

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS - GOVERNING HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE THROUGH STANDARDISATION

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INTRODUCTION

During the last few years the Bologna process has been going on in Europe: a process where ideas of comparability, mobility and transparency are put forward as a means to create a European educational space. This is a declaration signed by both members of the European Union and other countries and it isn't something the countries have to adapt to; it's voluntarily. Narratives about harmonisation are in some aspects taken-for-granted and many universities in Europe have accepted this process and see it as inevitable (NÓVOA, 2002, AHOLA & MESIKÄMMEN, 2003). Similar views can be seen in narratives created at Universities in Sweden, where adaptation to the process, without political decision is being made at several institutions of higher education. This compared to the 1970s when the EC did agree on some frameworks for higher education policy, but it never got implemented in the national cases (FÄGERLIND & STRÖMQVIST, 2004). The question that arises is; how come it is possible to speak of harmonisation in the specific way put forth in the Bologna process today? Further, the Bologna process can be seen as an educational restructuring process that is outlined on a European level to be implemented in the nations of Europe (and other nation's part of the process). The narratives speak about it as a bottom-up process and in this article we will view this as an example of how governing has changed during the last decades. Governing of higher education no longer seems to be based

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on a rationality based on institutional legislation. Instead there seems to be a neoliberal governmentality that «attempts to integrate new geographic spaces and populations not by overt coercion, but by instituting a host of «harmonized» regulations, codes and standards (DUNN, 2005:175). Such a rationality takes specific forms in the Bologna process.

In this article we do a textual analysis of educational policy documents relating to the Bologna process. Some of these documents are from the European Union, and some are from Sweden. We begin with Nóvoa's (2002) idea of «planetspeak» discourses, referring to a way of reasoning that seems to have no structural roots, no social locations and no origin. It is part of a «worldwide bible» that is on every tongue and it seems to provide solutions to the problems faced. It travels through the world and is inscribed in different countries and practices where it takes different forms. In this analysis we look at three essential tensions embedded in the idea of «planetspeak» - as it applies to the Bologna process. First, where do the ideas put forth in the Bologna process come from and how are they put together so they appear «legitimate» or «true» in a way that seems not to need questioning. Second, these ideas are framed in terms of «freedom,» and policy makers stress that they are not mandatory, and do not disrupt the autonomy of university systems in individual countries. At the same time, the provisions of the documents are framed in terms of subtle threats for the countries that do not follow them. In this article we trace the discursive tension created in these documents between the concepts of freedom and autonomy, and of the need for universal compliance and equivalency. Finally, we look more specifically at the case of Sweden, and examine how these concepts mesh with, and challenge local ideas about education.

Research on the Bologna process

When going through research and texts on the issue of the Bologna process critical and deconstructive studies of this phenomenon seems to be limited. There are a lot of policy inspired and sometimes normative texts that addresses different areas of the Bologna process.

The level of analysis varies, from superficial to more deep ones. Themes discussed in these articles are for example social issues in the Bologna

process (KLADIS, 2003, NYBORG, 2005), descriptive accounts of how the progress of implementation is going in the participating countries (REICHERT & TAUCH, 2004), trends reports, analysis of factors that has paved the way for nations to accommodate to convergence of higher education system (HUISMAN & VAN DER WENDE, 2004), personal reflections on the development (WÄCHTER, 2004), Personal reflections combined with normative accounts on the process (FROMENT, 2003).

There is however a few studies taking on the task of critically analyse higher education in Europe and the Bologna process. Ahola and Mesikämnen (2003) discuss the implementation of this process in Finland. They critically trace the emergence of the process and ask how it comes that Finland accommodate it. Ann Corbett (2003) makes a critical analysis of EU documents and interviews as a mean to explain how policy making before 1971 have had major impacts on the policy making after, such as the Bologna declaration.

A critical task is carried out by Nóvoa who together with Lawn (2002) has edited a book, *Fabricating Europe* that collects several critical and deconstructive approaches to European educational Policy. Nóvoa (2002) himself analyses educational policy documents produced by the European Union during the first two years of the 21st Century. He focuses on three things that have influenced our way of thinking about educational policy: the agenda-setting by the media, the planetspeak discourse of the experts and the excesses of the past and future. These lenses are then used to analyse European educational documents and discuss the Bologna process. In the same book Lawn (2002) focuses on borderless education. He argues that the traditional borders of education have been replaced by cross-border activities. The concept also draws attention to the traditions of education constructed within borders and this can be related to the Europeanization of education existing parallel, and now also crossing into the realm of the nation. The new technological developments have given rise to a new organizing principle for Europe, away for the nation states towards networking with other partners. Steiner-Khamsi (2002) focuses on what she calls «educational borrowing»: a process which is making when ideas from a narrative created in one situation is inscribed in another. When creating an educational reform you are no longer able to refer to traditions, beliefs or organisation to justify it because such a way of reasoning is seen as backwards. Instead you refer to ideas from

other countries; you borrow concepts and reforms from abroad. These are then part of the policy talk. But in the cases referred to in her article she concludes that there is a resistance to import educational models from abroad. Therefore the externalization is downplayed and the local adaptation and indigenization of the borrowed model are emphasised.

As we summarise we can see that there seem to be a limited amount of critical and deconstructive approaches concerning the Bologna process. This is a similar conclusion made by Antonio Nóvoa (2002). He argues that there is a need to problematize education in Europe as an object of inquiry. The texts produced about this issue are mostly re-representations of present discourses and there is a lack of critical studies that deconstruct the ideas put forth. This article is an attempt to contribute to a more critical deconstructive approach of education in Europe. The task at hand is to problematize the Bologna process in a way that seems to be absent in the literature; to study the ideas that makes the Bologna process a reasonable way to reason and act; to see how these ideas are put together to legitimate the «truth»; and to discuss the tension of the concepts of freedom and autonomy related to the need for universal compliance and equivalency.

Educational restructuring and governmentality

We will draw on the idea of educational restructuring as a means to analyse these narratives. Lindblad and Popkewitz (2004) use this notion as a way to analyse the «rules and standards of reason that order, differentiate and distinguish the processes of restructuring across different national contexts» (LINDBLAD & POPKEWITZ, 2004: IX). One of their aims is to understand how it is possible to speak in the way policy is spoken of today. In this article we have a similar pursuit; to analyse how the planetspeak discourse of harmonisation is made possible in the practice of higher education and how this idea is inscribed in both the European and Swedish case.

Further, we draw on the foucauldian concept of governmentality (FOUCAULT, 2003a) in our analysis. The focus is on the ways the narratives analysed creating mentalities of how to govern which is based on specific assumptions of what to govern. Foucault argues that there has been a process of governmentalization of the state during the last few hundred years. A

change from a repressive centralized power of the prince to punish, to a more decentralized way of governing through institutions and the subjects themselves. The new ways of governing were made possible through the emergence of population as an entity that was to be governed. To attain this goal, statistics and other technologies were invented to manage the population. We could say that Governmentality is mentalities/thoughts concerning how governing should be practised. Foucault (2003a) argues that Governmentality focuses on the articulation of different kinds of rationalities of government; not on what is the correct way of governing. Such rationality is always based on, or has a relation to, an idea of what to govern. The main focus of a rationality of governing is on how to govern: the conduct of conduct - how to lead the governing. The concept of conduct points to several meanings; to conduct is to lead or guide, and it also means to conduct oneself (ethical aspect), at the same time it points at our behaviour; if we have a professional conduct or not. All these meanings merge in the concept of governmentality; governing attempts to shape our behaviour according to a particular set of norms and ideas. It is not made through laws. Instead, the rationalities of governing are inscribed into different tactics that are to shape the conduct of the population by working through our desires, aspirations and beliefs (DEAN, 1999).

... the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes it directs; and the instrument of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiple tactics. (FOUCAULT, 2003^a: 237)

An analytics of government thus focuses on how to govern and what to govern. In this article we focus on the Bologna process as a standardisation process. This contains different tactics for governing which will be elaborated upon. But first, we will elaborate on the question of how it comes to be possible to speak of higher education reform in the specific form as it is spoken of in the Bologna process.

Material from the European Union and Sweden will be analysed. Four EU documents are analysed; the *Bologna declaration* (1999), *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (2001), the *Berlin communiqué* (2003) and the document *Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area* (2005). From Sweden

one official document (DS 2004:2) concerning the Bologna process is analysed and two official documents concerned with adult education (SOU 1998:51, SOU 2001:78).

The analysis is structured in three parts. First there is an analysis of what planetspeak discourses are present in, and drawn on, in the Bologna process. How are they put together so they appear «legitimate» or «true» in a way that seems not to need questioning? The second part problematizes the tension around the concepts of «freedom» and autonomy related to the idea of harmonisation. In the third part I elaborate on how these concepts mesh with, and challenge local ideas about education.

I. PLANETSPEAK DISCOURSES MAKING THE BOLOGNA PROCESS POSSIBLE

In this part we will analyse and problematize how it becomes possible to speak of the Bologna process in the ways spoken of. Today there are specific discourses; ways of speaking that are the legitimate way to speak. If you don't use these, you will probably be excluded. Therefore we will analyse some of the planetspeak discourses that are drawn upon in this process? The planetspeak discourses of the knowledge based society, employability, mobility, lifelong learning, and quality assurance will be discussed.

I.1. The knowledge based society, employability and mobility

One idea repeated in the narratives on education on the European level and in the case of Sweden is the idea of the knowledge-based society. Society is constructed as building on knowledge. It is seen as essential that Europe becomes the most competitive and well-developed knowledge society in the world.

The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 set the European Union the strategic goal, reaffirmed at the Stockholm European Council in March 2001, of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world (EU COMMISSION, 2001: 7).

In such reasoning there is an idea of a threat from the surrounding world. There are other parts of the world, and in this case the entire world, that has to be competed with¹. Therefore, Europe has to become a «Europe of Knowledge (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 2)». Such an idea is also inscribed in the case of Sweden.

In the knowledge based society, lifelong and lifewide learning is a reality and a prerequisite for our country to compete with good knowledge, technical ability and high competencies (SOU, 2001: 78, 147).

Also in this case there is the idea of competition with a surrounding world and lifelong learning is a way to meet this competition. Central to note is that this idea constructs a basis for thinking of knowledge and education in specific ways; first of all it constructs knowledge as a central part for *competition* with other countries and regions. Thus competition is a basis for constructing a knowledge-based society. Second, it makes it possible to speak of knowledge as something all individuals in a country need to gain, as a way to compete with the surrounding world. This seems to be a fairly new idea in Sweden as the knowledge society is not part of the narratives of the mid 20th Century. Instead there is a discourse of creating a society with enough educated people to meet the demands of the labour market. Knowledge is not constructed as a commodity (SOU, 1952:29). The concept of knowledge society seems to have emerged in the 1970s in relation to some social theorists. The basic idea was that energy was to be replaced by knowledge as a primary source for society (RASMUSSEN, 2004), thus making it a condition of possibility to speak of knowledge in specific ways.

Another basis for the knowledge-based society is that all citizens become employable. «In economic terms, the employability and adaptability of citizens is vital for Europe to maintain its commitment to becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based society in the world (EU, 2001: 6). The idea of employability is a planetspeak discourse that is inscribed into the Swedish case.

¹ You can find this idea in all the European documents analysed. When arguing for a harmonised system of higher education in Europe, there is often a reference to Europe's need to be «better» than other parts of the world, i.e. the USA.

The aim of the adult education initiative was, besides giving access to courses on secondary level, to give access to courses at upper secondary level, which is needed by the individual to become employable and participatory in the societal development, directly or through further education (SOU, 1998: 51, 29).

Europe and nations can compete with the surrounding world by educating its citizens. In this discourse there are ideas of economic nature. For example, the idea of employability in Sweden is combined with ideas of reducing the unemployment rate and thus the cost of social benefits (FEJES, 2005a). If we compare this to the analysis of narratives on adult education in Sweden produced during the mid 20th Century we can see how this way of reasoning isn't new (FEJES, 2005a, 2005b). Sweden was then seen as competing with the surrounding world as a way to maintain its position as a developed country with high living standards.

The discourse of employability is combined with the discourse of mobility. The Bologna process has as its aim to create a European area of higher education as a means to reach employability and mobility.

The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998, which was underpinned by these considerations, stressed the Universities' central role in developing European cultural dimensions. It emphasised the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 1-2).

To become employable you need to be created as a mobile subject; if you become mobile you will have a greater chance to attain a job as your competence can be matched with a suitable employment somewhere in Europe. Such mobility will also make Europe more prosperous as it will contribute to creating mobile citizens that makes the most of his/hers competencies (EU COMMISSION, 2001). This idea is repeated in the Swedish documents on the Bologna process (DS, 2004:2). The citizens need to be mobile and willing to move to other parts of Europe to get an employment. This also creates a practice of exclusion; what happens to those who don't become, or can't become mobile?

What seems to be new in these narratives is the idea of education and knowledge as something that constantly needs to be updated as a means to

become employable. This turns our attention to the next planetspeak discourse: lifelong learning.

I.2. Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is constructed as a central part of the knowledge-based society and as a way to create the employable citizen, both in European and Swedish narratives. It is a way to compete with the surrounding world and to make Europe prosperous. Further, it is argued that a Europe of lifelong learning will empower citizens to become more mobilised, and to make Europe more democratic, inclusive and tolerant.

This Communication contributes to the establishment of a European area of lifelong learning, the aims of which are both to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries, making the most of their knowledge and competences, and to meet the goals and ambitions of the European Union and the candidate countries to be more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic (EU COMMISSION, 2001: 3).

In this quotation we can see how discourses on lifelong learning, mobility, knowledge and competencies meet ideas of democracy and tolerance. If people participate in lifelong learning they acquire competencies and knowledge that will be possible to bring to use in different parts of Europe and thereby making Europe prosperous. Such relation suggests that the subject constructed is in need of remedy and help to become mobilized as a mean to become prosperous. This will be attained by creating opportunities for learning; then the citizens will become empowered and mobilized. An idea of the future is embedded in such reasoning. Lifelong learning is something that will create mobilized citizens, which is part of the future. Further, the future is also visible in the idea of a prosperous Europe. This is something that has to be created: the teleos of government (DEAN, 1999).

Lifelong learning is constructed as something everyone is part of and from which no one is excluded. «They stress the need to improve opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher

education (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 6).» Learning should take place during all stages of life and in different settings. «In addition to the emphasis it places on learning from pre-school to postretirement, lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, nonformal and informal learning (EU COMMISSION, 2001: 3).» This constructs a citizen that is constantly learning. You are not only learning in formal school settings during your first part of life; life itself becomes a continuum of learning. You could say it's a colonisation of life; you are encouraged to learn all the time and you can't escape it. You can't choose not to learn, but you can in some aspects choose in what contexts to learn. One way to interpret this discourse on lifelong learning is to see the construction of the subject as a salvation narrative. Through constructing the mobilized lifelong learner, the teleos of government will be reached. There is a process of self-responsibilization (ROSE, 1999a). The individuals are to take care of their own career and make choices that lead to an employment. Doing so will create a prosperous Europe.

Another effect of the current power relations are the construction of practices of exclusion. This is illustrated with the case of Sweden. The discourse of lifelong learning, where learning is to take place in different contexts, throughout ones entire life, and in which all are included, is inscribed in similar ways in the Swedish case as in the EU documents. But in Sweden this discourse is paralleled with the idea of those who lack the prerequisites to participate in lifelong learning. The risk groups are defined (the unemployed, single mothers, social security dependents etc) and they need to acquire the prerequisites to participate in lifelong learning.

With the adult education imitative, the committee intended to strengthen the educational opportunities for adults with the shortest of formal education. There are groups that are at risk of being marginalized and excluded from the labour market because they do not have the prerequisite needed to participate in the lifelong learning. It is for them that adult education has to be strengthened and an adult education initiative created. (SOU, 1998: 51, 27).

Therefore you have two parallel discourses on lifelong learning in Sweden. One that stresses that everyone is always learning (lifelong learners), and one where some people don't have the prerequisites to learn all

the time. This points at how the specific power relations in society assign a specific meaning to the concept of lifelong learning; in this case two different meanings. This creates a specific «other»; the discourse creates exclusion. What happens to those who choose not to participate in lifelong learning, or don't have the ability to participate? By constructing the desirable subject there is also a construction of «the other» (POPKEWITZ, 2003), the one who is in need of remedy.

I.3. Quality assurance

In the documents concerned with the Bologna process are several market-oriented ideas present. One of them is quality assurance. As a central part of creating the European higher education area the need for a system of quality assurance is stressed. The narratives argue that the criteria for this have to be the same over the entire area.

The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Ministers commit themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 3).

Similar ways of reasoning were introduced in higher education policy in the Nordic countries during the 1990s (FÄGERLIND & STRÖMQVIST, 2004). One character of these reforms was a more market-oriented way of governing the universities. Decision-making was decentralized and more responsibility was assigned to the individual universities concerning quality assurance. Several of the Nordic countries introduced a model where the individual university signed a contract with the state concerning its enterprise. The activities of the universities was to be followed up by the state through a system evaluation; management by results. This has by Fägerlind & Strömquist (2004) been called the rise of «evaluative state». Such development can be seen as a move to a new way of reasoning about governing: the introduction of economic and entrepreneurial terms. So a condition of possibility to start speaking through market oriented terms could already be found in the narratives of higher education in the Nordic

countries during the 1990s (and in other European countries). But as Lindblad and Popkewitz (2004) argue, referring to Wagner (1994), we can't view such business language as business. Instead it is about cultural norms, and we need to consider how language works as cultural practices. In this case the language borrowed from the area of business is applied in the area of education, and thus are constituted with new meanings.

I.4. «The future» as a technique of governing

One central feature of the narratives on higher education in Europe is the idea of the constantly changing future². Things change and therefore a specific society needs to be created that can handle it. One approach is to assign responsibilities to the universities. They are to be the guardians of the future.

This is of the highest importance, given that Universities' independence and autonomy ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society's demands and advances in scientific knowledge (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 2).

At the same time, ideas of a constantly changing future form a common theme in the discourses discussed so far; lifelong learning, the knowledge based society and employability. The knowledge based society needs to be created to handle a future which cannot be foreseen. Threats from the surrounding world can't be anticipated in other ways than by creating a knowledge based society that is flexible and made up of flexible citizens. At the same time the citizen is one who needs to be employable, something that lies in the futures. This has to be realised through the idea of lifelong learning. Education and learning will create the employable subject that is prepared whatever the future has to offer. Through constantly learning the citizen will be able to handle a future that is constantly changing.

² In the language used in the documents the future is construed as something that is to be created, at the same time as it is construed as impossible to predict. The texts don't define what the future is made up of; it only puts up ideas of how the future should be like. For example it is stressed that a Europe of knowledge will be «capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium (THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 1)». Exactly what this new millennium is made up of is not elaborated on in specific terms. It's a future that's not predictable.

I.5. The Bologna process - a rational way to act!

If we summarise the analysis so far we can say that there are several discourses creating a specific configuration that makes it possible to speak of educational restructuring in a specific way. Through ideas of the knowledge based society, lifelong learning, employability, quality assurance, mobility and a changing future the Bologna process is made possible. These discourses are drawn upon in the process and together (and with other discourses and ideas not elaborated on here) they constitute a configuration that is taken for the «truth» and the legitimate way of reasoning.

If we ask ourselves how come Sweden reform its higher education in line with several ideas put forth in the Bologna declaration? What makes it possible to act in such a way? One answer drawn from the analysis made so far would be; in the narratives of higher- and adult education in Sweden during the last decade several discourses are travelling. One of these is the idea of the knowledge-based society. Sweden needs to be a productive country based on knowledge. The population needs to be highly educated and they need to constantly develop their competencies through a system of lifelong learning. The future is constantly changing and therefore the educational system needs to prepare its citizens for such a future. During the reforms of the 1990s market oriented terms were introduced such as quality assurance. These were to decentralize decision making in higher education. At the same time quality was to be evaluated by the National agency for higher education as a way to control that the established goals were reached. As such planetspeak discourses were already present in the Swedish narratives, the introduction of similar discourses in the narratives of the Bologna process isn't that «strange». To adapt to the Bologna process is therefore seen as something desirable as it will, according to the narratives, produce a desirable society. But the Swedish narratives are slightly different from those produced on the European level. We will elaborate on this at the end of this article.

II. HOW IS GOVERNING TO BE PRACTICED? - FREEDOM AND STANDARDISATION

The texts not only put forth ideas of how the future society and the future subjects should be like. It also put forth ideas of how to create these

ideas of how to govern. Therefore, we will analyse documents produced on the European and Swedish level as a way to problematize ideas of how governing is to be practiced according to the narratives. This will be done through the analysis of the tensions around the ideas of freedom and autonomy related to the idea of harmonisation.

II.1. Freedom of choice - inclusion/exclusion

The Bologna process has as its overall aim to create a European area of higher education as a way to promote employability and mobility (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999, BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003). The declaration is not something different nations have to sign and comply to. Still 45 nations have ratified the declaration and several of them have complied with the statements made. This way of restructuring higher education in Europe is putting in motion different ideas and mentalities of how governing should be practiced. There is no central «power» that decides how things should be. Instead, the declaration is creating a narrative where the idea is that the nations and universities are to realise by themselves the gains there are to be made through this reform. You have a choice, either you participate or not. This is stressed in the following paragraph:

We hereby undertake to attain these objectives - within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate the European area of higher education. To that end, we will pursue the ways of intergovernmental co-operation, together with those of non-governmental European organisations with competence on higher education. We expect Universities again to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of our endeavour (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 4).

As can be seen, there is no demands put up, instead it is a hand reached out to the Universities: ‘you have heard us before, now listen to us again!’ There will be co-operation between nations that are mutual and respectful. Differences are to be taken into account and be respected. This can be seen as an expression of a specific rationality of governing where governing is to be carried out through the subjects (nations, universities and students)

themselves. As some researchers have suggested, we can see a «steering at a distance» (LINDBLAD & POPKEWITZ, 2004), where the «state» still governs, but through the subjects instead of through laws. This is further emphasised in the Berlin Communiqué:

Ministers welcome the commitment of Higher Education Institutions and students to the Bologna Process and recognise that it is ultimately the active participation of all partners in the Process that will ensure its long-term success (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 5).

All participants are to be mobilised and active in the process of creating the European area of higher education. Thus there is a certain kind of subject to be created the active ones that we have addressed earlier in this article.

In the official narratives in Sweden the adaptation to the Bologna process is outlined as necessary to create mobility (DS, 2004: 2). The Swedish system needs to be clear and there needs to be faith in the quality of the system.

Central factors in an international perspective are the clarity of the structure of higher education in Sweden and of the educational quality. Clarity and trust of the system is crucial for a correct academic and professional recognition of studies and degrees, and thereby for the mobility (DS, 2004: 2, 31-32).

The reason for adaptation to the process can, according to the narratives, be found in the need for the Swedish students to be able to compete with students from other countries for jobs etc. Another threat of the future is that the degrees from Sweden will be undervalued, if not accommodating to the Bologna process.

As a mean to reach clarity and international comparability the group made the judgment that it was highly prioritized to define different levels of degrees, and thereby avoiding undervaluation of certain Swedish university degrees (DS, 2004: 2, 43).

This idea is repeated several times in the documents analysed. Such narratives of future threat act as a technique for governing. Through them specific measures are motivated. At the same time this raises the question of the freedom of nations to participate. According to the narratives, the students in your country will not have the same opportunities as students from other countries if you choose not to participate.

Swedish students who apply for job or continuing education in other countries might have an unfavourable placing in selections processes as the Swedish grading scale has too few grading steps to give sufficient information on earlier efforts and merits (DS, 2004: 2, 114).

This leads to the construction of the Bologna process as something you have to adapt to if you don't want your students and you population to lack behind the rest of the Europeans.

These narratives create a practice of inclusion and exclusion through the effects of power. The Bologna process is a salvation narrative that promises the betterment for Europe and those nations participating in the process. Several non-EU members have signed the declaration. The effect is that ideas created by EU members (the initial Bologna signatories) are now travelling to other countries such as Russia. Their educational system needs to be adapted to the Bologna system (as all the other members). At the same time as the salvation narrative includes, it also creates an exclusionary practice. What happen to those nations not participating in the process? Your students will, as a consequence of the narratives, have problems travelling to other educational systems if you don't participate. Further, you will not acquire the feeling of being a European, and your students will have a disadvantage when competing for jobs with students from the European area of higher education. The Bologna process might therefore be seen as inevitable for those countries participating. You have the choice to participate, and therefore give your students the chance to become mobilized, or you can choose not to participate and therefore give your students a disadvantaged position.

II.2. Homogeneity and heterogeneity

Governing is made through different techniques. The Bologna process can be seen as a standardisation technique. The idea put forth is that you need to make higher education more alike in Europe as a mean to create employability and mobility. This is also expressed as leading to comparability and transparency. It is argued that if higher education is made more alike in Europe, people will be able to more easily transfer between different educational systems, and they will easier receive an employment

(BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999). This way of speaking is constructing an idea of standardisation as a mean to create a desirable future. At the same time as standardisation is put forth as desirable, cultural differences are to be respected.

We hereby undertake to attain these objectives - within the framework of our institutional competences and taking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy - to consolidate the European area of higher education. (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 4).

This idea of respect for cultural differences is repeated in several of the documents, for example: «The aim is to preserve Europe's cultural richness and linguistic diversity, based on its heritage of diversified traditions (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 2).»

In other words, what is to be reached is both standardisations (homogenisation) of educational systems at the same time as there should be a respect for differences (heterogeneity). These are two parallel discourses constructed in these narratives. Standardisation can be seen as a governing technique for fabricating the desirable Europe, nations and citizens. Ideas created on a European level are to be implemented in the different national contexts through the act of standardisation. The higher educational systems in Europe have to become more alike to guarantee a good future. The discourses of heterogeneity and homogeneity can be seen as persuasive techniques to accommodate the different nations. These discourses are part of the narratives that promises both a prosperous future through comparability, at the same time as it promises specificity for the different nations; it offers a choice.

Further, we can see how the same technique for governing is used in the case of Sweden; standardisation made through ideas of homogenisation and heterogeneity. On the one hand it is argued that the universities are to decide by themselves how to plan their study organisation (heterogeneity). On the other, the implementation of the Bologna process is seen as making changes at the local upon whom the universities can't decide (homogeneity).

It hasn't been the intention of the group to restrict the universities freedom of action to decide about the organisation of studying and it hasn't been the intention of the group to recommend that education for master

degrees shall be organised in programs. This is decided upon by the universities themselves. But the group is aware of that its proposal will have consequences for the organisation of studying, something more closely elaborated upon in the end of this section (DS, 2004: 2, 50).

The goal of mobility for students is argued to be more essential than the freedom of the universities to decide the goals for their educational programs.

The Project group is of the opinion that the freedom of the universities to set their own goals should continue, but these goals should not be allowed to prevent the mobility of the students to move between universities (DS, 2004: 2, 96).

The Bologna process is argued to be a voluntarily process for each participating country, and in the narratives in Sweden it's argued that the universities are to be autonomous. But still there are parallel discourses of limited influence for the nations and the universities respectively. What we see is a tension in how the ideas of freedom and autonomy are problematized related to standardisation. You are constructed as autonomous subjects (nations, universities and citizens) that are to make your own choices. This is a desirable subject to create in line with a neo-liberal mode of governing where the «state» is inscribed into the actions of its subjects (ROSE, 1999). At the same time the present technique of standardisation, and its persuasive techniques of homogeneity and heterogeneity, creates «truths» of how to act. There are specific ways to act, and specific choices to be made if a prosperous future is to be reached. This can be related to the analysis made in the former part of this article where several planetspeak discourses creates a configuration that constructs the «truth», based on the present power relations in society.

II.3. Tactics for governing

Closely knitted to the idea of standardisation is the technique of goal setting. As the narrative argues, by creating concrete goals, tangible forward steps in the process can be reached.

The course has been set in the right direction and with meaningful purpose. The achievement of greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of higher education nevertheless requires continual momentum in

order to be fully accomplished. We need to support it through promoting concrete measures to achieve tangible forward steps. The 18th June meeting saw participation by authoritative experts and scholars from all our countries and provides us with very useful suggestions on the initiatives to be taken (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999: 2).

Governing through goals can be seen as a part of a mentality of governing where the subjects (nations, citizens etc) are to choose by themselves. There is no central power that dictates what to do, instead you are encouraged to try and reach the goals set up. These goals are set up by experts from all countries and they will give input on good goals that are to be reached (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003). For example the member states are encouraged to:

«elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile» (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003: 4).

Goal setting acts as a way to govern. If you know the goals and that they are to be evaluated, you are encouraged to reach the goals and as a mean to receive positive feedback in the evaluation. As argued in the former part of this article, such ways of reasoning is made possible through discourses borrowed from the business area that takes specific forms in the educational practice.

The ideas of standardisation and goal setting are further discussed in a document produced by the European Association for quality assurance in higher education. In it suggestions are made on how Universities can work to have good quality standards. The narratives emphasise that the ideas are only guidelines and guidance. Each university is to decide by themselves how to work with these issues.

The purpose of these standards and guidelines is to provide a source of assistance and guidance to both higher education institutions in developing their own quality assurance systems and agencies undertaking external quality assurance, as well as to contribute to a common frame of reference, which can be used by institutions and agencies alike. It is not the intention that these standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable (ENQA, 2005: 13).

This raises three interesting issues. First it points to the idea of a governing process where the mentality is to create mobilized subjects making their own choices. The experts are only to give guidance. The second issue is the idea that there need to be standards concerning quality in higher education in Europe. The narratives stresses that these standards is often a way to reach transparency between educational systems and to create trust between the systems of different countries (ENQA, 2005). This is part of the technique of standardisation as a way to create the desirable Europe. The idea of standardisation is inscribed into different practices. Combined with the idea of standardisation is also the idea of audit. These standards are not only to be created and followed by the different countries; they are also to be audited. Evaluations and follow-ups are to be made as a way to reach quality assurance. In this way the different nations and its universities are created as active subjects that are to monitor their quality as a way to reach the Bologna standards. Such ideas, as argued before, draw on discourses on quality assurance present in for example the Nordic countries earlier on during the 1990s. A quality assurance system can be seen as a way to transform the subjectivity of the universities and its employees into becoming self-monitoring. You need to constantly check on your standards and qualities in order to ensure you meet the Bologna standards and that you have a good quality. Otherwise you will be marginalised related to other countries and other universities.

Tied to the idea of standardisation are several techniques that are to be used to create the desirable future. One of these is ECTS, European credit transfer system. In the narratives this is put forth as an important part of reaching mobility (BERLIN COMMUNIQUÉ, 2003). By having the same grading system in all countries and by having the same system of counting time of study, transparency and comparability is to be reached (BOLOGNA DECLARATION, 1999). ECTS is therefore acting as a governing technique part of the idea of standardisation. Other such techniques include the use of diploma supplement, a description of the education a person has graduated from to make it easier to compare to education in other countries. Yet another idea is to have the same cycle for different degrees in all countries, such as three years for a Bachelor, another two years for a Master and yet another three years for a PhD.

III. THE «SPECIFIC SWEDISH»

What seems to be specific to Sweden related to the European level is the emphasis on the student's possibility, not only to move on the international level, but also to be able to move between universities in Sweden. The idea of standardisation seems to be a tool to create a smorgasbord for the Swedish students to choose from.

Another reason is the wish of the group to bring about a clear system of stages and to increase the mobility by offering program that leads to masters degree, not only to the students of the own university, but also to students from other universities in Sweden and abroad (DS, 2004: 2, 49).

Another specificity for the narratives in Sweden is how to create the «specific Swedish». The specificity of the system in Sweden needs to be protected. «The unique system of Sweden concerning the possibility for students to reach a degree by choosing a combination of courses has to be protected (DS, 2004: 2, 32).» Such narratives construct a division between «we» and «them». The specifics of the Swedish system are also constructed through the discussion on the ECTS grading system. It is emphasized that Sweden need to implement such a grading system as a way to reach transparency, but all parts of the system can't be adopted. The argument is that Sweden has a good experience of the goal oriented grading system, compared to the relative system proposed in the Bologna process. If adopting the relative system there is a threat/negative consequence for the pedagogical work of the teachers and students.

The project group is of the opinion that the ECTS grading system should be used goal oriented in Sweden. There are good experiences and habits in Swedish higher education using a goal oriented grading. In such a system the grade represents the students effort only related to the goal of the course and not related to other students. The introduction of a relative grading scale would, according to the project group, have great consequences, both for the pedagogical work and for students and teachers (DS, 2004: 2, 114).

The idea of implementing this system into Sweden has changed since this official text was produced. Now it is argued that the system will not be implemented. But the way to argue is still the same: constructing the «specific Swedish». In a news article the minister of education says that

«another pedagogy is needed for such a fine grading scale, and it diverges from the Swedish tradition to work in such a way (SvD 10/4 2005).» Further the article states that the minister «wants to increase the competitiveness and the mobility of the Swedish students with ‘other means’. Anyway, he doesn’t think the seven grade scale would have solved the problems as there are only two countries that have introduced it (SvD 10/4 2005).» What these examples show is that there are ideas of trying to accommodate to the Bologna declaration at the same time as this is to be done in a specific way. What we can see is narratives creating «the specific Swedish». Certain experiences in Sweden are used to support ideas of going in a slightly different way than proposed in the Bologna process. We can call this a process of educational borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi 2002) where there is an indigenization of the idea of standardisation. There should be a standardisation in Sweden related to the countries participating in the Bologna process, but Sweden should do it in its own specific ways. However, the narrative of transparency is still dominating, and the changes suggested in the documents are argued to reach this. Therefore, we could say that the indigenization act as a technique for governing in the local. By trying to relate to the specific Swedish there is an effort to evoke feelings. It acts as a rhetorical device aimed at persuasion (EDWARDS *et al.*, 2004). The narratives suggest that we should adapt to the Bologna system, but we need to keep the good parts of our own system.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In this article it has been argued that the Bologna process is an example of a specific neoliberal way of governing. No longer are governing made through legislation. Instead it is made through different techniques/tactics. There is an emphasis on constructing a self-regulative governing where the subjects (nations, universities, citizens) are to govern themselves (ROSE, 1996, 1999a). As nations voluntarily adapts to the process without anyone telling them they have to, the question is; how is this made possible? As been argued several planetspeak discourses are creating a configuration of thought that makes adaptation to the process a rational way to act. The discourses of the knowledge based society, employability, lifelong learning, mobility and quality assurance all help to construct the «truth». These discourses are

drawn upon in The Bologna process. It is constructed as a standardization process that acts as a technique of governing through different tactics and persuasive techniques. It acts as a technique that tries to harmonise the different educational systems in Europe. It not only acts on a promise to make educational systems transparent, it also promises to make the products of education (the subjects) comparable. No matter where in the «European area of higher education» you are educated, you will be possible to compare to others. You will be a person that has been mobilised and that preferably have studied in other countries than the one you were raised. This comparability will be implemented and made possible through goal setting, evaluation and audit. Further, this will construct you as one who has a feeling of identity to Europe; you are constructed as a European citizen. Through such a process the teleos of governing will be reached: a prosperous Europe who are well off in the competition with the rest of the world.

The idea of freedom for the different nations to adapt to the process is paralleled with the effect of the existing power relations: the construction of an exclusionary practice. Those not participating in the process are created as «the other», the one who is in need of remedy. They will not be able to compete with the rest of the world and their students will have a disadvantage related to students in participating countries. The «truth» of what is the rational way to choose is constructed through a configuration of discourses. This puts the idea of freedom in a specific point of view. You are encouraged and constructed as a choosing and free subject. But you are not free not to choose, a choice have to be made. And this choice is made within a space where assemblages of discourses travel and creates what is the rational way to choose. If you chose in other ways you are constructed as the «other». Such practices are also constructed concerning the citizen. To be a European citizen means that you are a person constantly learning, all the time in all places. You are also to be mobilized. Everyone should be able to handle a changing future by being prepared (flexible) to move to other parts of Europe to study and to work if needed; you should be an employable subject. Such narratives create «the other», the ones in need of remedy. What happens to those who don't have the possibility or don't want to learn all the time, or who don't want to be mobile?

Throughout the article it has been argued that the narratives in Sweden are similar to those on the European level. The planetspeak discourses are

inscribed in Sweden, but however in some aspects different. Discourses travel through time and space, and they are part of a process of indigenization in specific practices (such as Sweden). In other words, discourses are inscribed differently in different practices in relation to the specific power relations of that practice. In this study we have argued that this is the case with the discourse of standardisation. Even though there is, according to the narratives, an adaptation process in Sweden where almost all parts of the Bologna process are followed there is also an argument of the specificity of Sweden and its educational system. Some values related to, i.e., the Swedish goal oriented grading system in higher education, are to be protected according to the narratives. This can be related to the idea of the future and the past. We can see this as an idea of nostalgia (Pettersson & Olsson, forthcoming) where the past is used in the present as a way to govern the future. The future is constructed as ever changing and this idea is present in present time because we can't govern something we are not able to imagine. Further, the narratives create a reminiscence of the past and these acts as a form of belonging and safety. In other words, as I have argued, this can be seen as a rhetorical device aimed at persuasion. The reminiscences evoke feelings concerning the «Swedish identity», and it plays out as if Sweden will follow the Bologna process but only on its own values. At the same time the specificity of the Swedish can be seen as a slightly redefinition of the idea of standardisation. Still there are to be standardisation, but this can be the case even if the grading system stays different.

The writing of this article have been a critical task insofar as it has tried to problematize the taken-for-granted ideas of higher education in Europe and Sweden today, and the rationalities of governing upon which the Bologna process is built. This will hopefully contribute to further discussion on how governing is being and can be practiced concerning higher education in Europe and Sweden.

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RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza las razones de gobierno o gubernamentalidad que hacen posible la legislación de la educación superior en Europa, a través de su configuración en una suerte de proceso voluntario como el de Bolonia, cuarenta y cinco países han ratificado tal proceso e intentan acomodarse a las ideas en él expuestas, sin que nadie les haya dicho que deban hacerlo. Partiendo de la noción foucaultiana de gubernamentalidad, se analizan los documentos oficiales referentes al proceso de Bolonia y la educación superior y de adultos a niveles europeos y suecos. En su primera parte, se estudian discursos y términos mundialmente aceptados tales como la *sociedad del conocimiento*, *empleabilidad*, *aprendizaje de por vida*, *garantía de calidad* y *movilidad*. Crean una corriente de pensamiento que facilita la contemplación del proceso de Bolonia como la manera más racional de actuar. En la segunda parte, el proceso se estudia como una técnica de estandarización, que causa cierta tensión en referencia a los ideales de *libertad*. Se crean exclusiones; aquellos países que optan por no participar, son denominados como «los otros», necesitados de un remedio. En la tercera y última parte, vemos cómo tales ideas se adaptan o resultan conflictivas con las distintas creencias educativas locales. Aunque las narrativas producidas en Suecia, en su mayor parte parecen adaptarse al proceso, ha surgido un sueco «específico». Actúa como una técnica persuasiva para la implementación de las ideas surgidas de la Declaración de Bolonia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Reestructuración educativa. Análisis del discurso. Gubernamentalidad. Sociedad del conocimiento. Empleabilidad. Aprendizaje de por vida/educación permanente. Garantía de calidad. Movilidad.

ABSTRACT

This article studies the rationalities of governing that makes it possible to govern higher education in Europe through a voluntarily process such as the Bologna process. 45 nations have signed it and try to accommodate to the ideas in it without anyone telling them they have to. Drawing on the Foucaultian notion of governmentality official documents concerning the Bologna process, higher- and adult education on the European and Swedish levels are analysed. In the first part «planetspeak» discourses such as knowledge society, employability, lifelong learning, quality assurance and mobility are analysed. They create a configuration of thought that makes following the Bologna process a rational way to act. In the second part we analyse this process as a standardisation technique which creates a tension related to the idea of freedom. The narratives create exclusion; those nations who chose not to participate are created as «the other», in need of remedy. In the third part we problematize how these ideas mesh with, and challenge local ideas about education. Even though the narratives produced in Sweden to major parts seem to adapt to the process, there is a creation of the «specific» Swedish. It acts as a persuasive technique for implement the ideas in the Bologna declaration.

KEY WORDS: Educational restructuring. Governmentability. Discourse analysis. Knowledge society. Employability. Lifelong learning. Quality assurance.