



## New practices of education and research

Universities as spaces of translation and resonance for post-industrial societies

The Bologna Process created a common European higher education space. It mainly focused on the legal frame, on quantitative exchange and on encouraging a new technocratic approach to academic governance. By linking its reporting and evaluation procedures mainly to quantitative factors, The Bologna Process intensified the commodification of higher education. This process takes place in a radically changing world, which is shaped by globalization and by a broader structural move from industrial production towards post-industrial modes of production and the spread of authoritarian tendencies both in the West and in the East.

As a result, academic autonomy has been challenged both institutionally and as common practice in various parts of Europe. In reaction to those challenges we search for new ways of organising academic solidarity, which would go beyond the institutionalized modes of exchange established within the Bologna frame. In many academic disciplines there has been a longer discussion and sharing of ideas regarding the process of reorganizing knowledge production processes in the twenty-first century. We propose to start changing the way we are currently conducting education and research today.

As a point of departure, we see the constant practice of self-reflection as an eminent part of academic work and as a strong factor in the ongoing transformation of academia. But we also see this reflective practice as a way of relating to the word. Today, academia is already a space that allows participants to ask questions from different perspectives. Our goal is to make this space less self-sufficient and more resonate to changes occurring outside of academia. To strengthen universities as institutions of resonance, it is necessary to be engaged in two directions: with the surrounding societies and with the students, the core of the educational process.

We see the university as a space for personal development beyond the administrative support of separate competences needed for future business conduct. By upholding an integrated approach to this responsibility *vis à vis* students and their personal development, we critically refer to some humanist ideas. Together with students, colleagues, and members of the surrounding society, we understand the university as space for the creation of communities of new experiences and their reflection. The academic process is shaped largely by finding the language to describe new experiences and by giving a voice to those who are touched by change, but who do not have a voice to express their concerns.



In the dynamic relationship between science, the humanities, and social sciences we see the university as an institutional motor of translation: across disciplinary, cultural, social, and linguistic dimensions. A particular challenge in this process that we see the need to bridge is the existing gap between theory and practice in many disciplines. Therefore, we would make practical applications part of the theoretical learning process, but review critical observations made during the experiments. In further challenging the deeply institutionalized gap between theory and practice, we envision learning as a structural part of the academic process not only on behalf of students, but of academics too.

The core of the organization of new forms of academic conduct must be solidarity and ensuring a horizontal form of commitment across national, disciplinary, gender, and age boundaries. Another important fundament is the formal relationship between ownership and governance in academic institutions: Academics should be part-owners of their institutions, but also stakeholders from local, regional, and state levels shall have some form of participation in the institutional setup. From our experiences in various contexts, we know that we need a new ethical code of conduct for universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This new ethical code of conduct should regulate the impact of funding bodies on the ongoing academic process. And it shall grant the full public accessibility to knowledge. Publicly produced goods, per definition, shall become common. For new forms of formalised interaction between universities, NGOs, and private entities, transparency is a core condition.

*Beyond Bologna Working Group, Praxis Europa, Essen, 20–22 October 2017*

Ayşe Çavdar, Duisburg: The crackdown on universities in Turkey created 2016 a new form of solidarity among scholars. In many towns, Solidarity Academies bring knowledge from the universities to a broader public. Instead of teach-ins, Solidarity Academies created teach-outs. Academia today has been forced to depart from universities.

Olga Shparaga, Minsk: I created a college for liberal arts in Belarus, because there was a need among young adults with a university degree for additional education. This informal practice of knowledge production is creating a new community based on the horizontal relationships we lack in Minsk today.

Tadas Janusauskas, Budapest: As an academic nomad commuting between Lithuania, Hungary, I find it important to critically voice concerns about higher education reform in Lithuania, even if I am enrolled as a PhD student in Budapest.

Andrey Vozyanov, Regensburg: In my research on communal forms of maintaining public transportation in Ukraine and Rumania I am working on applied anthropology methods. The idea is to include the needs of the community into the research design in an earlier stage of the work as well as to provide informants with tools of knowledge accumulation after the research has formally concluded.

Silija Graupe, Bernkastel-Kues: Change is possible— even in economics research in Germany. I founded the Cusanus-University in a village in southern Germany to bring together theory and praxis and to critically reflect upon the ideological and political frames of academic knowledge production. It actually works.

Felix Ackermann, Warsaw: While teaching at a Belarusian university in exile, I learned that autonomy needs to be the core of any form of academic self-organisation. Today, autonomy is threatened by authoritarian rule, the neoliberalization of higher education, and a lack of solidarity among academics. In my academic practice I try to develop new methods of applied humanities in order to reflect upon the relationship between academic knowledge production and social change.