisbon Agenda' which aimed to transform the European Union into 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' (European Council, 2000), hence leading to the nascent formation of 'education policy' and the regular featuring since then of education in the yearly European Council meetings. Still governed by the principle of subsidiarity which restricts the legal competence of the EU to intervene in the content or organisation of member states' schooling systems, education policy is now based on 'soft' governance mechanisms such as the Open Method of Coordination, which rely on policy learning, benchmarking and informal normative pressures for the achievement of 'common agreed goals' (Fink-Hafner and Deželan, 2014; Lange and Alexiadou, 2007, 2010).

The 'Europe of Knowledge' agenda has also brought universities at the centre of the European Commission concerns, which has expanded its higher education activities considerably throughout the 2000s and linked HE policy developments to the Lisbon strategy and the European Research Area. In addition to the Commis-

sion activities in HE, the Bologna Process launched in 1999 as an intergovernmental process outside of the EU, provides an important framework that aims to promote collaboration, but also to transform both the product and the process of Higher Education (Corbett, 2005, 2011). The construction of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010, "was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe" (EHEA, 2014). Even though one of the main purposes of the Bologna process has been to strengthen the competitiveness of European HE and to foster student mobility and employability, the Bologna documents emphasise also the 'public good' dimensions of European HE:

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognized as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competencies to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space. (Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education, Bologna 19 June 1999)

The social dimension is firmly embedded and it is this unique combination of values and principles that shape the European dimension of European higher education." (Leuven Ministerial Conference, 2009)

Further developing the 'social dimension' is part of the current priorities of EHEA and is seen as part of the social responsibility of universities. It is concerned with widening access of under-represented groups to higher education "as a precondition for social progress and economic development", with the latest Bucharest Communiqué setting the goals of EHEA as quality higher education for all, enhanced employability, and strengthening mobility as a means for better learning. Importantly for issues of 'citizenship', the Ministerial Conference reiterated their commitment to promoting "student-centred learning" and "higher education as an open process" that encourage students to develop as:

... active participants in their own learning and intellectual independence and personal self-assuredness alongside disciplinary knowledge and skills. Through the pursuit of academic learning and research, students should acquire the ability to confidently assess situations and ground their actions in critical thought. (Bucharest Ministerial Conference, 2012).

The stress on the social responsibilities of universities continues to go hand-in-hand with a strong emphasis on

employability of graduates, to be achieved through improving the connections between higher education, employers and students, but also by increasing the research links, innovation and entrepreneurial potential of courses and students (*ibid.*). But, despite the proclamations of the EHEA documents, one of the main problems with this discourse is that Higher Education policy has been assigned a central role in the improvement of European economies, with knowledge production and research activities viewed primarily (if not exclusively) as economic investment and economic assets. This is far from unique to Europe or the European Union. It reflects a globalized rhetoric that tends to reconstruct universities as entirely instrumental to economic ends. Emphasizing and foregrounding the economic functions of universities overshadows the social and cultural dimensions of their responsibilities, and in some national contexts undermine the projects of democratization where universities have played a particularly important role (Pavlin et al., 2013).

The European HE Area discourse attempts to emphasize both the contribution of universities to the creation of autonomous, democratic and critical citizens, and their contributions as institutions of the economy. It discusses however less openly the role of universities as corporate entities that operate in highly competitive higher education markets that are increasingly global in their construction. The rise of what Biesta (2011) calls the 'Global University' sees institutions that despite their diversity all compete for a position in national and international league tables, for resources usually national, but increasingly also driven by 'consumer' demand in attracting international students. One big problem with this side of institutional dynamics is that:

... the global university operates in an entirely self-referential manner, that is, the conception of a good university that underlies the idea of the global university is not based on a substantive set of values and principles but is articulated in terms of how one institution is positioned in relation to other institutions. (ibid., 37)

Such critical reviews point to a wide recognition that universities in Europe are changing in character and 'mission'. In a seminal article, Zgaga (2009) presented a typology of the 'full range of purposes' of Higher Education that draws on four so-called 'archetypal models' of universities. The Napoleonic model has its main purpose defined by the instrumental needs of the state and the economy – and its modern variant has kept the emphasis on training students for their future careers, a model with high emphasis on employability; The Humboldtian model was a reaction against the strictly utili-

tarian approach of earlier institutions of higher learning, and emphasized the value of knowledge for the sake of further knowledge generation and learning. This model corresponds more closely to the definition of HE role in the production of research and new knowledge, both for economic but also social and political progress and innovation. The Newmanian model represents the more liberal views on education, and, in significantly contemporary tones, represents the view of higher education contributing to the development of personal development of future citizens and the formation of a more intellectual society. Finally, Zgaga identifies the Deweyan model where universities are seen as primarily serving their local communities and promoting a liberal education necessary for free societies, and fully formed critical citizens. The contemporary policy context across the EU is one where there are distinct shifts from traditional and liberal models of universities, to models prioritizing more instrumental and labour-market friendly programs and institutional aims. These often reflect explicitly governments' concerns with the contribution of higher education to economic growth. The regulation of universities 'output' and their connection to wider economic policies, and the quality of provision offered in fairly liberalised systems, become imperative.

The response to such shifts of the European Commission and of a number of Member States such as the UK where the market has been extensively used in public services, is remarkably similar: the introduction of quality control management systems. In 2013, the High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education, produced a Report commissioned by Androulla Vassiliou (Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Sport, Media and Youth) on *Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions*¹. The Report, consistent with the thrust of EHEA policies, rehearses the familiar 'quality' rhetoric that tends to construct universities as institutions in 'deficit' (in this case in relation to teaching quality), and to suggest improvement recommendations of a managerial nature. This context of Higher Education emphasizes the tensions that universities face in terms of their own role in 'performing' for the competitive market place, the continuous need to satisfy the demands of states and the changes in their funding, while at the same time produce the democratic but also 'entrepreneurial' and 'innovative' educated citizens. The strong emphasis on a consumerist student culture within this context of quality control, de-professionalisation of academic staff, and widespread marketization, puts the whole idea of universities as sites for citizenship in a defensive footing.

In the rest of the paper we shall examine how universities in England have responded to these challenges. England is a particularly interesting case study with

1 High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (2013): Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions. NC-01-13-156-EN-C.

regard to these debates for a number of reasons. First, it is considered as an outlier in Europe with regard to its welfare state that combines generous overall social provisions with very strong competitiveness. In the education sector, reforms since the 1980s have combined competition with high degrees of marketization and privatization, coupled with hierarchical differentiation of education institutions (Ball, 2009). Second, in terms of its relationship to the European Union, the UK (and England in particular) have been very reluctant to engage at least explicitly, with initiatives and discourses that come from the Commission. On the contrary, the UK has been active in deflecting influences from the EU on education matters, although of course there are points of connection between the national and the transnational that are less visible and so politically acceptable (Alexiadou and Lange, 2013). Finally, England and the UK are interesting because of their own processes of devolution. Seen by some as dis-integration, manifest in the September 2014 Scottish independence referendum, devolution captures many of the tensions between the creation of a global economic and civil society and the desire for democratic accountability and preservation of local cultures that has seen a resurgence of nationalisms across Europe and beyond (Habermas, 2003; Joppke, 2007).

HIGHER EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

The higher education sectors of England and Scotland have been separately governed since the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992. The Act also removed the divide between universities and polytechnics and, since then, the same preoccupations have characterized higher education policy in England, despite well-developed discourses around citizenship education per se. In the late 1990s, a linked series of agendas and schemes aimed at both increasing participation in numerical terms and improving the socio-economic mix of students were incorporated under the rhetoric of 'Widening Participation'. But the government goal of 50% of school leavers going to university has been subjected to a range of critiques, from the widely debated contention that higher education has a very limited capacity to interrupt inherited patterns of privilege and capital acquisition to what has been called the 'new stratification thesis' (Reay et al., 2005, 9; Furlong and Cartmel, 2009), which notes disproportionate numbers of so called 'non-traditional' students attending the less prestigious universities and former polytechnics.

Osler and Starkey (2006) in their review of research and practice on 'education for democratic citizenship' in England, highlight the relative insularity of the debates which do not seem to take into account activities in the field in other parts of the UK, or indeed Europe. They identify a wide interpretation of 'citizenship' as a school curriculum subject but also as skills that endow young people to be active and participative citizens.

'Skills' in the context of the well-known 'Crick Report' published in 1998, are considered in so far as they enable democratic participation. As a response to concerns about anti-social behaviour, the Crick Report advocated the 'citizenship learning outcomes' of community activity, and knowledge about political structures (political literacy), rights and responsibilities (Section 3:20). In practice, attempts to connect these ideas in core policy debates and initiatives concerned with the relationship between schooling and citizenship have foundered. The confusion over the meaning of the term 'citizenship' has remained practically unresolved, even in later initiatives, such as the 2001 Denham Report on *Public Order and Community Cohesion* that was criticized for defining cultural citizenship on the basis of 'Englishness' (Herbrechter and Higgins, 2006).

Similar confusion can be seen at the level of Higher Education – in, for instance, the rhetorical fusion of concepts as diverse as: "global citizenship and employability" (as seen in the Higher Education Academy *Strategic Priorities 2013-14*). In part, this problem is due to operational difficulties: the development of 'citizenship-oriented' higher education curriculum and training of teachers invested in 'citizenship' is even harder than in schools. But there are also more significant structural barriers to pursuing a citizenship agenda: Universities function in a climate of increased competition, and are judged by their position in the national (and for some, international) league tables. In such a climate, employability becomes an important proxy performance indicator of quality, with a seemingly neutral-utilitarian value, often promoted at the expense of 'softer' and less quantifiable purposes for higher education. Operating in intensely stratified education markets, universities are under pressure to produce entrepreneurial young people, but also 'skill matches' in the labour market and thus contribute both to individual students' career success, and to the needs of the local and national economies (Morley, 2013). For some universities in England, this emphasis has led to a more competence-based curriculum and a more distinct vocational shift to the content as well as organization of knowledge. Modularization and continuous assessment, have offered mechanisms to facilitate this switch to an entrepreneurial and highly flexible HE environment. But, this version of employability is rarely compatible with a citizenship agenda concerned with civic dimensions, or indeed with national or global inequalities and injustice. As far back as 2001, Morley (2001, 132) argued that "employability is a decontextualized signifier in so far as it overlooks how social structures such as gender, race, social class and disability interact with labour market opportunities".

Similarly to developments in most countries in Europe, HE in England has undergone reforms and changes in the post-war years that have significantly changed its shape and character. The sector is now larger than ever before: in 2014, 34,8% of 18 year olds entered higher

education (the figure rising to over 40% if we account for older and mature students); and, there is higher representation of students from less privileged background studying at universities (UCAS, 2014). This change in scale has been accompanied by a succession of policy shifts taking the public conception of university education dramatically away from either the Humboldtian or Newmanesque ideals as described by Zgaga (2009).

In 1998, The Dearing Committee of Inquiry's report, 'Higher Education in the Learning Society' established a view of higher education as a central part of both the economy and market, conceived on the state level. Consultations and recommendations flowed from the report's central premise that, "...students are motivated to enter higher education by the desire to improve their labour market prospects". This view was consolidated by the Higher Education White Paper of 2003 (*The Future of Higher Education*), which reflected early New Labour's attempts to straddle (new) economic and (old) social visions, with its awkward phrasings on "freedoms and funding" and "fair access". The policy message was clear: universities (or at least those without substantial private endowments) would henceforth have to earn their keep.

The re-naming in 2007 of the government department responsible for universities as "Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills" (from Department of Education and Skills), emphasized the shift away from humanistic notions of higher education. Henceforth, all aspects of a university's business were to be evaluated according to their usefulness to business. Strong links were forged with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) that was keen to develop students' employability skills, which it saw as equally important to academic ones: "These skills should be developed alongside (students') academic qualifications and achievements – they are an integral part of higher education" (CBI, 2009, Recommendation 21). Although the CBI professed to be drawing on students' own views in this, it has been followed by fairly consistent reporting that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not translate good degrees into good jobs as well as their wealthier peers, regardless of the employability orientation of their course or university.

The current government (in place since 2010) have subsumed ministerial responsibility for university education under the "Department for Business, Innovation & Skills" (known as BIS). They are pursuing even closer links between universities and businesses for the production of graduates with employability skills to meet the demands of a flexible labour market. Against further cost reduction

of university funding, the government introduced a Regulatory Partnership Group set up in 2011 that maps out the regulatory framework for HE in England. This consolidates a shift of control of universities from relative independence (relying on state funding and distant regulation) towards a strong control from the market (through student choice and cross-sector competition), and stronger than ever state-steering in terms of quality. Combined with changes in funding for Higher Education over the last few years, this has further strengthened the pre-existing diversity of institutions, and the vertical differentiation of universities in terms of status, specialisation, links to the labour market, research funding, and student intake (Findlow, 2008; Molesworth et al., 2009; Tomlinson, 2012). In 2012, the Review of University-Business Collaboration (known as 'Wilson Review') laid what can be seen as the final cornerstone to the UK government's efforts to embed knowledge exchange with business as a core mission for higher education (HE) in England.

So, social and state expectations from universities have changed, and universities themselves have responded in various ways to re-defining their sense of purpose. Most discussion about the functions of English universities, by universities themselves and independent analysts, is directly inspired by funding changes in the sector that have seen student fees rise to £9000 per annum². These costs of a university education have raised the stakes for students but also for universities which have become very proactive in their recruitment campaigns and in repackaging themselves through marketing strategies. Employability has become part of such marketing packaging, and both the university self-promotion literature, and the government HE policies tend to reduce the studying experience to what has been criticised as a primarily utilitarian and instrumental pursuit: "The value of a university education is the income it enables you to earn minus the cost of acquiring that education." (Collini, 2013). The student has been re-cast as a 'customer' of a 'business' that, in the UK, the state still has a monopoly on.

So, how can we think about the changing role of universities in England and how is this linked to issues of citizenship? The wide range of universities in England do not of course fit nicely in any of the archetypes described by Zgaga – no university does. But, there are features of all 'types' found in different proportions across a sector which is highly differentiated. So, many of the prestigious Russell Group³ universities are driven primarily by research and knowledge generation in the Humboldtian tradition, with distinct elements of democratic and

2 This is the annual fee for undergraduate studies for UK and EU students, for the academic year 2014-2015 (equivalent to about 11,325 Euro).

3 This is a "member organization" that represents 24 UK Universities (20 in England, 2 in Scotland, 1 in N. Ireland, and 1 in Wales). According to their website, Russell Group universities are "committed to the highest levels of academic excellence in both teaching and research", they "operate globally, attracting international students and academic staff from many different countries, but also have a strong role and influence within their regional and local community". The Russell Group also claim "outstanding research and teaching, unrivalled links with businesses and a commitment to civic responsibility" (<http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>).

liberal functions – although these are often ‘ideals’ that are beautifully packaged and sold to students, together with strong elements of ‘tradition’ and ‘exclusivity’. Even in these institutions however, we would find strong instrumental links with the economy, which are very much present in the ways the universities are organized and funded. The less wealthy institutions on the other hand, are more influenced by local labour market frameworks, with vocationally oriented preparation of students as their dominant function. At best, these institutions retain a link to the local communities that goes beyond the economically defined, and serve different kinds of social needs.

Is the public good vision of higher education still present in England? There are important examples of university practice that may be suggestive of opening up of policy space for alternative visions of citizenship. We shall discuss some selected ones which we believe illustrate the tensions inherent in institutional practice when citizenship agendas meet the pressures of performance in the national and global market place.

ENGAGING WITH CITIZENSHIP AND THE MARKETING OF COSMOPOLITAN DEGREES AND IDENTITIES

A number of UK universities (all in England, in addition to Edinburgh) have since 2010 introduced Liberal Arts undergraduate programmes⁴, and limited cross-disciplinary study in the form of degrees that allow students to take a wide range of subsidiary subjects. It is a move that may well be inspired by persuasive arguments in defense of America’s liberal arts tradition, on the basis that a sluggish economy requires bright young people capable of ‘thinking outside the box’ (Ungar, 2010).

Even though there is a long tradition of European universities to offer such broad university education, this was a trend almost under extinction through the 1980s and 1990s, when most universities strengthened the disciplinary appeal of their education offer. Considerations of employability of graduates, but also of a research funding base, meant that broad interdisciplinary degrees were not seen as popular, and the introduction of tuition fees for students would point towards the phasing out of such degrees. All the universities currently involved in such Liberal Arts initiatives, belong to the Russell Group of universities. The rationale provided by these universities is to reintroduce degrees that include combinations of Arts and Science programmes covering social and physical sciences, arts and the humanities. Significantly, they have all constructed courses on the basis of (a) interdisciplinarity, (b) spending a year abroad where students are linked to other “top ranking”, “global” universities in the world, (c) personalizing learning to suit the interests of individual students; and (d) promoting a broadly cosmopolitan outlook. In addi-

tion, they are all keen to emphasise the elite nature of their education, as well as the marketability of the skills for graduates of these programmes:

Arts and Sciences at UCL also provides core courses which enhance the understanding of how different branches of knowledge relate to one another and encourage interdisciplinary thinking. This distinct approach delivers both educational breadth and depth, and fosters an understanding of working across the disciplines to respond to real world issues. (University College London, Liberal Arts & Sciences, 2014)

A degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences puts you among the next generation of leaders. A prestigious undergraduate degree for elite A or A grade students, it offers you the unique opportunity to design your own programme of study to match your individual interests and strengths. (Birmingham University, Liberal Arts and Sciences programme, 2014)*

One of the very first degrees of its kind in the UK, the BA in Liberal Arts is a flexible, interdisciplinary and innovative course which enables students to tailor their degree from a wide range of options in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. It combines the best features of higher education in the UK and the USA... As part of the degree you can spend a semester abroad at one of our global partner institutions. Many of our students enjoy studying in New York City as part of an exclusive Liberal Arts exchange with the New School. (King’s College Liberal Arts, 2014)

The versatility of Liberal Arts graduates - a result of their interdisciplinary experience, their engagement with qualitative and quantitative data analysis, their linguistic facility, and their critical acumen - qualifies them for post-graduate study and makes them highly marketable to prospective employers. (University of Kent, BA (Hons) Liberal Arts, 2014)

Clearly these programmes construct their appeal on the back of the elite and exclusive nature of the universities that offer them, and they emphasize a curriculum that attempts to combine the ‘interesting’ with the ‘useful’ for the future global citizen. But, at the same time, it is clear that this approach to undergraduate courses is one that only the more selective universities have the luxury to offer, targeting the (already) cosmopolitan, high achieving, ambitious and globally mobile student / future ‘leader’. So the link with ‘employability’ as seen from

4 In: Birmingham, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Kent, Kings College London, Oxford, and UCL.

a social cohesion perspective would seem tenuous at best. As Tomlinson (2012, 411) argues “clear differences have been reported on the class-cultural and academic profiles of graduates from different HE institutions, along with different rates of graduate return”. The students that attend such Liberal Arts programmes and are willing to pay the high tuition fees for a (more risky) inter-disciplinary degree, are likely to view employability from a very different perspective to the more risk-averse students with lower socio-economic or academic capital.

CITIZENSHIP VS. SKILLS AND THE LABOUR MARKET?

The expansion of university places in the UK during the 1990-2000s period has been accompanied by a more recent attempt to control student numbers but also their destination. The current government announced an increase in HE places for 2014-15, but the intention is to regulate the market place of universities and impose number controls on student places, “if providers are expanding at the expense of the quality of provision” (HEFCE, 2014, 20); a move likely to favor the already strong institutions in the HE landscape. The current government continues to view HE as an important economic agent, with the need to further enhance the employability of graduates. This is of course not a new theme. Earlier governments committed funding for additional student places in the system, with the intention to “increase the share of workers with high level skills from 31% to 40% by 2020” (HECSU, 2008), equating ‘graduates’ with ‘high level skills’ in the market place⁵. This is a theme that has been important in policy making in the last few years. In 2008, a White Paper on the creation of the UK as an ‘Innovation Nation’ focused on higher education partnership with business, emphasizing their strategic usefulness, and the need for a strong ‘performance’ orientation and international competitiveness of universities (DIUS, 2008).

The White Paper, and the various initiatives by the Higher Education Funding Council for England that responded to the government’s requests for forging closer links between HE and the economy, have prioritized a rather short term skills agenda. Government-linked think tanks and consortia such as Westminster Briefing and Government Knowledge⁶ view HE studying in terms of ‘improv(ing) your ability to meet employer requirements’, and ‘maintaining standards’ in terms of ‘giving students what they want’, while Universities-UK (an association of 134 institutions), despite accepting the ‘student as consumer’ as an established feature of the higher education

landscape, encompasses in its remit the possibility of universities also having broader social purposes:

The value of higher education is generally assessed in terms of how much money universities generate for the individual, for business and for the wider economy. Critical though these considerations are, they tend to ignore the huge public good that universities generate, both locally and nationally. UUK works to highlight the importance of universities to their local communities. (Universities-UK website, 2014).

Problematizing issues to do with immigration, international students and the internationalization agenda, it departs from the government vision most notably for the way that it talks about ‘value’ in terms that are independent of money, with finance seen primarily as a constraint rather the *raison d’être* of universities. On a more cynical note of course, Russell Group universities are also part of Universities-UK, and the civic society language of the latter is very rarely seen in the discourse used by the prestigious universities either as part of their collective Russell Group identity, or in their individual university literature and marketing.

The 2000s saw some interesting initiatives across universities in England, in the form of: 3-year funding cycles of projects explicitly designed to promote citizenship teaching at university level; dedicated modules on citizenship (mainly as part of Politics courses); or, (more rarely) a whole institution approach to citizenship (see McCowan, 2014 for a review). But the sustainability of such projects is mostly short lived. They tend to get discontinued when their funding runs out, and they are easily taken over by more pressing agendas that aim at increasing concerns with employability.

The (rhetorical often) commitment to fostering ‘civic values’ and the importance of universities promoting ‘citizenship’ is certainly present at the policy level. The Higher Education Funding Council for England has clearly put this into the map in their 2006-2011 Strategic Plan:

Higher Education plays a key role in developing active citizens, and sustaining a civilized, more tolerant and inclusive society. (para 42)

But, there has been little policy attention or specific initiatives trying to operationalize, fund, and evaluate this commitment. Whether a matter of changing the curriculum, or a means of increasing the active partici-

5 Equating ‘education’ with ‘high skills’ and assuming a continuing increase in the rate of return from university degrees, has been challenged: Both by research on ‘overeducation’ and its consequences for matching graduate skills and employers’ needs, but also by evidence of falling rates of return to degrees in times of HE expansion (Chevalier and Lindley, 2009; McGuinness and Sloane, 2011).

6 These are recently established, with close links to the government, organizing policy events and conferences, with the purpose of giving advice to government. Westminster Briefing is producing events in association with The House Magazine, which is “the weekly business publication for the Houses of Parliament” (<http://www.westminster-briefing.com/>, <http://www.govknow.com/>).

pation of young people in civic matters, HEFCE policy documents tend to be fairly vague on this point. The relative openness of the New Labour governments of the 2000s on linking higher education to citizenship, appears to have reduced dramatically and quickly with the economic recession and the arrival of a new Conservative-Liberal coalition government in 2010, bent on the role of universities for income generation, and a refocusing primarily on employability of graduates.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this article was to review selected debates in the European and English education policy frameworks in order to illustrate the connections between on one hand: discourses around employability and the role of universities in economic growth, and on the other, the debates around universities and citizenship.

Universities have always acted as sites for citizenship, even if this was not an explicit or 'designed' feature of their mission. Preparing young adults for entry to the labour market, practicing political participation as part of their studies, and acquiring critical awareness of social issues, has always been an ingrained feature of studying and 'living' in HE spaces. Universities have been expected to create public value by the state (in most European contexts), and increasingly now by the market, and of course individual students. The 'public value' they offer needs to be conceptualized in relation to their purposes not merely as isolated institutions but also as part of a wider public sector that is positioned and acts within certain political and economic frameworks (Alford and O'Flynn, 2009). And, it is these frameworks that have been changing over the last 20 years, and so providing universities with new parameters within which 'citizenship' is practiced.

One such framework is provided by internationalization and Europeanisation policies and practices that have become a dominant feature of the HE landscape, whereas the second framework is the political and economic markets within which universities operate.

This twin framework places both individuals and institutions in positions whereby employability, marketability and a 'global' outlook are presented as universally 'good' and necessary properties (Altbach, 2013). In responding to this, universities in England have become very adept at adjusting to market requirements, and in many instances playing the 'global' dimension to their advantage. But, there is no doubt that universities, even within the same country, are not operating from a level playing field. The extent to which different universities engage with this dimension very much depends on their position within existing structures of power and privilege. For prestigious universities, the citizenship discourse is manifested both in their literature, but also in study programs, as well as recruitment of international, 'cosmopolitan' students. This is by no means a task that

institutions endowed with less economic and cultural capital can reproduce.

This is exactly the kind of citizenship discourse that the European Higher Education Area encourages, and student exchange programmes such as Erasmus promote: The educated European citizen with strong sense of a dual national / European identity, where employability, mobility and flexibility are key. But, there is also a significant difference. The European Council and Commission (2012) have been emphasizing the need for a stronger disciplinary focus of university education. Science at university level has for the last 15 years been seen as an integral part of economic policy – and this includes inter-disciplinarity of only a limited character. The latest European Council urges the Commission and the member states to address shortages in the STEM subjects, and the industry to be more involved in forecasting future skills needs' (European Council, 2014, para.10), in an attempt to bind education and labour markets more tightly.

At the same time, both at the level of Europe, and within English HE developments, there is an ever stronger focus on students as consumers of HE for the development of their own career progression and mobility. The high levels of instrumentality of this discourse are promoted stronger than the 'public value' elements of university education. Students are very aware of the diversified and vertically structured university system when they make their choices of university and, in England, this is only pronounced further by their payment of high tuition fees. Within the universities, the quality control discourse and practice and the (relative) weakening of autonomy and control of their work, academics (even in prestigious institutions) find that they need to prioritize narrow and instrumental purposes for their own practice (Findlow, 2012; Morley, 2013).

All these undermine the inclusion of citizenship education, either as a curriculum focus or as a set of practices that draws on democratic participation of students. There are examples to the opposite, but these tend to be either a packaging of citizenship for marketing purposes (as the example of the Liberal Arts degrees would suggest) or a set of distinct but isolated practices that are not integrated organically in the life of universities.

Is there a silver lining? We believe there is still space within higher education practice to embed citizenship practices. We accept the argument that higher education is central to the task of *re-imagining* the public good (Nixon, 2011) and this gives higher education a central role in making, not only delivering on, social and economic policy. In addition to providing knowledge and skills, this role requires universities to be committed to the sort of "critical education for citizenship" that aims to promote understanding of "the politics of difference" (Rimmerman, 1998, 100) and helps students make the connection between their lives and their role as global citizens (Langran et al., 2009).

OBLIKOVANJE IZOBRAŽENEGA DRŽAVLJANA: SPREMINJJOČI SE OKVIRI UNIVERZ V EVROPI IN ANGLIJI

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POVZETEK

Članek odpira vprašanja, povezana z državljanstvom in vlogo univerz v kontekstu javnopolitičnih sprememb v Evropi in Združenem kraljestvu v zadnjih dveh desetletjih. Četrto stoletje po politični tranziciji v Vzhodni Evropi in 70 let po koncu II. svetovne vojne je Evropa bolj združena kot kadarkoli. Nove politične, družbene in gospodarske razmere na celotnem kontinentu ustvarjajo nove pritiske in pričakovanja, ki se prenašajo na državljane in institucije, pri čemer so univerze na čelu marsikaterega gospodarskega ali družbenega projekta. Kaj pravzaprav te nove razmere pomenijo za državljanstvo v kontekstu evropskih univerz in kako se države članice Evropske unije odzivajo na spreminjajoče se razmere? Ta vprašanja članek obravnava na primeru Anglije kot devoluiranega izobraževalnega sistema Združenega kraljestva znotraj prostora Evropske unije. Primer Anglije kaže na napetosti med humanističnimi predstavami, ki se ohranjajo znotraj nekaterih univerz, ter pritiski po ustvarjanju "gospodarstva znanja", ki prežemajo nacionalni in transnacionalni prostor na področju izobraževanja.

Ključne besede: državljanstvo, evropske politike, visokošolsko izobraževanje, Anglija, trg dela, univerze

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