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Postgraduate Education in Europe
Harmonising with a dissonance?

This presentation deals with the emerging European postgraduate policies and their larger EU-dimensions which have motivated the establishing of a co-operative network (PG-NET) of eight European countries. The focus is on the harmonisation of the European higher education scene, especially from the Finnish point of view. The ongoing Bologna process can be seen as an expression of the will to create a common higher education market in Europe in order to promote the free mobility of students and the labour force. In this respect the speculation taken furthest is that already in the near future the effort to maintain the distinction between universities and polytechnics will be given up. In this way Europe will probably follow in the footsteps of the US, and gradually move towards a three-phase model of higher education with abroad access and initial three-year programmes leading to the bachelor’s degree that provides advanced training but that are not closely linked with the world of academic research. In the next phase a smaller part will advance through selective procedures to the master’s level on which studies are also more closely connected with scientific work. Only at the post-master’s level leading to a doctorate will the humboldtian ideal of the integrated nexus of teaching, research and learning be attained. It is argued in the paper that this kind of a two (or three) tier structure would be suitable especially from the perspective of the European Graduate School model and beneficial also to the functioning of the Finnish higher education system with its special problem points.

paper presented at the conference

Postgraduate Education in Europe
- past, present and future

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**Introduction**

In modern higher education systems characterised by massification and diversification, postgraduate training and the traditional PhD degree have been problematised in many ways. In the changing world of work, the appropriateness of the degree in the labour market is the main issue. Both national and international policy statements constantly repeat the themes of quality and efficiency and the need for internationalisation. Access and equality questions are also on the postgraduate agenda. And the more day-to-day higher education policy is still occupied with the (too) long duration of postgraduate studies (see Noble 1994, 25-32; Blume 1995, 9-10). These themes and problems are shared all over Europe.

Discussions around postgraduate reforms emphasise the needs imposed by the globalising world economy and the related policies propagating the ‘coming’ of the information society. Facing the challenges of the changing European labour markets, the developments towards the information society and the intensified international competition in the globalising economy, governments are now enhancing the production of highly trained labour, developing knowledge-intensive services, building new research centres, and promoting other conditions for furthering research and development. (See Kivinen & Ahola 1999.)

Higher education and R&D activities play an important role in this strategy as promoters of new innovations, new industries, and new employment opportunities. Postgraduate education especially is one strategic measure relating to the importance of developing and increasing R&D activities. As part of this trend, the American graduate school model has been introduced in Europe, and in most OECD countries universities are nowadays ‘pushed’ towards more effective production of PhDs.

**The PG-NET**

One attempt to tackle European postgraduate developments is included in a thematic network which was agree on in December 1998 in Finland where researchers from eight countries (Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and United Kingdom) met in order to discuss the expansion and problems of European postgraduate training and PhD labour markets.
The shared conclusion of the meeting was that the number of PhDs has indeed been growing fast in all countries. In Finland, for instance, doctoral output has more than doubled during the 1990s. In Italy the growth has been even more rapid. This fast growth and the changes that have taken place in postgraduate education systems have directed attention to the obvious lack of research in this area. Notwithstanding the fairly established research on the graduate labour market (cf. Teichler 1998), PhDs have until now remained a small and unproblematic elite group. However, especially in the universities, governmental actions towards postgraduate expansion have raised questions concerning the future employment and the changing labour market for PhDs. Governments themselves have also been quick to realise that there is not much information on the postgraduate labour market outside traditional university employment. Thus in many countries projects have been launched in order to map the basic features of the postgraduate labour market and to track emerging new needs and potential opportunities for the increasing human capital (OECD 1995).

The main objective of the PG-NET is to assess the emerging European graduate school model and the functioning of the related policy implementations both on the EU and national levels. The aim is to compare and analyse the responses of higher education institutions to these policies, and track the labour market outcomes of expanding postgraduate education in the eight participating countries.

The important European dimensions of the network’s assignment relates to three EU-level priorities: The first priority concerns the harmonisation of European higher education (Sorbonne Joint Declaration 1998; Bologna Declaration 1999) and the building of the European research area (European Commission 2000). In this regard, it is important to carefully consider the consequences of following in the US footsteps by gradually moving towards a three phase model of higher education where the distinction between universities and other higher education institutions fades away. This is especially consequential to countries like Finland where the labour market relevance of the new bachelor degree is at stake.

Secondly, the development of Europe-wide labour market is supposed to affect also the mobility of highly qualified researchers and experts (European Commission 1997a). The ”four pillars” of the Commission’s employment strategy, employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and equal opportunity (European Commission 1997b) have also important ramifications concerning postgraduate education. There is
evidence, for instance, how prolonged education and postgraduate degrees can actually weaken rather than enhance individual’s employability (see Kivinen & Ahola 1999).

Regarding to the second pillar, the ‘magic word’ of self-employment frequently used by policy makers, all we have at the moment is the enduring empirical finding that the most educated are the least probable future entrepreneurs. The need to adapt, on the other hand, relates to the question how to build rational and profitable ”triple helix” relationships between universities, firms and the government (cf. Ahola et al. 1999). The final point of equal opportunity deals with the question how to make postgraduate and research careers more open for women, minorities, and people with disadvantaged social and educational backgrounds.

The third priority concerns the competitiveness of the European economy, especially in the light of the efforts to introduce the American style graduate school model in Europe. Notwithstanding the various forms of the model currently applied in European countries, the common question is the quality of postgraduate training which is in danger to be displaced by quantitative growth. In what ways are the graduate schools superior in this respect compared to traditional postgraduate training?

State of Art in Postgraduate Research

Existing traditions of postgraduate research are scattered throughout the disciplinary field. The university as a remarkably permanent institution (e.g. Bender 1988, 4) has naturally been in continuing interest of sociologists. As a top link in the education system’s chain, universities and other institutions of higher education are in many ways related to the reproduction of society. And it is precisely the special nature of higher education as a producer, transmitter and reproducer of scientific knowledge which has given substrate to specialities like the sociology of knowledge and science.

Economics of education, on the other hand, has developed around questions relating to the production of human capital, and to the increasing importance of scientific knowledge as a factor of production. Administrative sciences are today increasingly interested in the steering and administering of higher education institutions, and also in the broader implications of various institutional reforms on the
management of organisations. Faculties of education, on their side, are most keenly preoccupied with questions of university pedagogics, teaching and learning, and evaluation.

Although the viewpoints are rich, communication between the different traditions and disciplines has been restricted. In addition, empirical research on postgraduate training has been quite practical or administrative in nature, and lacking theoretical insights on the place and functioning of the postgraduate training institution.

In this respect it is worth recalling the seminal works of Burton Clark (1983; 1993; 1995) which offer an elaborated sociological insight into the functioning of higher education systems and their scientific components. Clark’s work include comparative findings concerning the existence and the location of the research-teaching nexus and the related two drifts, i.e. that research tends to drift away from university settings and that teaching tends to became a school-like endeavour with no connections whatsoever to academic research.

In *Places of Inquiry* Clark (1995) characterises the German, British and the French postgraduate systems against the American model which he terms as “graduate department university”. According to Clark (ibid. 55), in the German “institute university” the research-teaching nexus is situated primarily in institutes internal to the university. In the humboldtian tradition, these institutes are defined by powerful chairs and their directing professors. While the system has changed from elite to mass and has become extended in scale and operations, it has still remained relatively undifferentiated among and within universities.

The British system, labelled as “the collegiate university”, has a long historical predominance of concentrating on the elite training of undergraduates. It was also the massification of higher education that transformed the “old idea of a British university, as places that happen to do some research and research training alongside their undergraduate teaching” (ibid. 88). The growth of science and engineering and the related globalisation put the attainment of internationally competitive expertise beyond the scope of undergraduate courses.

All national systems of higher education are exceptional, but some are more exceptional than others. If the humboldtian principle is found at all in France, in modern dress, it is hidden somewhere in the intricate features of an unusual structure of higher education and research. For Clark (ibid. 89, 114) the French
system can be distinguished as "the academy university" in which an outside set of research institutes
(notably the CNRSs) provide the main research base and university research-oriented programmes are
brought in alignment with it.

The American graduate school model in which, according to Clark (ibid. 225), the most favourable
institutional context for the research-teaching nexus exist, has now been widely accepted as the new
research foundation also for Europe.

Since 1980s several OECD and other policy documents have discussed the many different ways to
organise postgraduate training in relation to the expanding and diversifying higher education. They
document well the emerging of a specifically European policy addressing the form and content of doctoral
research training and the implementation of the graduate school model for organising postgraduate training.
These new policies included also rethinking of the functions and objectives of postgraduate training and the
PhD degree. Instead of the traditional preparation for a academic career in research and training the PhD
ought to prepare for a wider variety of social functions, especially for careers in the industry.

The 1987 OECD report on postgraduate education diagnosed the emerging problems of growing
postgraduate education paying attention to, for instance, prolonged study times and non-completion. It
addressed the confusing attempt to keep under one rubric a set of standards, functions and responsibilities
which no longer had anything more to do with each other than that they all belonged to the university. As
the report concludes, "the diversity of provision for post-graduate education has not kept pace with the
increasingly differentiated relations between knowledge and society" (OECD 1987, 80).

In 1990, the ministers responsible for education and science from The Netherlands, Belgium, France and
Germany established a Temporary International Consultative Committee of New Organisational
Forms of Graduate Research Training which recommended the adoption of the US style graduate
school system in Europe especially in order to shorten postgraduate studies. The committee also pointed
out to the need to streamline postgraduate training in order to facilitate mobility (OECD 1991). The
committee’s report was followed by an international conference in Amsterdam in 1993 which gave further
recommendations including, for instance, that the number of postdoctoral positions should be increased
considerably (Blume 1995, 18).
The 1995 OECD report, *Research Training - Present and Future*, presented country studies and the current postgraduate situation in Australia, Canada, Finland, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States and in the Czech Republic. This report clearly documents the emerging of a specifically European policy addressing the form and content of doctoral research training and the implementation of the graduate school model for organising postgraduate training.

In 1996 the European University Institute in collaboration with the European Commission’s DG VII organised a conference *The future of postgraduate education in Europe*. The output of the conference recognised the need for more systematic information on European postgraduate developments. There is a need for a common language, a more precise terminology, and a conceptual framework for addressing the postgraduate problem. More information is needed on postgraduate courses and their organisation. Up-to-date information is lacking especially on the postgraduate labour mark (see Frijdal & Bartelse 1999).

Today, here at Linköping, we are again gathered under the same familiar rubric: *Postgraduate Education in Europe – past, present and future*. In the following sections we will present something from the past which is important for the understanding of the Finnish graduate school developments. We will also discuss the present situation in the harmonisation and sketch the future of the Finnish degree structure.

**The Finnish Case**

*A short history of Finnish Graduate Schools*

In mid May 1994 Finnish universities received a letter from the Academy of Finland asking for proposals for new kind of postgraduate programmes - graduate schools. The deadline for applications was August the 15th. Professors and other faculty were naturally confused and angry - some more so than others. It soon became obvious than in certain quarters plans were far ahead while in others the whole innovation came from the blue sky.

In the Academy’s letter reference was made to the second supplementary state budget of that year which included a considerable sum (FIM 113 million) to be allocated in order to increase educational
opportunities for unemployed youth due to the deep recession. Behind this plan was a special Committee called "Option for Unemployment" set up in 1993 with the task to create additional studying places for mainly basic and secondary school leavers. However, the Committee soon expanded its assignment also to higher education graduates. This gave the Ministry of Education the opportunity to launch the graduate schools as a protection against graduate unemployment.

The decision to embark this new direction was officially made in the 1993 Development Plan but the history goes back to the 1980s and the Europe-wide changes in higher education policy and especially to the rise of the ‘evaluative state’ (Neave 1988). The ‘ancient’ history starts from the 1950s with the gradual emerging of specific science policy related to the expanding higher education and increasing interests in postgraduate training. As regards to the Finnish case, these developments can be divided into five stages which are shortly characterised in figure 1.

During the time of the elite university or ‘academic traditionalism’ postgraduate research training evolved, more or less on its own, between the traditional concerns of higher education policy which concentrated on the expanding undergraduate provision and those of the emerging science policy which dealt with the allocation of research funds. Co-ordination was mostly lacking, and postgraduate education ‘policy’ was often no more than unintended consequence of these two sets of processes (cf. OECD 1987). At that time, postgraduate activities were individual academic cultivation in nature, and training was more or less just a relationship between the apprentice and the master.

In 1947 a special agency, the Academy of Finland, was founded. The Academy itself was a group of 12 honorary top scientist appointed by the President. In 1950 the Academy was expanded by scientific boards which were responsible for allocating funds for research and young postgraduate students. The Academy is nowadays the main financier of basic research and the graduate schools. The 1960s witnessed a breakthrough of centralised planning in all governmental sectors. Especially in the field of educational planning, manpower forecasts became an important instrument of controlled expansion. Education in general was important human capital, and also postgraduate training served the needs of larger

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1The Development Plan is based on the Higher Education Development Act (L1052/86) and it is revised every fourth year. It states, among other things, the quantitative objectives and the needed resources. It is one of the most important higher education policy documents in Finland.
society and economy. In addition to the needs to reproduce academic chairs, calculations were made concerning the need of PhDs in other industrial and social sectors.

An important hallmark of the second phase, called here as the ‘time of the steering state’, was the passing of the 1966 Higher Education Development Act inspired by the British Robbins report. It gave detailed regulations on the future development of student and teacher numbers and the needed facilities. During the 1970s the state still strengthened its grip: private institutions of higher education were nationalised and all art colleges were integrated in the higher education system. Thus, nowadays it is possible to ‘perform’ the PhD also in the field of arts.

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**Phase I: Time of Academic Traditionalism**

Postgraduate activities were individual academic cultivation in nature and the training was a relationship between the apprentice and the master

- 1947 Founding of the Academy of Finland
  - financing basic research and young postgraduate students
- 1958-64 Committee for the Organising of Scientific Research.
  - two interrelating problems: funding of postgraduate activities and long duration of studies

**Phase II: Time of the Steering State**

Towards centralised planning in all societal sectors. Postgraduate training served also needs of the larger society and economy

- 1965 Committee for Planning the Higher Education System
  - manpower planning for controlled expansion
- 1966 Higher Education Development Act
  - the need to secure steady growth of resources

**Phase III: Time of the Evaluative State**

Accountability and efficiency. Towards co-operative postgraduate training programmes

- 1983 Memorandum of the Steering Group for Postgraduate Training
  - strengthening the training function, tutoring, efficiency
- 1987 OECD evaluation report “Review of the National Science and Technology Policies: Finland”

- Finnish postgraduate training was poorly organised or totally unorganised
- 1987-89 Committee for Postgraduate Training
  - estimated PhD demand until 2000 indicated the need to double PhD output
  - proposed special postgraduate programmes for all fields

**Transitional phase IV: The Deep Recession**

A special policy of "structural development" was launched in order to renew the higher education system to survive considerable budget cuts. Huge amounts of resources were redirected to compensate unemployment using education as an instrument. "Steering by results”.

- 1993 Decision of the State Council for the Development of Education and Scientific Research (= Development Plan)
  - postgraduate training ought to be organised as a co-operative network consisting of "centres of excellence” and ordinary postgraduate programmes in different universities

**Phase V: Time of the Information State**

Graduate schools are part of a "supranational” project towards the information society

- 1994 request of the Ministry of education for proposals to establish graduate schools based on a supplementary budget which gave additional resources for universities in order to relieve youth and graduate unemployment
- 1995 launching of 67 graduate schools employing 722 postgraduate trainees
present situation: 94 graduate schools with approximately 4,200 postgraduate students.
- At the moment about 100 new posts are open for application and from the beginning of 2002 about 1,000 existing places will be open for new applicants.

**Figure 1. The Five Phases of Graduate School Evolvement in Finland**

The third phase can be characterised as ‘time of the evaluative state’. As Guy Neave points out, evaluation has always been an intrinsic part of governmental policy making. What is distinctive in the changes of the 1980s, and in the coining of the concept ‘evaluative state’, is the change that the state brought in the practice of evaluation itself and how it was connected to policy making and especially to the steering of higher education. Evaluation is "the ‘little bit of sugar’ which makes the often very bitter medicine of budgetary compression flow down the collective academic gullet without too much gagging” (Neave 1998, 270).

New modes of steering and budgeting the Finnish system were introduced during the early 1990s which was a transitional but quite important phase. Straightforward budgetary and regulatory control had to give room to ‘hands off’ monitoring of performance which was backed up by a shift to budgeting by results and the related evaluation systems. A key element in Ministry-university relations is the yearly consultation procedure by which the Ministry and the universities jointly set the objectives for each university and agree on funding levels. The universities receive lump-sum funds and decide themselves how to allocate them. Management by results emphasises the assessment of activities and rewards for performance (see Ministry of Education 1998). What the recession brought in the picture, however, was that the new lump-sum covered only about 80 to 90 percent of running expenses and, consequently, there was actually not very much to negotiate on.

The quest for accountability and efficiency - via highly developed instruments of evaluation - became a trans-European project within the EU and with the help of OECD ‘policy milling’. The historical situation when "decisions can no longer be fobbed off” (Neave 1998, 268) came in Finland already in 1987 when the OECD evaluation of Finnish national science and technology policies bluntly concluded that our postgraduate training was poorly organised or even totally unorganised. It was obvious that something had to be done. And in deed, another Commission was appointed.
The rest of the history goes as already told. At the moment there are 94 graduate schools in operation. According to the Ministry, the total number of students involved is about 4200. In addition to the Ministry’s separate funding, graduate schools receive money from the Academy, the universities and from outside sources. The prevailing situation is, unfortunately, that it is difficult to get accurate information on the number of graduate school students let alone the money flows involved.

The current phase has been labelled as the ‘time of the information state’. This designation derives from the developments already described in the introduction. More eagerly than many other OECD countries, the Finnish government has decided to rush forward on its own express train to the information society. Like elsewhere, the national strategy emphasises lifelong learning which is, for its essential parts, connected to the visions of information society. In addition to the special concern to teach all the citizens the basic skills required by the information society (see Ministry of Education 1997), the highly educated led by the PhDs are those who are supposed to ‘make it happen’.

**Harmonisation**

One of governments’ justifications, more or less openly stated, is that also the graduate schools are a response to the threat of serious unemployment among those with master’s degrees arising as a result of mass higher education. The problem is that as mass higher education pushes more and more graduates into the doctoral track, governments are forced to expand postgraduate studies also in those fields where employment prospects outside a traditional university career are relatively poor. Consequently, and again in lines with the American precedent, there is now discussion of establishing postdoc positions, ostensibly as a temporary measure providing opportunities for researchers to further refine their research skills, but in fact largely as a means to avert the impending threat of postdoctoral unemployment (Kivinen & Ahola 1999).

The EU is putting a lot of faith into the rapidly expanding labour market for higher education graduates outside national borders. Harmonising European higher education in its entirety is considered the first step towards this direction. In 1998 the Sorbonne Joint Declaration was signed by the Ministers of Education of the leading EU countries, France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy. The Declaration reminds us that Europe cannot be only the Euro, the banks and the economy. Therefore the respectable European tradition
of vital culture and ‘Bildung’ must be cherished. Bildung, however, must be harnessed by a comparable and transparent degree structure (Sorbonne Joint Declaration 1998)

In June 1999 altogether 29 European ministers of education joined in a follow-up declaration in Bologna. The objectives of Bologna Declaration include the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. It further proposes that access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after first cycle should be relevant also in the European labour market. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree which is the case already in many European countries (The Bologna Declaration 1999).

The declarations can be read as an expression of the will to create a common higher education market in Europe in order to promote free mobility of students and the labour force. In the harmonising of education, the speculation taken furthest is that, already in the near future the effort to maintain the distinction between universities and different non-university sectors will be given up. In this way Europe will probably follow in the footsteps of the US and gradually move towards a three-phase model of higher education. In this model there is broad access to initial three-year programmes leading to the bachelor’s degree, providing advanced training but not a close link to the world of academic research. In the next phase (graduate school) a smaller part of the above mentioned group will advance, through selective procedures, to the master’s level where the studies are also more closely connected to scientific work. Only at the post-master’s level, leading to a doctorate, will the humboldtian ideal of the integrated nexus of teaching, research and learning, be attained (cf. Clark 1995).

Harmonisation: the Finnish Case

The Ministry has recently published a discussion paper on Finnish degree structure. The motivation for the contention came mainly from the plans to introduce a special postgraduate degree also to the AMK sector. The need for this kind of new a degree has initiated heated discussions in Finland. The universities but also representatives of the employers have been quite critical towards this reform. Opinions within the government, on the other hand, are divided. The most eager developers and proponents of the new degrees are naturally the polytechnics themselves.
In relation to the European harmonisation project, the paper discusses also the newly established lower academic degrees. It recognises that one of the major problems with the development of the Finnish bachelor’s degree has been its week labour market status. The traditional master’s degree is still the basic academic degree in a sense that the right to study is conferred for the master’s. Students can ‘take out’ the BA if they want to. The numbers taking bachelor degrees grew after the reform but during the last few years the situation seems to have stabilised. In the field of humanities and natural sciences, for instance, where the bachelor was reintroduced (see note 2 below), the shares of bachelor/master are nowadays about 25/75 per cent respectively.

It is important to notice that the new lower academic degrees were introduced in the beginning of the 1990s before any knowledge of the becoming harmonisation project. The reasons for this degree reform were on one hand related to the perceived failure of the previous big reform of the 1970s. On the other hand, they were related to the internationalisation of higher education and to the ”comparability problem” which was also behind the AMK reform. The previous degree reform which, for instance, abolished the two traditional lower degrees in the fields of humanities and natural sciences was considered as a failure because it just swelled study requirements, prolonged study times and increased drop outs. Also the organisation of studies in the form of study programmes was considered too constraining in the changing world of the 1990s. Thus, in this respect the new reform meant returning to the traditional subject-based (major and minors) academic degrees.

The other reason for the need of a bachelor level degree was the increasing internationalisation, and the Finnish government’s commitment to considerably increase studies abroad. In order to participate international postgraduate courses, masters programmes especially, Finnish students needed a comparable entry qualification. In this respect, a ‘natural’ harmonisation process had begun already before the Sorbonne-Bologna declarations.

The new degree legislation has made it also possible to organise the second tier (the MA phase) as specially designed master’s programmes. Master’s programmes have been developed especially for the

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2 These were introduced during the years of fast expansion in the 1950s in order to alleviate the shortage of secondary school teachers.
needs of the changing labour markets, and they have been offered, for instance, as a form of ‘transformative’ education for people in the working life with obsolete degrees or for other reasons to be retrained in fields with shortage of competent work force. There is at the moment, however, some confusion on the field because the further education centers of universities have previously offered vocational further education, using the ‘fancy’ English title ‘Master’s Programme’. They are not, however, degree courses. Another problem is that the new master’s programmes are not yet part of the regular training structure of the universities but they are separately financed and administrated projects. The standpoint of the ministry is that master’s programmes should be financed from the universities’ normal operational funds. Without additional funding to the basic university budget, however, departments are reluctant to engage with this kind of new innovations. It seems rather obvious that the future of master’s programmes will be dependent on the solving of the bachelor’s problem.

Another ‘obstacle’ in the postgraduate pathway is the licentiate degree which is available for postgraduate students before the doctorate. It has been an independent scientific degree, although it is not necessary for the completion of the PhD. In many fields of study, especially in the humanities and social sciences where postgraduate studies take a considerable long time, it has been more like a rule to take the licentiate. On one hand, the licentiate may prolong postgraduate studies but on the other hand is has been considered an important option for the individual student overwhelmed by his/hers opus magnum. This is one reason why it has proved to be so difficult to abandon it. According to the discussion paper, the Ministry wishes to develop the licentiate degree with clear vocational tuning. Only during the last couple of years, the number of licentiate degrees has begun to decrease, especially in relation to the fast growing numbers of doctoral degrees (see table 1). This is due to the graduate schools in which students are expected to proceed straight to the PhD.

Table 1. The number of licentiate and doctoral degrees in Finland 1981-2000.

<table>
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<th>Licentiate</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
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<td>319</td>
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<td>318</td>
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Source: KOTA  
Note: Art academies excluded

*Harmonisation in Some Other Countries*

France

France, which is usually considered as the most different and opaque higher education system for the rest of Europe, has been one of the leading forerunners in the harmonisation process. France is creating both a new first cycle degree corresponding to the bachelor level and a new master’s or *Mastaire* encompassing the existing baccalaureate + 5 degrees (DESS and DEA). According to the French country report, the "*Mastaire* is delivered on behalf of the State by the relevant institutions, together with the qualification or diploma giving title to the *Mastaire*”. Thus, the *Mastaire* seems more like a common designation or title to ensure European comparability than a genuinely new degree. From the point of view of the diversity of the French system, the *Mastaire* has also important domestic functions. The report notes that "for the first time, the same designation will cover qualifications from both universities and *grandes écoles*, thus promoting the development of co-operative programmes between these institutions while preserving the identity of the different components of the French system.

The first tier degree is called in the French country report - for some reason or another - "the vocational degree”. It is a question of a specially designed - with close connections to the world of work, for instance

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3 This section is based on the Salamanca 2001 conference material (see *Fel! Bokmärket är inte definierat.*, including the available country reports and the background report "Trends in Learning Structures in higher Education II" prepared by Guy Haug and Christian Tauch.
- courses after the traditional baccalaureate + 2 qualifications (DEUG, DUT, BTS or BTSA). It will be an option for "students who so desire to obtain fast-track vocational qualifications meeting identified needs”.

The country report is sketching further that the new bachelor level degree courses will be organised in the form of both initial and continuing education; they will include genuine work experience for students and enable them to make in-depth assessments of their career plans and facilitating their integration into their profession. They are also supposed to apply new teaching technology and international co-operation. All students are expected, for instance, to complete part of their studies in other countries.

Italy

In Italy the newly introduced two tier structure will be also quite different as compared to the old system. The first cycle lasting three years will lead to the laurea degree. The second cycle corresponding to the master’s is called laurea specialistica. Only the Italian country report specifically states that admission to the second cycle can be obtained only after successful completion of the first cycle.

Germany

Germany has introduced a new legislation which provides for the voluntary development of bachelor’s and master’s curricula either in parallel or in replacement of the traditional long degrees. According to the background report two entire universities and many faculties have already transformed their traditional course structures corresponding to the new two tier model. The German Rectors’ Conference is expecting that the new structure will became the standard throughout the country.

Sweden

Especially from the Finnish point of view, the Swedish case is quite interesting. According to the Swedish country report, their degree structure is already corresponding to the two tiers and, consequently, the Bologna Declaration does not motivate any changes. However, as also pointed out by the background report, Sweden is currently debating its “undergraduate magister” degree which does not easily fit in the two tier pattern developed elsewhere. In addition to the magister, Sweden still has two undergraduate
degrees: the two-year högskole-examen and the three-year kandidatexamen. The Swedish degree system includes also about fifty professional degrees which are situated at different levels.

The UK

The two-cycle system of undergraduate degrees - usually of three or four years’ duration - and post-graduate awards is a traditional and integral part of UK higher education. According to the British country report, emphasis is nowadays placed more on the outcomes of learning than on time spent in schooling. In addition there are discussions on the possibility of two-year "Foundation degrees". They are designed to be responsive to students’ and employers’ needs, but they will not replace traditional first degrees. If a student wish to move from a Foundation degree to a first degree, they would need take some additional courses.

There is also a number of other activities in the UK higher education sector which are in the line with the action programme of the Bologna process. The development of qualifications frameworks, for instance, include:

- a clear distinction between postgraduate and undergraduate qualifications; the distinction is based on the level of the outcomes that need to be demonstrated by students;
- clear and accurate information about the purposes and outcomes of higher education in a form that will be useful to all;
- a structure of shared reference points that enable the character, level and intended outcomes of different higher education qualifications to be distinguished;
- the basis for a consistent use of qualification titles throughout the UK - the use of the bachelors and masters titles is clearly determined.

The following table tries to capture the basic features of the current developments in degree structures in the above described six countries. As we can see, new bachelor’s and master’s are introduced approximately in their ‘right’ +3 and +5 positions, but the overall picture is still exhibiting more or less the same ”extreme complexity and diversity of curricular and degree structures” noted by Guy Haug in his first
background paper in the *Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education*\(^4\). That is why it is so important to proceed also with the two other objectives of the Bologna process, namely the development of a common credit system (ECTS) and the diploma supplement.

\(^4\) Online at URL http://www.rks.dk/trends3.htm
**Table 2. Degree Structures in Some Selected European Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+8</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Doctorsexamen</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dottorato di ricerca</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Ph.D.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+7</td>
<td>Licensiaatti (postgraduate degree)</td>
<td>Lisensiatexamen</td>
<td>Zwaite staatsprüfung</td>
<td>DE (in medicine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+6</td>
<td>Lisensiaatti (basic degree in medicine)</td>
<td>New Master’s</td>
<td>Laurea (dottore)</td>
<td>DEA, DESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Master’s (laurea specialistica)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Master’s (Mastaire)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Magisterexamen</td>
<td>Maîtrise</td>
<td>Bachelor’s /</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staatspfüfung</td>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+4</td>
<td></td>
<td>laurea ou licenza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Kandidatexamen</td>
<td>New Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Licence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma universitario</td>
<td>New Bachelor’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(laurea)</td>
<td>(Licence professionelle)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Högskole-examen</td>
<td>Zwischenprüfung</td>
<td>DEUG etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(A new foundation degree under construction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINLAND | SWEDEN | GERMANY | ITALY | FRANCE | UK

Sources: Eurybase *(Fel! Bokmärket är inte definierat.)*
EuropEdu *(Fel! Bokmärket är inte definierat.)*
The Future

In this final section we will shortly sketch the future of Finnish higher education and degree structure. Although we agree with Ulrich Teichler (2001) that the two tier structure might serve more the interest to attract students from outside Europe than the intra-European needs of flexibility diversity or transparency, we recommend the bachelor-master model especially from the point of view of the functioning of postgraduate training. As we pointed out above, the question is how to retain the humboldtian ideal of the integrated nexus of teaching, research and learning.

In order to make the bachelor level functional it should be the first degree which is in line with the proposals of the Bologna declaration. If the master’s will be kept as the basic degree the bachelor will never gain the required momentum in the labour market. The creation of a three-year first degree which would be common to both the universities and AMKs would also facilitate the simplification of the heavy and expensive student admission system in the university sector. Thus, the idea is that access to the bachelor level, which already accounts for 60-70 per cent of the relevant age groups, need not to be broadened but made more simple and easy. The bachelor curriculum should also be rewritten, as pointed out by Teichler, first, in order to secure its relevancy in the labour market and, secondly, to prepare adequately for the postgraduate phase without trying to hold on to any quasi-scientific thinking.

As mentioned above, in the present system only a few take the bachelor and even fewer exit with it in the labour market. In our sketch a clearly smaller proportion than at the moment - depending on the solutions in the AMK sector - will proceed, through selective admission, to master’s programmes where the studies are more closely linked to scientific research. After the master’s, the graduate schools will pick the most able students in doctoral studies.

In some discussions the common bachelor degree has been condemned because it would jeopardise the Finnish dual system where the AMKs form a separate and distinctive sector of higher education. We feel, on the contrary, that in addition of giving AMK graduates the opportunity to choose between university master’s programmes and AMK’s own further education degrees, this kind of an arrangement would also support the development of the new further education degrees in the right direction. The danger, in the other case, is that AMKs continue to imitate university structures and functions.
According to Teichler (ibid. pp 10-11), the new structure would be beneficial for the different student groups:

- The traditional university student will straightforward pass the two stages, pretty much as before. They benefit mostly from the diversification of the new modular course offering.
- The less ambitious or able university students who are uncertain about their success, who were the former drop outs etc., gain the bachelor’s degree. Maybe after some years work experience they can consider whether they are willing and in the position of pursuing a more ambitious aim.
- Students in the non-university sectors (AMK, Fachhochscule, etc.) study basically as before but are awarded with the bachelor’s degree. The more ambitious and able ones have then better opportunities to study in various postgraduate arrangements.

Especially in Finland were student flows between the two higher education sectors have been in many ways problematic (see Ahola 1997) the bachelor-master structure could balance the flows and ease the pressure which in the present situation is directed heavily towards the universities.

As regards to the European graduate school, only one thing seems to be certain: universities will also in the future have professors who go through traditional academic research training. But what about the fast growing number of other postgraduate students working on new kinds of professional PhD degrees supposedly needed outside the academic labour market? Who are they and what might their qualifications be?
References:


KOTA database: Online at URL: http://www.csc.fi/kota/kota.html


