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Recontextualizing European higher education policies: the cases of Austria and Romania

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This paper explores, in some detail at the European Union scale, processes and relationships of recontextualization between higher education and other EU policy fields, including for instance the recontextualization of ‘competitiveness rhetoric’ and ‘globalization rhetoric’ in HE policy documents. We trace the implementation of the Bologna Process in two EU member states, Austria and Romania, illustrating the effects of these very different socio-political and historical contexts on EU standardization processes through a detailed discourse analytic study of recontextualization processes of policy documents. This paper integrates two approaches in critical discourse analysis, Fairclough’s dialectic-relational approach and Wodak’s discourse-historical approach, by introducing recontextualization as a salient critical discourse analysis category and explaining its relationship to other categories within a discourse-analytical approach to (or ‘point of entry’ into) trans-disciplinary research on social change.

Keywords: higher education; Bologna Declaration; recontextualization; globalization rhetoric; European Union; discourse-historical approach; dialectic-relational approach; Austria; Romania; *topos*; fallacy; discursive strategy; policy paper; legitimation strategy

Introducing the problem: recontextualizing EU policies in member states

The 2009 EU Commission’s EURYDICE Report on Higher Education in Europe focuses on the development and implementation of the Bologna Process since the Bologna Declaration (BD) in 1999 (specifically on p. 13ff.). The report takes a partial look at the emerging European Higher Education Area and summarizes and evaluates the many recent changes in higher education (HE) in the 31 countries that are members of the EURYDICE network (p. 7). What emerges as salient result of this evaluation is the fact that each of the 31 countries has implemented the Bologna Process in a very distinct and different way (for details, see p. 17ff.). After narrating the history of the Bologna Process, the report focuses on some major issues of the BD, such as the Bachelor–Master structure, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the National Qualifications Frameworks. It neglects, however, other salient aspects of the BD which we have dealt with extensively elsewhere (Fairclough & Wodak, 2008) and which outline important European values such as flat organizational hierarchies for universities, the autonomy of universities, the freedom to carry out research and teaching, and the implementation of core human rights. In sum, technical and organizational dimensions currently dominate the Bologna Process in official reports while the ideational dimension seems to have vanished, although, within the EU, education had been put forward as a meta-narrative (Jauhiainen & Alho-Malmelin, 2004) on how to cope with the internal and external challenges caused by globalization and increased competition from the emerging economies in Asia and South America. The EURYDICE report also poses the question why the 31 countries have achieved

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such different stages and results without answering this – in our view – very interesting and complex question (p. 17).

In this paper, we take up this question and discuss it, against the background of macro-structural theories on globalization, standardization and regulation of HE (Ball, 2008; Falkner et al., 2005; Gannon, 2008; Heidenreich & Bischoff, 2008; Jessop, Fairclough, & Wodak, 2008; Lodge, 2007; Robertson, 2008) all of which point to the obvious antinomies and paradoxes which accompany globalization processes (and their agents) when implementing policy papers and strategies: on the one hand, standardization is aimed at (such as the detailed issues listed above); on the other, nation states and even regions retain their specificities and contest standardization.¹ Gannon (2008, pp. 4ff.) introduces the term ‘paradoxes of globalisation’ to conceptualize these apparent and obvious contradictions whereas Wodak and Weiss (2004, 2007) speak of ‘antinomies of globalisation and standardisation processes’. This is why we regard policy ‘as a process, something ongoing, interactional and unstable’ (Ball, 2008, p. 7), necessarily leading to different outcomes at different scales, times and places. We come back to these phenomena when discussing models of recontextualization of (EU) policies theoretically and our two empirical cases studies of the implementation of the BD² in Austria and Romania, below.

The EU Commission attempted to capture the complexity mentioned above by proposing the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) in the Lisbon Agenda 2000.³ Most generally, as Lodge (2008, p. 344) states, ‘the OMC represented a key example of “non-hierarchical governance” that has received considerable interest [. . .], namely that intended and converging policy outcomes can be generated through non-coercive and voluntary devices’.⁴ The OMC comprises a number of interrelated steps, such as a ‘joint diagnosis of a problem’; a ‘commitment to solve the problem via Europe-wide guidelines’; identifying ‘good practices’; developing ‘quantitative and qualitative indicators for benchmark purposes’; preparing National Action Plans, implementing these, and so forth (p. 346). However, after much hope and optimism, a ‘high level group’ (convened by the former Dutch Prime minister Wim Kok in 2004)⁵ strongly criticized the Lisbon Strategy and OMC: lack of coordination of national policies, a much too diverse and contradictive European agenda, and lack of political implementation were put forward as the main reasons for the common failure.

Member states and the European Commission must re-double their efforts to make change happen. Far more emphasis must be placed on involving European social partners and engaging Europe’s citizens with the case of change. Greater focus is required to build understanding of why Lisbon is relevant to every person in every household in Europe. (Kok, 2004, p. 7)

In a similar vein, Falkner et al. (2005) show on the basis of a substantial body of empirical evidence that member states (15 at the time) implemented EU directives in very different ways: some complied, some partially complied and some did not implement the directives at all. This can be explained, the authors suggest, by differences in historical traditions and specific context-dependent socio-political interests. On the basis of this comprehensive empirical study, Falkner et al. (2005) propose ‘three worlds of compliance’: the ‘world of law observance’, the ‘world of domestic policies’ and ‘the world of neglect’ (p. 322). In the first case, the directive is highly valued and made a national priority; in the second case, it is one of many priorities and is politically backgrounded; in the third case, the directive is not an aspiration, the bureaucracy rejects it and inertia seems to be the outcome.

Falkner et al. (2005, p. 6) distinguish between three stages in the implementation of EU policies in the member states – transposition, enforcement and application – which relate to the OCM on the one hand; on the other, these stages are derived from the bottom up and comprise many small scale activities, strategies, tactics and procedures without being able to distinguish

these in detail (which would only be possible via in-depth ethnography in organizations; see Gobo, 2008; Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2009a). Transposition (or in our terms, implementation) is mostly in the hands of politicians and law-making bodies, whereas enforcement is enacted by the bureaucracy in each member state. Application is a matter of highly diverse and loosely structured processes of take-up, strategic appropriation, resistance, etc., by groups and individuals in diverse practical contexts.

Moreover, Falkner's study illustrates that the stages may be in conflict or overlap and that those procedures may vary in each member state depending on the specific topic of the directive. The fields of politics and administration are frequently in conflict with each other. There are many reasons for this: sometimes, the directive means progress, sometime it implies a step backwards; if election campaigns can make use of the proposed policies, they are politically instrumentalized, be it on a national or regional level; if, on the other hand, they contradict political interests, they are postponed; and so forth (cf. Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009).

Research in the Social Sciences to date on the Lisbon Process and the Bologna Strategy is based primarily on interviews and policy documents, and on content analysis of the latter, and does not include ethnographic perspectives or detailed qualitative discourse analysis of the processes involved in transposition (implementation), enforcement and application. We shall be concerned by contrast with developing a more fine-grained account of these processes, arguing that this can be achieved by carrying out a form of critical discourse analysis (CDA) centred upon the CDA category of recontextualization, by tracing the history and trajectory of related documents and their textual transformations in detail (Iedema, 1999, 2003; Wodak, 2000a, 2000b; Fairclough, 2003).

Thus, our aim in this paper is to trace the implementation of the Bologna Process in two countries, Austria and Romania, illustrating the effects of these very different contexts on EU standardization processes through a detailed discourse analytic study of recontextualization processes of the Bologna Declaration and HE-related policy papers while illustrating the context-dependent factors leading to significantly different forms of implementation.

Recontextualization of EU policies at the national scale, will be discussed below, but we begin by introducing recontextualization as a CDA category and explaining its relationship to other categories within a discourse-analytical approach to (or 'point of entry' into) trans-disciplinary research on social change.⁶

Recontextualization, discourse and social change

Defining recontextualization

The assumption common to various approaches to CDA is that processes of social change are in part processes of change in discourse, and that change in discourse may, subject to certain conditions, have constructive effects on processes of social change more generally. The challenge is to develop theories of social change which coherently integrate discourse and relations between discourse and other elements or moments of the social process, and methodologies for focusing specifically on these relations, and the particular place and impact of discourse, in trans-disciplinary research on social change (e.g., Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2006, 2007; Heer, Manoschek, Pollak, & Wodak, 2008; Kovács & Wodak, 2003; Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009).

Discourse analysis is concerned with the analysis of texts, in a broad sense, in their relation to other elements of social processes – written texts, spoken interactions, 'multi-semiotic' texts which combine language, visual images, music, etc. Texts are the discourse element of social events (also in a broad sense – actions, interactions, happenings, etc). In so far as discourse analysis focuses on texts in researching relations between discourse and other elements or moments of social change, the theoretical and methodological challenge involves

simultaneously addressing (a) relations between discourse and other social elements or moments (i.e. ‘mediation’), and (b) relations between social events/texts and more durable, more stable or institutionalized, more abstract levels of social reality: social practices and social structures. Moreover, since events and texts are linked to, affected by and have effects on other events and texts in different places and at different times, a further challenge is developing ways to address (c) broadly spatial and temporal relationships between events and texts (i.e. ‘intertextuality’; Kristeva, 1986; Fairclough, 1992).

One approach to addressing (a), relations between discourse and other social elements or moments, centres upon ‘the dialectics of discourse’ (Harvey, 1996) and dialectical relations between discourse and other moments of social processes. This includes (i) studies of the *emergence* of discourses as a process which includes selective condensations, inclusions and exclusions, foregrounding and background, of relevant realities, and (ii) studies of the *operationalization* of discourses – their enactment in practices (and also in genres), their inculcation in identities (and also in styles), their materialization in physical reality (Fairclough, 2007). Each macro-stage in the implementation of a policy (such as the OCM) is thus accompanied by a range of discursive processes on the micro-level.

One approach to (b), relations between social events, social practices and social structures, focuses on dialectical relations between structures/practices and strategies. Social events (and texts) are contingent upon and shaped by structures and practices and their semiotic moments, languages and ‘orders of discourse’, but they are also deployments of social agency and the strategies of different agents and groups of agents which are directed at shaping (reproducing or transforming) structures and practices and may, contingently, have such effects. Conflicts between different agents and strategies include *contestation* between discourses and may lead to the *hegemony* of particular discourses, argumentative standpoints or ideologies manifested in these discourses. Within this approach, the focus needs to be not only on individual events (and texts) but also on chains of events (and chains of texts), and on the effects of agency and strategy in shaping events (and texts) over time (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2009a, 2009b). This connects (b) to (c), spatial and temporal relationships between texts as elements of events, which is the main focus of concern in this paper.

Struggles for hegemony which can be reconstructed in a longitudinal way require very subtle context-dependent analyses. In this way, the theorization of contexts becomes crucial to any dialectic analysis (e.g. the ‘*four-level model of context*’; Wodak, 2001, 2008). We assume that such changes occur on several levels at different times and with different speed (or sometimes not at all); thus *non-simultaneity* needs to be accounted for in differentiated, context-dependent ways. These intricate and complex processes also suggest the necessity of the concept of ‘*glocalization*’: of understanding how more global processes are being implemented, recontextualized and thus changed on local/regional/national levels (which matches Falkner’s concept of ‘application’; cf. Mitsikopolous, 2008). Hence, spatial relationships between events and texts exist in various dimensions of the social organization and structuring of space (cf. Figure 1). The social process also takes place simultaneously in different spheres, domains and social fields, and through relationships between them and between events and texts within them. Temporal relationships between events and texts exist in various dimensions of the social organization and structuring of time. Spatial and temporal relationships between texts include relations of *recontextualization* whereby texts (and the discourses and genres which they deploy) move between spatially and temporally different contexts, and are subject to transformations whose nature depends upon relationships and differences between such contexts. For example, while analysing specific Polish debates on EU enlargement and the implementation of EU policies thereafter, it became apparent that national elections and religious and political parties involved therein were salient factors influencing the speed and the region and/or site where policies were

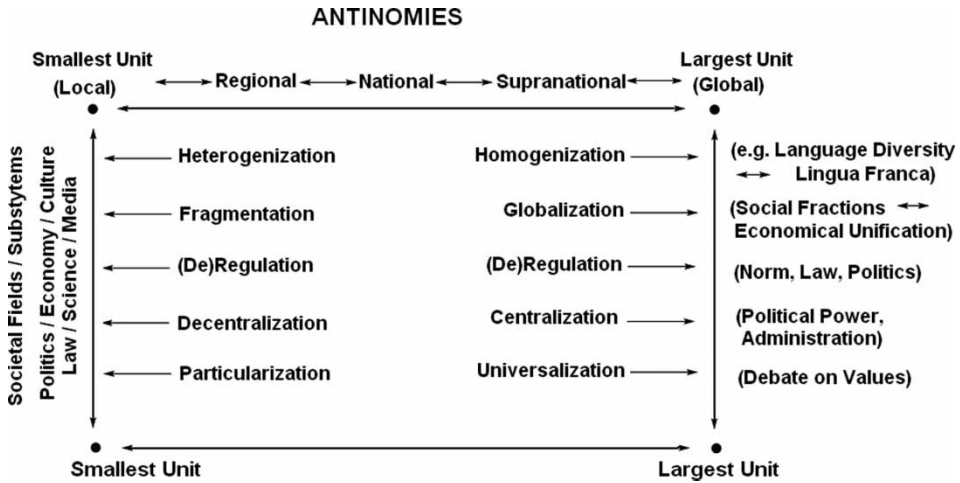


Figure 1. Diagram of ‘antinomies’ (adapted from Wodak & Weiss, 2004, p. 233).

implemented and how they were implemented. Different social fields (education, health, economy, etc.) employed specific standardization requests and introduced specific benchmarks at different times, as did geographical regions (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009; ‘model of circular non-simultaneous transformation’).

From this condensed account we can, focusing on discourses, identify four main objects of research for a specifically discourse ‘point of entry’ within trans-disciplinary social research on a macro-level, and situate our main concern in this paper – recontextualization – within a research agenda for CDA: *emergence* of discourses, *contestation* and relations of *hegemony* between discourses, *recontextualization* of discourses, *operationalization* of discourses; these stages clearly relate but also contradict the proposed linear sequence of the OCM. Moreover, we focus and trace the specific context-dependency and *discourse-historical trajectory* of recontextualized elements on a micro-level which emphasizes the context-dependent complexity of recontextualization processes; in this way, we integrate the dialectical-relational approach of Fairclough with the discourse-historical approach of Wodak (cf. Fairclough & Wodak, 2008).

Recontextualization and CDA

The category of recontextualization originates in Bernstein’s sociology of pedagogy (Bernstein, 1990). In Bernstein’s work on pedagogical discourse, he characterized the latter partly in terms of its particular ‘recontextualizing principle’: ‘a principle for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into a special relation with each other for the purposes of their selection, transmission and acquisition’ (Bernstein, 1990, pp. 183–184). Van Leeuwen (1993) used the category within CDA in suggesting that the ‘field structure’ of a text is a recontextualization of the structure of a social practice: ‘as soon as a practice is represented, it is recontextualized’ (p. 204). This approach was developed for media discourse by Fairclough (1995), and elaborated by van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) for the agenda of anti-immigration policies and legitimation strategies of Austrian bureaucrats by introducing – on the textual level – distinct linguistic transformations of intertextually related documents which realize recontextualization.

Bernstein’s category has also been somewhat differently appropriated by Chouliaraki (1998), who discusses ‘translation’ relations between Bernstein’s categories, ‘classification’ and ‘framing’ as well as recontextualization, and the discourse-analytical categories of

genre, intertextuality, interdiscursivity and order of discourse. This approach is elaborated in Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). A further appropriation of the category of recontextualization specifically related to the analysis of organizational discourse associates it with (linguistic/discursive and material) technologies, attributing ‘the potential to turn structuring relations and meanings . . . into structured relations and meanings’ to recontextualization, and viewing it as ‘the crux of organizational power’ (Iedema & Wodak, 1999, p. 3, Kwon, Clarke & Wodak, 2009).

Another significant type of recontextualization relation for our topic is that identified by Jessop (2001) and also a focus for Bernstein between academic and government/policy fields, between ‘theoretical’ and ‘policy paradigms’ and discourses, for instance theoretical and policy discourses of the knowledge-based economy (KBE).

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) further interpret recontextualization as a *dialectic of colonization and appropriation*: one practice colonizing another (‘colonization’ in a sense akin to Habermas, 1984, as developed in Fairclough, 1992), but also simultaneously being appropriated within another. This dialectic is central to our understanding of the implementation of EU policies at national and other scales, and relates to Falkner et al.’s (2005) types of compliance with EU strategies and policies. At this point it is important to re-emphasize that the application and accommodation in various contexts vary due to historical and political agenda of the respective nation states: sometimes colonization takes place, sometimes appropriation, sometimes transformation and sometimes outright rejection of an EU policy.

The official view of the implementation of EU policies in Member States, while it allows for variations in accordance with national circumstances and traditions, greatly understates the complexities, tensions and contradictions involved. Recontextualized practices, discourses and so forth enter into this complex social dynamic specific to the recontextualizing context, and whether and in what form they achieve the sort of dominance or hegemony which enables their operationalization depends upon not only on the ‘recontextualizing principles’ identified by Bernstein, but also, as argued by Fairclough (2006), how they are taken up within particular strategies and figure within contestation between strategies. The complex relations between scales in processes of policy development, implementation and recontextualization are characterized by ‘*antinomies*’ identified by Wodak and Weiss (2004, 2007), between homogenization and heterogenization, globalization and fragmentation, and so forth (cf. Figure 1; Gannon, 2008). This means that accounts of policy implementation and recontextualization across scales requires theorization and analysis of social processes, relations and dynamics on these different scales and levels (trans-national, national, specific fields and organizations, etc.) to account for differences in timing, pace, degree and forms of implementation between countries, fields, organizations and so forth.

Operationalizing recontextualization

As mentioned above, recontextualization is concretely manifested in the *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity* of texts, and processes of recontextualization can be investigated in detail by focusing upon this dimension of texts. The intertextuality of a text is a matter of how elements of other texts (words, phrases or larger elements) are incorporated within it; the interdiscursivity of a text is the particular combination of different discourses, different genres and/or different styles that characterize the text, and how the deployment of particular discourses, genres and/or styles links the text to other intertextually related texts (cf. Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Recontextualization is often textually realized in the *mixing* of ‘new’ recontextualized elements and ‘old’ elements, such as particular words, expressions, arguments, *topoi*, rhetorical devices and so forth. The tensions, contradictions and antinomies which recontextualization gives rise to can be textually identified and analysed by focusing upon such textual mixing or *hybridity* (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

Thus, in the following section, we analyse extracts from key documents in the Bologna Process in Austria and Romania, focusing on several partially overlapping analytical categories (cf. Fairclough & Wodak, 2008):

- (1) ‘interdiscursive analysis’ of the shifting combinations of discourses within and between texts;
- (2) analysis of the ‘legitimation’ of policy objectives and proposals;
- (3) analysis of distinctive and differential features of genres;
- (4) analysis of some argumentative devices, such as *topoi* and fallacies.⁷

Moreover, in applying the ‘four-level context-model of the DHA’, it becomes possible to analyse in detail why some policies succeed when recontextualized in specific national/regional/local contexts while others are doomed to fail. Wodak (2001, p. 67) distinguishes the following four distinct levels of context for analytical purposes:

- 1 the immediate, language or text internal co-text (e.g. the specific National Action Plan);
- 2 the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses (e.g. between the National Action Plan and the BD, interviews by politicians, other EU policies related to other social fields, etc.);
- 3 the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific ‘context of situation’ (e.g. a specific organization such as the University of Vienna); and
- 4 the broader socio-political and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (the historical and socio-political traditions of HE in Austria and Romania).

In other words, through processes of recontextualization, hegemonic ideologies are disseminated throughout the policy fields. In this way, a dominant ideology such as KBE exercises control over others by perpetuating (subtly) persuasive – abstracted, mystifying – messages that get others to actively agree with them. For example, by drawing on neo-liberal ideologies in HE and HE documents, this ideology is then recontextualized through the reformulated documents in to the policies of the member states (Jessop, 2008).

Case studies: Austria and Romania implementing/recontextualizing the Bologna Process

Before we map out our case studies, we would like to add a few words about the choice of these two countries. Apart from the personal experience of the two authors (Norman Fairclough has been living in Bucharest since 2004; Ruth Wodak has taught at the University of Vienna since 1975), a number of other factors support this choice: the countries have gone through significantly different developments since 1918 and 1945, Romania being part of the ‘Eastern Bloc’ after 1945, and Austria, after a period of home-made fascism (*Austrofaschismus* 1934–1938) and National Socialism (1938–1945), having been neutral since 1955 and having belonged to the ‘West’. Thus the development of academia and universities has been extremely different. ‘Transition’ is a term used in both countries, but with significantly different meanings: in Romania, the term is used for transition to market economy and to the ‘West’ after 1989, in Austria for the move from the traditional university system to the new University Act 2002. We thus assume that the changes due to the implementation and operationalization of the Bologna Process will lead to different processes and results for the two countries. After summarizing the most recent historical context briefly to situate and understand on-going developments (in accordance with the four-level context model), we highlight some important aspects of change. These analyses and comparisons will yield insight into contextual struggles as anticipated above, and into the everyday life of the Bologna Process.

Austria

Brief contextual summary since 1968

The year 1968 marked a new beginning in many respects, all over Western Europe: not least, through the student revolution which started in the United States, Germany and France. The revolt also occurred in Austrian universities, demanding a change from the old, still existing, quasi-feudal system where (mostly male) professors were the most powerful members at universities and other staff depended on them for promotion, contracts and their possible range of activities ('professorial university'; *Ordinarienuniversität*). The main focus in 1968 was on changing university structures ('*Weg mit den Talaren, dem Muff von tausend Jahren!*'; 'Away with the gowns, the smell of thousand years' was one of the salient slogans in 1968). The 1968 movement enforced major changes on university life.

The Social-Democratic coalition government (elected 1971; the 'Kreisky Government') started modernizing Austria: modernization happened in various social fields at different times and in different locations; a new University Law (*Universitätsorganisationsgesetz* UOG), 1975, was implemented which, for the first time, established wider participation in decision-making and supported research in the newly developing social and natural sciences. Moreover, women were increasingly allowed into higher academic positions. Austrian academic scholarship started to link up with international developments. Although the UOG 1975 was amended in 1993 to establish more effective decision-making procedures (implemented at the University of Vienna only in 2000), the fundamental participatory emphasis was preserved. This meant, for example, that decisions on hiring, tenure, personnel and so forth were all taken in independent committees that consisted of professorial staff, assistants (i.e. lecturers) and students. Huge 'faculty meetings', twice per term, confirmed such decisions, which then needed to be implemented at a ministerial level; minutes existed, as well as transparent communication channels.

However, many failures also became apparent: no consistent evaluation procedures for research or teaching existed, some curricula were old-fashioned, too many meetings took place on rather trivial matters, and visiting students and staff from abroad were astonished that, for example, university libraries were not well equipped and were closed over the weekend (to name just a few organizational, infra-structural and content-related phenomena).

Nevertheless, Austria had established free access to HE, thus allowing students from all social backgrounds to study, and the important slogan 'equal chances for everybody' (*Chancengleichheit*) remained a high priority. Joining the European Union in 1995 meant another important step in the internationalization of Austrian scholarship.

This situation changed with the so-called 'turn' (*Wende*) in 2000, when the conservative right-wing coalition government (between the People's Party, ÖVP, and the Freedom Party, FPÖ) was installed, against huge international and national opposition (Wodak & Pelinka, 2002). Although the then Minister for Education, Elisabeth Gehrler, had first promised not to abolish free access to HE, a new law 2001 imposed student fees (about 800 Euro a year and twice that for non-European citizens). The University Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz*, 2002), in addition to officially implementing the BD, installed a new top-down hierarchical structure and all participation of staff and students in decision-making was abolished from January 2004; the universities were claimed to be 'autonomous', although they still received and receive their funds from the state, and the budget was cut enormously at the same time, leaving university administrators to cope with a deficient infrastructure, and frustrated and oppositional staff and students.⁸ Simultaneously, 'autonomy' became a euphemism for a new managerial and hierarchical structure which is both indirectly and explicitly dependent on political interests.

Even though the elections on 1 October 2006 voted the conservative government out and gave the Social-Democratic Party a thin majority, the wheels could not be turned back.

Neither participation nor transparent communication was re-instated; however, more money has now again been allotted to universities. The official hegemonic discourse continues to promote these changes as a necessary pre-condition for implementing the market model of American universities and the Bologna Process (see Wodak, 2006, 2009b).

Implementing the Bologna Declaration?

The *National Report for Austria, 2004–2005*, p. 1 states:

The University Act 2002, which provides the legal framework for the implementation of the Bologna objectives in Austria, took effect in 2004, the implementation is still ongoing.

Although the University Act is claimed to implement the BD, nowhere do we find in the document any mention of details of structures needed to enforce ‘international competitiveness’, new degree schemes, and so forth, except that ‘Universities’ independence and autonomy’ need to be ensured. A high level of abstractness and generalization characterizes this text; agents are deleted, no deadlines are spelt out. The document remains vague – more like the genre of a policy document than a legal document.

Moreover, the BD emphasizes that ‘national education systems and University autonomy’ will be respected throughout. Thus, the Austrian University Act 2002 could be seen as having taken ‘autonomy’ as a point of departure to ensure a structural change from a participatory model to an autocratic, managerial model as ‘legitimization through procedure and idea’ (see Wodak & Weiss, 2007), implemented from above. Furthermore, intertextually, it is marked by reference to the Magna Charta and not to the BD (Fairclough & Wodak, 2008).

The textual chain analysed in some detail consists of the BD, the Austrian National Action Plans and Reports 2001 and 2004/5, the University Act 2002, the National Report 2005, and one of the most recent documents 2006/2007, The Regulation on Intellectual Capital ([*Wissensbilanz*] http://archiv.bmbwk.gv.at/medienpool/14186/wbv_eng.pdf).

National Report 2001

The Introduction to the National Report 2001 states that

[i]n order to translate the objectives of the Bologna Declaration into reality, it will be necessary to take certain measures in the field of university legislation, promotion of mobility, quality assurance, and information management. . . . The text of the Bologna Declaration was analysed for broad objectives, which in turn were broken down into detailed ones. Out of these, broad objectives for implementation in Austria were defined. The Austrian objectives then were operationalized and used as categories for the monitoring report.

This introduction makes it very clear that all changes are to be understood as *necessary* results of implementing and operationalizing the BD. This legitimizes the changes as EU-enforced, thus effectively ordered from ‘elsewhere, from outside’ (and thus not related to the OMC strategy). This discursive strategy (a typical *fallacy*) potentially allows the shifting of blame from the Austrian government to an abstract policy, decided upon by the abstract entity ‘EU’; moreover, the EU is discursively constructed as if it were outside, quasi foreign policy, although Austria is a member of the EU, and thus inside. Politicians continuously employ this discursive strategy to justify unwelcome policies which simultaneously allows for positive self-presentation when opposing EU decisions. Apart from abstractness and technicalities, the *topoi* of necessity and measurable, rational efficiency mark this document. The operationalization procedure is taken for granted, no alternatives are spelt out.

On page 12 of this document we find a table labelled ‘Objectives – Overview’ which contains selected broad objectives of the BD, the detailed objectives and the broad objectives for

implementation in Austria. The selection serves as a summary that was put together by the Austrian Ministry of Education. The broad and detailed selected objectives relate to comparable degree schemes, international competitiveness and mobility. Moreover, quality assurance on a European level as well as the promotion of the European dimension in HE are mentioned. The two-cycle system to be implemented is explicitly related to the European labour market. Nowhere do we find, however, any mention of the huge structural changes deemed necessary to achieve these goals. KBE is thus recontextualized into a 'discourse of technologization': tasks and targets are spelt out. An account of 'achieved knowledge' (*Wissensbilanz*) as well as 'targets' (*Leistungsvereinbarungen*) is expected from all staff as if knowledge could be defined and measured in distinct units and as if achievements were predictable, e.g. the number of specific products for the future. All these measurements serve to construct a notion of accountability and indicators for assessment which are oriented mostly towards numbers of outputs but not towards any qualitative criteria of innovation in research or teaching. These terms are obviously taken from accounting (economy) which is currently colonizing the field of HE (Wodak, 2009b).

In the last few pages, we discover a paragraph on 'Quality assurance systems': an independent evaluation agency needs to be established:

[...] part of a reform process which entails giving full legal capacity to the universities. Therefore, these two developments are taking place at the same time. In a joint working group with the Austrian rectors' conference, a concept for such an agency was developed. The actual establishment of this agency is planned for autumn 2002, which means that the agency may take up its work a year later, when the new University Act becomes legally effective.

This paragraph should be interpreted as the crucial legitimation device to 'reform' the universities simultaneously with the establishment of a non-defined quality assurance agency and the implementation of standardized credit systems, and so forth. Two actions which are not necessarily linked at all are linked together in a causal chain (another fallacy – *post hoc, propter hoc*). In this way, argumentatively, the so-called 'reform' (a positively connoted term and a *topos* since the *Wende* 2000) that entailed the salient shift in structure, is legitimized nationally.

Next in the textual chain comes the University Organisation and Studies Act (2002) (<http://www.bmbwk.gv.at; DVR 0064301>), a 66-page document.

The University Act 2002

The document is divided into eight main parts that are further divided into chapters and sub-chapters. The main parts are the organizational law (I), Study Law (II), University Members (III), Employment Law (IV), Penalties (V), Properties, Buildings and Rooms (VI), Science Council (VII), Transitional and Final Provisions (VIII).

The University Act is a legal document; thus it differs from the BD and from the other documents analysed above because it is written in legal language and constitutes a new normative reality. The verbs used are therefore material and existential, not mental as above (the law states how things are and should be, not what is considered or suggested or promoted; see Pfeifer, Strouhal, & Wodak, 1986, for the characteristics of legal genres).

Following a first sub-chapter in Part I which states the principles, duties and the scope of application, which largely follow principles of the BD and the *Magna Charta*, the focus turns to organizational issues in the structure of the university, teaching and curricula, and the definition of the positions of staff. This document thus combines the ideational and organizational dimensions on a national level, with some gate-keeping measures (drawing borders) of entry requirements for students and staff. However, the ideational moments are very short

(2.5 pages) in comparison with the technicalities spelt out in the course of the document. The ‘objectives’ summarize the aims and goals of the law, as a quasi mission statement:

1. The mission of the universities is to serve academic research and teaching, and the advancement, appreciation and teaching of the arts, and thereby to contribute to the personal development of the individual, and to the welfare of society and the environment. Universities are public educational institutions which, in their research and research-based teaching, are directed towards the advancement of knowledge and new approaches to the arts. Through the common efforts of teachers and students, working in enlightened scholarly communities, they assist individuals in their striving for the education and autonomy conferred by scholarship. They promote the advancement of junior academics, which goes hand in hand with the acquisition of academic and artistic abilities and qualifications, and methodological skills, with the goal of helping a society in transition to master the challenges it faces in a humane and gender equal fashion. To enable them to respond to the constantly changing demands made on them in organizational, academic and personnel management terms, the universities and their governing bodies shall constitute themselves under conditions of the greatest possible autonomy and self-administration.

It quickly becomes apparent that some buzzwords from the Magna Charta (and to a lesser extent from the BD) are recontextualized, others not. We find the ‘advancement of knowledge’ but not a ‘knowledge-based society’. We also find ‘the goal of helping a society in transition to master the challenges it faces in a humane and gender equal fashion’. Thus, the ‘transition’ of Austrian society is narrowed down through the *topos of definition* to gender mainstreaming and a ‘humane’ society that refers to the co-text of ‘enlightened scholarly communities and the welfare of society and environment’. These references point more to Magna Charta than to ‘competitiveness, the new millennium, or employability’ as spelt out in the BD (Fairclough & Wodak, 2008).

It forms a hybrid of the previous mass university with equal chances for all in a social welfare state, the Humboldtian model, and the standardization required by the BD. To be able to respond to new challenges, the mission statement concludes, ‘autonomy and self-administration’ are absolutely necessary. This draws on the Magna Charta, which emphasized the autonomy of the university very strongly.

The definition of the ‘University Council’ contradicts the ‘autonomy’ as proposed in the BD in many ways: in this council, consisting of five, seven or nine members, the universities appoint two, three or four members (not from their midst), the ministry the same amount, and one member has to be jointly appointed. If this consensus fails, the ministry appoints the missing member out of a shortlist of three members proposed by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. This means that the most powerful body of an Austrian university consists of a large number of politically appointed members. The council is not envisaged as a controlling body but as a decision-making body for all aspects and dimensions of university life. The council has to confirm all decisions of the rector and appoints the rector, and can also dismiss the rector.

All participation is abolished; the rector may consult departments if s/he chooses – however, the rector decides on appointments of new staff, tenure (*Habilitation*), and so forth. A top-down structure has thus replaced the previous more democratic structure; ‘autonomy’ serves as a kind of euphemism for decisive political influence. Moreover, the labels for traditional sub-structures have been changed to ‘units’ (i.e. faculties; *Organisationseinheiten*), ‘unit leaders’ (i.e. deans; *Leiter*), and so forth, thus using notions employed in management, an example of marketization.

We are thus confronted with a top-down pyramid where political and governmental interests are deeply involved. The managerial structure and hierarchy are explicitly spelt out. What do the results of this analysis mean in relation to our research questions and the implementation of the BD and KBE? We believe that national political interests have interacted decisively with the goals of the BD, in accordance with our model presented above: local, regional and

national interests counteract and interact with transnational strategies and objectives; in Falkner et al.'s terms (2005) we are dealing with an example of 'partial compliance' and the 'world of domestic policy': 'Autonomy' becomes a *euphemism* for an autocratic hierarchical structure where politics remain inherently involved. Participation and democratic structures have been abolished, legitimized by the *topos of necessity* to create quality assurance and to implement the required standardization of teaching and mobility schemes. We will come back to these phenomena in our conclusions when comparing the Austrian and Romanian cases.

The National Report 2004–2005

As a next step in the trajectory of recontextualization of the BD, we summarize the *National Report 2004–2005*, which is written as a significantly different genre than the first *National Report*: full of bullet points, tables, in a question and answer form, forms which have been standardized by the European Commission to be able to compare developments in HE in the signatory states. The 'main achievements since Berlin' on the first page contain the salient clause:

The University Act 2002, which provides the legal framework for the implementation of the Bologna objectives in Austria, took effect in 2004, the implementation is still ongoing. An English version can be found at <http://www.weltklasse-uni.at/upload/attachments/947.pdf>.

Hence, the official legitimation for the University Act 2002 is recontextualized in the new report. Furthermore, descriptive paragraphs follow, listing all Austrian universities, the Bologna websites in Austria, the Bologna coordinators, and so forth. Doctoral Studies had not changed at this point, and 'the debate on the future of doctoral studies has intensified' (p. 5), specifying no details and thus remaining vague.⁹

This implies that the emphasis on change was directed primarily on structural changes of the now 'autonomous' system, and not on operationalizing and standardizing the BD in detail (in contrast to Romania; see below). Or, in other words, the operationalization has largely accommodated national political interests, a good example of glocalization. The ministry, the plan states, will be involved as contractual partner in defining the targets and 'performance agreements' for the planning of achievements by each individual and department, a kind of 'Three Year Plan' for the future: Hence thinking and spontaneity as essential parts of creativity as well as of intellectual freedom might be severely threatened or even possibly restricted politically, in contrast to the notion of 'innovation' as proposed, for example, by Nowotny (2005).

On page 7, 'autonomy' is defined as

'legal entities with full contractual capability'. The federal authorities do not have any influence on decisions within universities, except for their competence to review whether these decisions are in accordance with the law.

The 'myth of autonomy' is thus carried further and recontextualized from the University Act into the National Report. The same myth continues in the description of 'the active participation of all partners in the process', where it is concluded that there is 'no legal framework for these bodies and they are therefore organized differently at each institution'. What is absent in this short summary is the presentation of power and decision-making bodies which are prescribed by the University Act and which directly oppose the explicit intentions of the BD.

More specifically, the document 'Status of the implementation of the BD in Austria 2005' (*Stand der Umsetzung der Bologna Erklärung in Österreich*, 2005) contains an introductory statement by then Minister of Higher Education, Elisabeth Gehrler, which states, after a general summary of the Bologna Process, that 'dieses Zusammenspiel zwischen Politik, Hochschuleinrichtungen und Studierenden bildet das "Herz des Bologna Prozesses"' [the combination of politics, HE and students constitutes the heart of the Bologna Process]. In the

introduction to this document, the international trend for the ‘competition for the best minds’ is emphasized (*Konkurrenz um die besten Köpfe*), meaning ‘[I]nternationality, competitiveness with other European institutions and competitiveness in Europe’; however, also competitiveness with the United States and ‘the Asian space’. Europe as an HE space and as a research space needs to become more ‘attractive’; KBE buzzwords are thus intertextually linked to salient documents on employment policies analysed elsewhere (Muntigl, Weiss, & Wodak, 2000). The following paragraphs employ many English words such as ‘Input and Output’, ‘Incoming-Bereich’ and ‘Outgoing-Bereich’, ‘Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society’, ‘Monitoring Projekt’, and so forth. This language seems related to Europeak or ‘managerial speak’. Furthermore the necessity of installing ‘targets’ (*Zielgrößen*) and ‘operationalization plans’ is hinted at.

Finally, let us briefly have a look at the 63rd Regulation of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on Intellectual Capital Reports (Intellectual Capital Report Act – ICRA [according to subsection 13(6) and subsection 16(6) of the University Act 2002, Federal Law Gazette I, No. 120, amended as per the Federal Law Gazette I, No. 77/2005, accessed 24 August 2008). This regulation determines indices for assessment of the so-called ‘intellectual capital’. Thus, in this legal document, the *economization and technologization* have been entirely implemented related to KBE – as if knowledge were a distinct and measurable product. Working with lists, objectives and measurable entities of ‘knowledge’ are defined (via a *topos of definition*), with the goal of negotiating ‘performance’ indicators that have to be agreed with every member of staff for the following of two years:

Objectives of the intellectual capital report

§ 2. The intellectual capital report aims at presenting, evaluating and communicating intangible assets, performance processes and their consequences and serves as a qualitative and quantitative basis for generating and entering a performance agreement.

Various kinds of intellectual ‘capital’ are defined: intellectual property, human capital, structural capital and relational capital. These capitals are then related to ‘core processes’ such as ‘1. Education and continuing education; 2. Research and development’. The ‘output and impact of core processes’ are also considered. Moreover, a list of ‘measures’ is presented. Knowledge thus becomes definable, categorized into distinct indices, ‘measured’, and predictable (for the salience of lists as rhetorical device, see Fairclough & Wodak, 2008).

When analysing the most recent documents, it is obvious that, after having transformed the university structures, the implementation of the Bologna Process only started around 2005, accompanied by competitiveness discourse, globalization rhetoric, economization and the required standardization. This further implies that, as stated in the University Act 2002, the autocratic university structure is defined as a necessary precondition to be able to implement the BD, a constructed causal relation which was opposed by university staff, students, opposition parties and some media – a *post hoc, propter hoc* fallacy. However, through linking the ‘reform’ of the university structure fallaciously with the Bologna Process, the government has been able to legitimize all its drastic changes in terms of European demands.

The Bologna Process in Romania

Brief history

Romania effectively came into existence in 1862 with the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia and became fully independent of the Ottoman Empire in 1877. Universities were established in Romania in the 1860s, and there was a significant expansion of higher education after the First World War. The system developed a good reputation for quality, operating as an elite system

through competitive entrance examinations and low numbers of admissions until the end the communist period in 1989. Immediate steps were taken after 1990 to remove compulsory political elements and to allow subjects such as sociology and business, which had been excluded, to develop.

The demand for higher education increased dramatically after 1990, and this led to an increase in state universities and the appearance of a large number of private universities, which constituted half of the universities by the late 1990s and took around a third of students. The Education Law of 1995 declared universities to be 'autonomous' institutions and increased their actual independence over such matters as the distribution of state funding, although the power of the Ministry of Education remains great. It also banned political or religious interference with the autonomy of universities, and strengthened the position of state universities against private universities by allowing the former to take fee-paying students. This was one factor that led to the number of students in state universities doubling in the 10 years after 1990.

However, at the same time universities were starved of state funds (Romania spends a lower percentage of GDP on education than any other post-communist country), academic staff were badly paid and teaching facilities and library and other resources were appalling, although there were major differences between institutions and faculties (faculties of law and business, for instance, being relatively better provided for). The system remains highly traditional in its strong departmental/disciplinary basis, lack of interdisciplinary studies and rigidly hierarchical power structure.

Recontextualization of the Bologna strategy in Romania

Romania is a signatory of the BD and joined the EU in January 2007. It is committed to the Lisbon Strategy and therefore to the development of a KBE, and in general all major EU strategies, policies and regulative initiatives are taken up and adopted for the Romanian context – at least on paper.

At governmental level in Romania, there is a commitment to the Bologna Strategy and discourse and to implementing the Bologna reforms. Law 288 (2004) on the organization of university studies introduced a system of three 'cycles' (undergraduate 3–4 years, Master's 2–3 years, PhD 3 years), stipulated that undergraduate degrees should cover general subject areas and specializations appropriate to the needs of the labour market, otherwise leaving specialization for Master's degrees, and introduced the Bologna system of 'credits' and the 'Diploma Supplement'. The new system was put into operation from autumn 2005.

The specific way in which change in degree structures has been recontextualized in Romania reflects a preoccupation in public discourse with the mismatch between the products of HE and the needs of the labour market (foreseen as 'a major problem' in Romania's National Report to the Bergen meeting of Education Ministers in 2005). This is evident in the detailed specification within Law 288 of a range of general and specific 'competences' as well as subject knowledge for each cycle and the requirement that undergraduate degrees include a 'practical' component, and in a controversial Government decree which excluded many existing specialisms. The justification for the new law provided by the Government in Parliament is also revealing: the reorganization would 'eliminate excessive specialization', contribute to the 'development of professions which are short of specialized and economically and culturally necessary personnel', contribute to 'the development of new qualifications related to current needs and . . . the labour market', and be in line with 'the dynamics of the labour market at national, European and international level'. So the Government's interest was more or less entirely economic, and there were no references to other rationales in the Bologna documentation such as student mobility or European culture and identity. This is one illustration of how circumstances in EU member states affect how the strategy and discourse are recontextualized.

Documents prepared by the Romanian government for external consumption (such as the 2003 and 2005 progress reports) give a rosier account of progress than is evident ‘on the ground’ – although one does find hints of the real problems even in these texts (e.g. the 2003 National Report states that ‘resistance to changes is quite moderate’, no doubt a considerable understatement which implies however that ‘resistance’ is an issue). The slow progress has no doubt been partly because of the generally poor state of the system of higher education.

The operationalization of the Bologna Strategy has been very much ‘top-down’, starting from the government, as in the Austrian case. EU documentation by contrast envisages a process of ‘partnership’ and participation’ throughout the university system (e.g. the Berlin Declaration of 2003: ‘it is ultimately the active participation of all partners in the Process that will ensure its long-term success. . . . Students are full partners in higher education governance’), but in Romania student consultation has been virtually non-existent, many staff knew nothing about the reforms until they began to be imposed from the top, and the discourse of governance which represents all relevant groups as ‘partners’ seems to be alien and totally at odds with the extremely hierarchical nature of social relations in universities, where students are often subject to the favouritism and whims of staff, and junior staff to those of senior staff.

The combative and polemical tone of its supporters in government and universities is an indication of the resistance that the reform faces in universities. For instance, referring to changes in undergraduate degrees, the Minister of Education said (March 2005): ‘If we organize admission and undergraduate degrees in terms of (general) subject areas, then we create a mechanism . . . through which university provision meets the needs of students. The student knows that he or she will obtain a diploma for a broad subject area’, whereas with the existing system ‘we create a mechanism for choosing specialisms which are often out of date, inefficient, and only continue to exist through pressure from the ‘academic tribes’ within the universities’ and do not correspond with ‘the needs of the students or the demands of the labour market’.

The Minister’s reference to ‘academic tribes’ can be interpreted as a derogatory allusion to a feature of relations of power in the academic field and other fields of Romanian public life (the dominance of ‘status groups’ in Weber’s sense; cf. Matei, 2004; Mungiu-Pippidi & Ionița, 2002). Public life is highly personalized – everything depends upon who you know and can legitimately call on for help or support on the basis of favours owed, common friends or contacts, or loyalty. Members of a status group share a common interest in defending and increasing the prestige of their group and its values and practices, and raising the position of their group in status hierarchies. Status groups in Romanian universities are internally hierarchical and dominated by powerful senior academics on whom others are dependent (for jobs, promotion, perks and favours) and to whom they owe allegiance and loyalty.

These groups have pursued their own strategies to obtain and hold on to power, and the reforms can be seen as a threat to their position, for instance in introducing a transparency (in quality assurance, for example) which could undercut their privileged access to information and decision-making, and removing their power to control which specialisms are taught. They can be seen as adopting mainly defensive ‘foot-dragging’ strategies towards reform rather than positive alternative strategies, notoriously including ‘simulation’ – adopting the rhetoric of reform while resisting real change – as well as forms of self-legitimation in terms of for instance ‘preserving standards’ or ‘resisting subservience to the market’. However, the strategic options of such groups seem now to be narrowing as the political pressure for reform increases.

University of Bucharest: Manual of quality control

We shall discuss as an example of top-down, combative and polemical public documentation the opening section of the University of Bucharest’s *Manual of quality control* (2004), which clearly

presupposes opposition, resistance and ‘foot-dragging’. The document also textually ‘re-scales’ the University (Fairclough, 2006) within a new set of scalar relations.

The texturing of new scalar relations is summed up in the section title, ‘The University of Bucharest in the National and International Context’, and the first sentence (‘The University of Bucharest, like all the great universities of the world, is currently faced with major challenges’) locates the university within an elite group of universities on a global scale. The rest of the section sets out seven ‘challenges’. The use of the term ‘challenges’ evokes competitiveness discourse discussed above.

The discussion of the first challenge (‘Rapid innovation in the area of information and communication technologies’) concludes: ‘If the University of Bucharest were to ignore the challenge of information and communication technology, it would mean condemning itself to exclusion from the elite educational market’. Again it locates the University within global elites, but significantly represents this as a ‘market’ (a discourse long familiar in countries like Britain, but relatively new in Romania). A striking feature of this document is that change is legitimized as in this case in a negative way in terms of the need to avoid risks and dangers. This is a hypothetical conditional sentence with the pragmatic force of a warning, and characteristically legitimizes present action through predicting the future consequences of failure to act now. Legitimization through warnings of risk is also linked to the polemical character of the document: given the assumption of resistance and foot-dragging, emphasizing the dangers of inaction is an understandable strategy. The document is politicking against those who resist the reforms.

The second ‘challenge’ (‘Processes of globalization with their multiple forms and consequences’) again represents the University as an actor on the global scale and legitimizes change in terms of risk, claiming that processes of globalization are ‘objective’, warning that they ‘cannot be avoided or ignored’, and asserting that the university must be an ‘active agent within globalization’, working for the possibilities it opens up but also in defence of national cultural identity given the dangers of cultural globalization.

The third ‘challenge’ (‘The development of mass higher Education’) represents the University as part of a system at the national scale that has failed to respond to the challenge of mass higher education, and so suggesting that Romania is failing on international comparisons. The final sentence (‘If this issue is ignored or treated with hypocrisy, the quality of higher educational qualifications will be badly affected, and universities will lose prestige’) again legitimizes present action in terms of the need to avoid predicted future dangers. ‘Hypocrisy’ is interesting: there is a presupposition that these challenges *might* be ‘ignored or treated with hypocrisy’, and ‘hypocrisy’ introduces a covert polemic with those who resist reform by implying that they are hypocrites paying lip-service to reform without actually implementing it.

The fourth ‘challenge’ (‘Internal and international competition’) thematizes ‘competition’. It represents the University as subject to ‘intense competition’ within the changing ‘Romanian market’, and also subject to ‘severe international competition’, both because Romanians can choose to study abroad and will do so ‘increasingly often if the educational offers of foreign countries seem more attractive’ and because foreign universities are establishing themselves in Romania. The polemic against internal resistance becomes more explicit and targeted, recounting the experience of ‘certain faculties’ as a cautionary tale:

The University of Bucharest cannot avoid this process of competition, constantly invoking its prestigious past and considering this a sufficient argument to attract students. Certain faculties of the University of Bucharest which have used this way of thinking have experienced for several years the negative consequences of a fall in applications and have had to correct their attitude.

The fifth challenge (‘Loss of monopoly over higher education’) locates the University within a Romanian ‘educational market’ in which universities have lost their ‘monopoly’ because

non-university institutions now award higher educational qualifications. Again change is legitimized in terms of danger: 'If universities wish to keep a competitive position in the educational market, they must become flexible and capable of adapting rapidly to the needs of the labour market'. The seventh challenge makes the interesting claim that the process of reform, which according to the BD countries voluntarily subscribe to, will be 'imperative' for candidate countries (for 'universities cannot be responsible for creating difficulties for the Government in accession negotiations'). Again there seems to be an element of polemic with internal antagonists (principles for change agreed by the University Senate 'were only partially implemented') and legitimation of change through risk which is predicted as potentially cataclysmic ('we risk being overwhelmed by reality').

So the text contributes to the discursive re-scaling of the University at a global as well as a national scale as a competitor in increasingly competitive markets. The text argues for radical reform that is legitimized in terms of the risks and dangers at both national and global scales. The construction of time is also interesting: a predicted future of risks and dangers requires urgent present action in the context of changes, errors and failures in the past. The strategy of legitimation in terms of risks and dangers is perhaps motivated by an awareness of resistance and foot-dragging, and there is also an element of polemical engagement with those who resist or oppose reforms.¹⁰

Quality assurance

The Bologna objective of systems for 'quality assurance' poses particular problems in Romania. The *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA) has developed 'European standards for internal and external quality assurance' which were approved at the Bergen meeting of Ministers of Education in 2005. The methodology for quality assurance is centred upon 'self-examination' and 'self-evaluation' – the principle that 'providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance' (ENQA, 2005). They should establish an inclusive 'culture of quality' (ENQA, 2005) (including students, academic staff, administrative staff and other 'stakeholders') that recognizes the importance of quality and seeks its continuous enhancement. External quality assurance should ensure that this internal process is adequate. In internal quality assurance, 'institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards', 'students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently', 'institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so', and that 'the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate'.

Quality assurance is one example of a new technology of governance based upon a principle of 'self-management', 'monitoring' and 'assessment' combined with external 'audit' and 'rituals of verification'. 'Where audit is applied to public institutions the state's overt concern may be less to impose day-to-day direction than to ensure that internal controls, in the form of monitoring techniques, are in place' (Stråthorn, 2000). This new technology is closely associated with the idea of the 'accountability' of public institutions. These developments in governance fall under the general rubric of 'new public management', which is consistent with neo-liberal principles of converting public services into competitive markets (Rose, 1999). On the face of it, institutions are 'empowered' to act in the market without bureaucratic control, but their autonomy is largely illusory, because they are subject to 'audits' which monitor how effective their procedures are for 'assuring' standards that are imposed upon them. The OMC adopted at the Lisbon Council is essentially the same technology of governance at a European level.

Quality assurance illustrates both the importance of standardized technologies of governance in regulation at the European scale, and how such technologies impinge upon multiple

dimensions of social life. Quality control is important in economic dimensions of HE reform, its links to the international deregulation of trade in services, to the emergence of a global HE market and the increasing importance of HE in other sectors of the economy, and to the KBE. However, it also has significant cultural dimensions. The idea of a ‘culture’ of quality and an ongoing concern to improve quality through self-monitoring and self-assessment implies changes in ‘the way people perceive themselves in relation to their work, to one another and to themselves’, changes in ‘professional, collegial and personal identity’ (Shore & Wright, 2000). It is in this sense that quality assurance seems particularly problematic in the recontextualization of the Bologna Process in Romania: any substantive (as opposed to merely token) system of quality assurance entails deep changes in social and personal relations and in professional and personal identities which are profoundly at odds with existing social relations and identities in Romanian HE.

Conclusions: higher education reform in Romania and Austria: some final comments – context-dependent struggles and competitiveness discourses

Although our case studies are necessarily condensed and have most certainly neglected many relevant aspects, some salient results become visible. HE reform in Romania is at a very early stage, compared with a country like the UK, whose report to the Bergen meeting of Ministers of Education (2005) claimed with some justification, that the Bologna reforms had for the most part already happened in the UK. The circumstances in HE include obstacles that seem likely to affect the development and outcome of reform: an acute lack of resources, a hierarchical and undemocratic system of social relations and power structures, and an atmosphere of apathy, foot-dragging and resistance to reform, especially amongst a demoralized and badly paid academic staff. The strategy and the discourses are in circulation, but they have not yet been operationalized on anything like a general scale in changes in institutions, procedures, practices, values, attitudes and orders of discourse. The authorities are faced with a dilemma: it seems that the reforms will not be implemented unless they are imposed from above, yet they cannot ultimately work as intended without the active participation of and ‘partnership’ between all parties which is at odds with both top-down imposition and entrenched relations of power. This is particularly true for quality assurance, as we have indicated, although as in other respects there is unevenness between different institutions and faculties – some are more advanced than others, and some have volunteered or been developed as ‘pilot’ institutions (Mureşan, 2004).

It seems reasonable to expect a development and outcome that is significantly different from other countries, with perhaps some sort of hybrid combination of aspects of the existing order and aspects of the reformed order. Yet to some degree the reforms will take place (and the less problematic ones, changing the cyclical structure, introducing credits, the Diploma Supplement, are taking place), because it is difficult to see how universities can survive otherwise in a higher education ‘market’ which they are thrown into willy-nilly.

In Austria, on the other hand, the Bologna Process has been used to install a ‘university reform’ which has abolished all participatory structures (in contrast to the proposals of the BD); the University Councils have become the most powerful actors. ‘Autonomy’ has been redefined; the GDP for research has been cut or has not grown to European standards (under 2%) while a few ‘private elite universities’ have been created, thus marketizing HE. Technical changes have mostly been implemented slowly. Thus, in contrast to both Romania and the UK, Austria has actually first moved backwards due to the political *Wende* 2000, although some technical aspects of the reform have been operationalized – and have been implemented after the end of the *Wende*.

Hence, we can observe a range of conflicting and contradictory developments as predicted by our model above: national implementations and standardization procedures which have to accommodate to historical and traditional structures; political interests which functionalize the BD nationally; and legitimation ranging from the moral to the functional. HE reform on the European scale thus leads to context-dependent and significantly different developments on the national scale. Only in-depth case studies allow the comprehension of the very different struggles and conflicts accompanying such macro policy changes.

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Notes

1. In Jessop et al. (2008), several chapters consider national developments in Higher Education (HE) since the BD, for example in the UK, and in Finland (Mulderigg, 2008; Nokkala, 2008). Mulderigg was able to illustrate the development of HE policies in the UK from Major to Blair in detail while Nokkala illustrates how Finland resolves the conflicts between the Finnish Social Model and the European knowledge-based economy (KBE) endorsed in the BD. Fairclough and Wodak (2008) present a detailed critical discourse analysis of several documents related to the BD (specifically the *Magna Charta*) and focus on argumentative details of the text and its wider implications for its legitimation and the KBE. Robertson (2008) contextualizes the BD in other EU policy strategies while Dale (2008) discusses the implications of HE policies in the European and global contexts. Ball (2008) primarily deconstructs UK HE policy strategies in the Blair era. For reasons of space, we have to refer readers to these publications and cannot present more detailed summaries. For the analysis of *marketization* of HE due to the KBE see, for example, Fairclough (2006) and Wodak (2009b).
2. For the text of the *Bologna Declaration* 1999, see <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf> (retrieved August 29, 2009; cf. Fairclough & Wodak, 2008 and Wodak, 2006 for extensive analysis of this policy document). The *Magna Charta* 1998 can be accessed under <http://www.usm.my/ipptn/v2/documents/Globalupdates/Magna%20Charta%20Universitatum-No%2040.pdf>.

3. The Bologna Strategy, aiming to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, is one of the key elements of the operationalization of the Lisbon provisions. Bologna and Lisbon are overtly linked on the web-page of the European Commission's Education and Culture portfolio, where it is emphasized that 'all across Europe, countries and universities are engaged in a process of modernization. From an EU perspective, these reforms are part of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs' (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html, retrieved May 1, 2008).
4. In the Lisbon Strategy the OMC is defined as 'means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals . . . a fully decentralized approach using variable forms of partnerships and designed to help Member States to develop their own policies progressively' (European Council of Ministers, 2002, p. 10). Member states are encouraged to communicate and share experiences when working with the same questions to achieve policy coordination in order to 'become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (European Council, 2000). (See also European Commission, 2005.)
5. See http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/kok_report_en.pdf; *Financial Times*, 7 March 2005, p. 19 (London Edition).
6. In this paper, we restrict ourselves to the analysis of the recontextualization of the Bologna Strategy and the BD into national HE organizations (i.e. universities), in Austria and Romania. We assume that the *globalization and competitiveness rhetoric* which is also part and parcel of the Lisbon Strategy can be traced back to other earlier documents and policies in the Commission (and maybe even to certain *cultures of competitiveness* as propagated in the United States; Ash, 2008). More specifically, we assume that the huge debate on 'combating unemployment' which was at the core of EU policies 1997 influenced strategies for other social fields, such as HE (Muntigl et al., 2000; Wodak, 2009b).
7. Within argumentation theory, '*topoi*' can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to the required premises. They are the formal or content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument(s) with the conclusion, the claim (cf. Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 69–80).
8. After the national election on 30 September 2007, tuition fees were again abolished by the newly elected Grand Coalition government with a Social-Democratic majority and Prime Minister. In 2009, amendments to the University Law 2002 were decided upon, to be implemented 2010, which give the University Council even more power (308 *der Beilagen XXIV.GP – Ausschussbericht NR – Gesetzestext* 25, para 21, Abs. 5 – *Universitätsrechts-Änderungsgesetz* 2009): the Council selects the Rector, not the University Senate, thus only people from outside of the University. On the other hand, many reforms were implemented related to the support of interdisciplinary research and new interdisciplinary PhD programmes; furthermore, gender mainstreaming has been institutionalized. Thus, the University of Vienna has successfully recontextualized and operationalized some salient aspects of the Bologna Process while retaining a hierarchical, quasi-feudal structure. The status of 'autonomy' has remained the same as elaborated in this paper.
9. As noted before, this has changed through the implementation of new interdisciplinary PhD programmes since autumn 2009.
10. The *topos of danger and threat* is used throughout EU policy papers as a rhetorical device of persuasion; cf. Wodak (2000a, 2000b).

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