

March 2005

CRDHE Working Paper Vol.1

Report of the International Workshop

on

**HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM
IN JAPAN AND GERMANY**

Transformation of State-University Relation



Center for Research and Development of Higher Education
The University of Tokyo

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~**Transformation of State-University Relation**~

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Introduction

This volume reports the proceedings of the workshop on higher education reform in Japan and Germany.

Higher Education institutions in the world are now facing serious challenges. The Universities in Germany, with its glorious tradition, appears to be struggling to transform itself. Japanese higher education, one of the foremost at least in quantity, is also trying to change itself. The recent change in National Universities into National University Corporation is one of the changes. Through it both intellectually stimulating and practically, it is useful for us to compare the two countries with respect to the recent reforms.

In organizing this workshop we focused on the relationship between states and universities, because one of the important trends in both countries is characterized as the movement away from the predominance of the government and towards the utilization of market mechanisms. Under these conditions, universities are expected to effectively and efficiently achieve a high level of research and education.

The workshop was held in School of Education, The University of Tokyo on 14th June, 2004. It organized under the joint auspices of Japan Association for Higher Education Research, Center for Research and Development of Higher Education, and Chair of Higher Education, School of Education, The University of Tokyo. About 40 people participated in the meeting, including high-level policy-makers, and administrators of higher education institutions, and higher education researchers. The main objective of this meeting was to provide the opportunity for researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners to come together and to discuss recent developments in this field of research on higher education as well as the relationships among research policy and practice.

Finally we hope this report will make a contribution to the progress in the policymaking and research in higher education.

March 2005

Kazuo Okamoto

Director, Center for Research and Development of Higher Education

Reforms in German Higher Education

Michael Daxner

(Professor and Former Rector, Oldenburg University)

Higher education has become one of the really global issues long before all political and business issues have succeeded to achieve similarly. Science and scholarship have developed standards, which are widely acknowledged. However, what is true for science and methods, has still a long way to go in the areas of recognition, quality assurance and mobility. National boundaries and limitations and, more often than not, narrow interpretations of system's and institutional autonomy have created a confusion in the relations between systems and universities, which is detrimental to the attempts to enhance the global networking of higher learning.

The European attempts to overcome this crisis bear a name : Bologna. Bologna is, at a second glance, a twin-track symbol. In 1988, over 400 rectors and presidents from western and eastern European institutions signed the Charter of Bologna on academic freedom and institutional, autonomy : The Magna Charta Universitatum. This was the beginning of an intellectual bridging gap, when the real opening of the borders was still a year away. I call the Magna Charta an anticipated peace dividend. And then, in 1999, again in Bologna, 30 ministers signed the Declaration on the European Area of Higher Education ; this basic document wants to overcome the national restraints on a supra-national level, focussing on quality, mobility, recognition and transferability of credits and structures.

Other big systems, such as Japan or the United States, watch carefully whether 'Bologna' has become just another appeal to cooperation, or whether it will redefine the structures of European higher education. This is the more interesting as all major systems in the developed world face some similar aspects of crisis.

1.

Recently I had the opportunity to deliver quite a few speeches on the crisis in the German and European systems of higher education. I did not feel too good, who wants to blame his own country and who wants to make the hopeless statement that many of the obstacles to reforms are so typically home-made that it is difficult to turn towards a brighter future. And again, I will have to describe what's wrong with German academia. But I shall give you some facts, which make a veritable crisis, without context, just as they appear. And will turn immediately after the dark painting towards a much brighter second outlook. There are reforms ongoing, like

paradoxical interventions into a very difficult and stubborn patient, whose main characteristic is to prove resistant against any counsel.

- In an international ranking, the best German university is listed Nr. 26 (Ludwigs Maximilian University München, which, by the way of German perception, would not rank as a #1 in Germany).
- In the prestigious PISA-study by OECD, Germany ranks only average, regarding the competences of high school students in literacy and mathematical and science proficiency. The school system is somewhat anachronistic and not as learner-orientated as it should be. This hinders the supply of higher education with adequately prepared students.
- More than 25% of all students do not complete by graduating the programs to which they were admitted originally. Drop out rates are high.
- German students are among the oldest worldwide, when they graduate. There is no adequate system of organised life-long learning and further education.
- The attraction of Germany universities to foreign students is relatively low, despite the fact that there no tuition fees.
- The structure of studies does not reflect the requirements of life-long learning.
- The environment of successful institutions, including placement, alumni associations, philanthropy, and other quality standards of good universities, is underdeveloped.

Any serious analysis of the crisis would point at some underlying structures, which make it objectively difficult to initiate changes, which must precede reforms. Without these changes, reforms do not have any chance. Among these structures are some which bear an enormous potential of progress, if tackled : It is absolutely necessary to give an autonomy to the universities, which has become normal to many other countries. Along with this autonomy, the right to employ and dismiss academic and support staff, the right to create and administer income, and the right to finally determine the academic profile are the main issues. (Other countries, like Austria, have demonstrated how appropriate legislation can overcome traditional patterns of state control). The second change which must occur is linked to the deepest layers of German constitution after 1945. Culture and education are the only effective powers which the 15 states

have retained. Their sovereignty over higher education has been attacked by the Federal Government several times, and when it comes to research, they have little say. But concerning finance, study programs and the profile of the higher education landscape, the Länder, as the states are called, have a blocking power, which is detrimental to the national system and —ridiculous in the European context. Apart from that, 15 bureaucracies and a central bureaucracy and numerous coordinating bodies have to be coordinated. This is unique among developed countries, and the example of the United States is not bearing, because there, the federal influence is mainly restricted to student grants and research funding. The third major obstacle to reforms is the under-financing of a previously overpaid and rich system. And the fourth lies deeply buried in German ideology, it is, if you will, a paper tiger, a nightmare and a political threat at once.

Nevertheless, you might wonder why there are so many reforms occurring in German higher education ; and sometimes, I wonder how well they are growing, despite so many and many more obstacles.

2.

What has recently changed and why are the reforms the beginning of a thorough change?

Let me say that I am aware of the seeming contradiction to my earlier statement that in Germany changes must precede reforms. But what I mean now is that the reforms which occur indicate a process, in which change cannot be easily stopped or reverted. Not much in the so called German system will remain as it has been.

I will talk about reforms and changes. The reforms are what the dissolution of the nation-state and the supra-national emergence of a European higher education space demand. This is a sphere, where the market-driven development prevails, without automatically damaging some so called core values of the university, as many critics fear. Among these reforms, I will refer to

- the Bologna process and its implication,
- the intrusion by the evaluative state,
- the redefinition of quality and performance,
- the trend towards a study-oriented structure of institutions,
- a certain internationalisation.

If these are reforms, then they face stark opposition from many sides, and yet, they make

progress.

Bologna has become the keyword for a reform which acknowledges the priority of European integration over national traditions and habits. Systems with only one pre-doctoral degree, like Germany, have more difficulties to adapting the new model, but basically, Bologna is not an educational or learner-oriented reform, it is a political reform. The European area of higher education precedes what has yet to come in other fields, like trade, brain gain and brain drain, environmental and production standards. Why then does Bologna not signify a real change? Because it allows practically every reasonable pedagogical and organisational concept to be covered by its conditions. The reforms under the roof of Bologna will provoke some real changes, but as such, they are contingent. Only very hard-boiled opponents believe in a necessary downgrading of academia by this new standard. Even the complaint of German industry that they have no real trust in the B.A.-degrees can be easily deconstructed. My prediction is that in a few years all components of Bologna will be implemented without any big loss. However, one change is inherent especially to the German model : Bologna moves the system further apart from the legendary unity of teaching and research, from Humboldt and from the self contained mock-autonomy of the institutions. It is humiliating, well, but not unreasonably so.

The battle against evaluation and performance indicators was fierce, rhetorically chaotic, and futile. German universities could be easily convinced that a quality based policy of accountability would give them better and not worse stance against the government and the dictate of ever scarcer resources. However, the instruments are being abused by the government and many good instruments, like lump sum budgets and indicator-based contracts, are being distorted by this abuse.

The redefinition of quality and performance occurs in this context. The holy cows of *habilitation* and professor-oriented teaching have given way to better diagnostic and prognostic assessment and to the demand for student oriented didactics and reformed methodology. This is another interface with substantial changes.

It needs many dispersed reform-steps to cope with the study orientation. There are many more students than in the past, and their perspectives for the future are much more differentiated than in the old pattern of reproducing professional elites or accumulating cultural capital. Many are afraid that research will further lose ground in the university and emigrate into institutes outside academia. This is certainly true, and has been the case for the last thirty

years, but is no logical consequence from the new study-orientation. We shall go more deeply into this sensitive field a bit later.

Finally, internationalisation is on the way. Many traditionalist academicians wonder why Germany has not become or remained really attractive to specific cohorts of foreign students. The reforms which take place are mainly bottom up, including individuals, small study units or bigger research teams to existing networks and creating new ones. Mobility has become a diversified issue.

For each of these fields of reform we can find many examples, and quite a few case studies could be produced per extempore. However, I am reluctant to overrate these examples. The reforms are, as I said, market-driven, almost forced by the European integration, by growing competitiveness within Europe, and by the taking effect of certain standards. In a way, we are facing 'finalised' reforms, which do not necessarily reflect the state of mind inside the institutions.

(Why many of these reforms are not being recognised as such or even are attacked with some exaggerated fervour, has been part of a more elaborate consideration in my Kyoto presentation. It would be worthwhile to follow each battle for a major change and to explore some regular modes of conflict).

3.

After twelve years as a university president and five years abroad in policy, I have returned to my institute in the university and to teaching. One of the first experiences has been that the students have changed. They have become more industrious, more interactive and responsive, more relaxed. Of course, this can be also a result from my own changes, but I doubt whether my teaching has improved during seventeen years of absence from the classroom. Other colleagues affirm this experience. The biggest change is arriving from a side where most experts did not expect it to come, from the students.

The change is good news for the universities, or, for higher education in general. It simply means that people have become more interested in their institutions. It will take a long discourse to explain why I think that the new awareness of the university is linked to a loss of traditional attitudes towards the *German University*. The long-lasting economic crisis has accelerated the deconstruction of the myth of this institution. People simply are fed up by the permanent deployment of doomsday visions of an institution, which they did not much know

about. The specific form of autonomy, which I would rather call introversion, has made the university impenetrable for the public interest. Since the effects of massification are less obvious today than 25 years ago, interest in the fate of the institution has grown. This is a paradox.

Graduates are still privileged in terms of lifetime income and employment. But the gratification for a successful study in form of high income and the privileges from social and cultural capitals accumulated drift apart from each other. In other words, the focus on professional reward for a period of study has narrowed, while a higher participation of students in a shrinking population creates new modes of mass higher education. Participation is rising for first enrolment cohorts and will grow further through life long learning and retraining. This is not exceptional, but it breaks the old German tradition of a long once-and forever study. My conclusion is that participation in higher education becomes more normal, profane in a way¹.

I confess that I do not like all aspects of this development, but we have had our chance to improve higher education, and now we are facing some of the effects ; against all odds, this development does not attack seriously the 'core values' of universities, but it changes some paradigms². Most significant, and largely positive, is the development of a meso-level universal participation in higher education. My hope is that step by step the gap between a highly powerful expert culture and a lay culture will close. This may help both the employability and the average level of competence ; the reforms do not support, however, directly an emerging of a new democratic elite, which would be based on universities as sites of democratic citizenship, as a Council of Europe project calls it. It is in this field that I see the need for further reforms.

This normalcy leads to another important change. Slowly, but steadily the demographic factors become visible. The universities will become more international ; whether they become multicultural is not clear by now. There are many hundred thousands of Turkish Germans ; so far, we do not have a Turkish university or college. The integration of the Turkish population is obviously more successful than with other ethnic groups. But what the future will bring, is another question. One result from demographic shifts is the tendency towards English as a second language of instruction. While this can be interpreted as an alignment with 'western standards' and consolidates the ties with partners in Anglophone regions, it might also become an attraction for students from countries, where English is not the mother tongue or second language. These students will consider the language as a tool to get global.

1 If this is a sign of 'Americanisation', I would not object. The US system pays much attention to its schools, and the students identify with their institutions much more intensely than European or German students do. Cf. Brunkhorst 2004, p.95

2 EUA ACU meeting in Torino 3-5 June 2004

The third aspect I want to discuss refers to contents. The evaluative state has brought a lot of unrest into the colleges. Each evaluation and assessment has also its content-orientated side, which raises questions about the meaningfulness and the quality of what is being studied. The classical simplicity of the syllabus as a derivative from research has gone forever. The detachment of teaching from research, however, bears also some risks. The whole question of further education and retraining of faculty is bound to this aspect. Germany is far from having institutionalised a scheme in this direction, but, at least, the topic has been set. This is a direct effect from the modularising of the curriculum, which is necessary for a sustained application of transferable credits. The Modules are 'pre-set' ; that means that they must be inspected and reviewed in short intervals as to not become outdated. There is a danger of a schematic application of the module-system ; then, the contents would just reflect a 'classical' canon. It could also be a source of reform, if the modules reflect the changed expectations of both the students and the 'market' behind them. I do not only mean the labour market. There is also a competition among the different personality and knowledge profiles, which serve to cope with the individual planning of lives and careers. This aspect has not been thoroughly investigated by now, but will certainly gain in importance.

I have listed three changes that are not appearing in most of the reform-overviews on German higher education. I shall discuss the details of the reforms and changes in a context which will read as follows :

Germany has started belatedly to reform its structures. This is detrimental for the present situation but gives some grounded hope for a lessons-learned-approach. We know by now that only by introducing the evaluative state, we will not gain the excellence we want to achieve. We have won a feeling for the demand of students to be taken seriously both as clients and as partners. And we start to reconsider our potentials without asking permanently what the reaction by the governing state and stakeholders will be.

With regard to the overarching visions of university and higher education, Germany has to keep up with more elaborate systems, like the Napoleonic or American ; however, all systems, including the Japanese, face new challenges, demography and universal participation among them, but also security issues, a less safe environment, social tensions and a decrease of economic gratification from study, while the social and cultural capitals may be kept high. The similarities in crisis among our systems may support and strengthen our networks and global cooperation, the specific ways to solve our problems may create a friendly competition for the best to overcome the crisis.

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University Reform in Japan

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1. Main Points of Government's University Policy

In 1987, Japanese government established “The University Council” at Ministry of Education and asked the Council to report on “Measures for Enhancing, Individualizing and Vitalizing Education and Research in Universities and Other institutions”. Since then, the government has been putting emphasis on the following points in promoting university reform.

a. To enhance quality of education and research to world class

The main driver toward the emphasis on quality enhancement has been growing concern among industry leaders and politicians on being left behind other advanced countries in the global competition for developing high technology.

Government has been responding to this concern through special financial supports to “Center of Excellence”, increasing investment to post-graduate courses, and shifting weight from general core funding to targeted competitive funding.

b. To improve responsiveness to social needs

There has been a wide range of dissatisfaction with rigid system and unwilling staff' in universities particularly in national universities, which have delayed development of industry-university cooperation. This partly led to the incorporation of national university.

c. To promote diversification of universities

As massification of higher education has been progressing, Japanese universities have increasingly become multi-tier. However idea and practice of research intensive university still remains strongly among universities. This often causes social dissatisfaction, students' complaints, and inefficient use of resources and so on.

It is self-evident that an individual university could not respond to all the diversified needs. Universities therefore are expected to diversify themselves through concentrating on the area where their strength is placed. Government is encouraging universities to diversify themselves

through various targeted funding.

2. Incorporation of National University

The most significant reform in pursuing above-mentioned policy is the incorporation of national university. Since April 2004, national university has changed its legal status from a governmental organization to a special type of public corporation which is named “National University Corporation”. By this reform, the system of university governance has been completely restructured.

The direct aim of this incorporation is to vitalize governance and management of national university. Government expects that this will make university respond more positively to the above-mentioned policy issues.

The system design for vitalizing governance and management of national university can be summarized as follows.

a. To remove regulations imposed on governmental organization in order to make university more autonomous in administrative and financial management.

Funding mechanism is also changed from line-item budget to block grant, which facilitates university to use discretion in financing itself.

b. To confer university president ultimate authority for managing university.

President can exercise predominant authority in university management as follows.

- Only President has the legal status to represent both university and corporation.
- President has the authority to make ultimate decision on all institutional management.
- President appoints executive directors, vice presidents and all other staffs of the university except auditors.

President and executive directors form “Board of Directors”. When president makes decisions on important matters such as budget and mid-term plan, President is requested by law to ask deliberation of Board of Directors beforehand. In this sense, Board of Directors may look like “Council” or “Board of Governors” in English university. However it has quite different nature. It is president that makes final decision, not Board of Directors. Board of Directors is essentially formal meetings of executives. There are no organs or persons within university that can legally bind president’s decision. Government expect president to play the key role in vitalizing university management,

c. To change the way of government’s control over university management, from direct control through administration office to target-based control through evaluation of achievement.

For government, target-based control system is the core of the new corporation system. Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology establishes a mid-term (6 years) target for each university. University is requested to draw up a mid-term plan to achieve the target and to get approval of the Minister. Based on its mid-term plan, university is requested to submit a yearly plan to the Minister.

The Minister will establish a Committee for Evaluation of National Universities, comprising relevant experts and authorities. The committee will evaluate the performance of universities each fiscal year.

At the end of mid-term, the committee evaluates the degree to which each university met its mid-term target and the level of achievements of their research and other activities. When evaluating activities related to education and research, the committee must commission the work to National Institution for University Evaluation.

The result of the Committee’s evaluation should be reflected in government’s funding to university and the content of the next mid-term target.

We should note that as due regards to autonomy of university, the Minister is requested to set up mid-term target of each university based on the draft presented by concerned university.

Result of target-based control heavily depends on evaluation of achievement. However method of evaluation is yet in the process of completion.

This unique system has a prototype named “Independent Administrative Agency” the idea of which came from “British Agency Model”

3. Challenges for good exploitation of new system

It has been only a few months since national universities have been incorporated. It would be too early to evaluate the new system as a whole. However, it is already obvious that national universities need to address many challenges. The challenges include followings.

Firstly, the most important thing would be to set up clear goals and strategies which should be shared with relevant staff. Mid-term target might be expected to play this role, but comprehensive and general nature of the target makes it difficult to serve this purpose.

Secondly, it would be absolutely necessary to bridge the wide gap between president's strong legal authority and traditional collegial practice. The best fitted way to balance president's leadership and bottom-up initiatives should be seek for.

Thirdly, management of university is increasingly complex and there are few established models. It would be vital for university to develop and secure necessary professional staff.