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**Knowledge Shopping or Identity Formation in times of  
Globalisation**

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**Introduction**

Knowledge shopping is today a common phenomenon. For-profit universities are expanding all over the world, patterned knowledge is a precondition for our knowledge economy, and so is ownership of symbols and logos more than hard core production. This increasing privatization of knowledge as products that can be bought and sold seems more and more to contradict the idea that knowledge is a common good.

Economic globalisation, as well as globalisation of the knowledge creating sector itself as a business, has made the debate about “knowledge as a public good” a global debate. Who will defend knowledge as a global public good in a world of global capitalism?

The nation state has been an important guardian for the free access to knowledge, as well as the freedom of the knowledge producer (albeit with many exceptions) in the modern era. The universities however, are more and more becoming dependent on the funds they can gain through the market (whether it be from students or from patterns), at the same time as more and more nation states no longer see the role of the universities as crucial for the continuation of the modern nation-state project. The importance of the market seems to contradict the importance of freedom of knowledge, particularly as this has been associated with the building of national identities.

In this situation the question is how to find new defenders of the academic freedom. How can the universities themselves contribute, what about the new international kinds of collaboration

like NAFTA, EU, ASEA? And most importantly, how can a global public space and knowledge identities underpinning such a global space be created? This last question is the most burning, since the spread of the knowledge economy presupposes ownership and secrecy. The global capitalism is in contradiction to open knowledge creation and dissemination, and in contradiction to the building of free and open knowledge identities as these now more and more need to have the globe as a reference point. Global knowledge shopping from a knowledge sector that itself more and more behaves as firms, represents delimitation to the spread of knowledge. It represents an attempt to take ownership of knowledge, to privatize it as a commodity. And this is contrary to the attempts to build knowledge identities whether as researchers, professors or as universities within an open public space. This public space is still the nation –state, but also what we below will call the new globality. It is within this new globality, numerous networks of social activists work to preserve the openness of the knowledge society (Gorz 2004:70).

Below a number of issues relating to this possible contradiction between knowledge shopping and identity formation are discussed, first of all to inspire further contemplation and research.

### **The withering of the nation state?**

It is a common observation that when the big computer machines were improved to perfection, they were surpassed and made obsolete by the personal computer. The development of the nation –state, if we look at the so-called advanced industrial nations, seems to suffer the same faith: Once it works according to criteria of “good governance” - it becomes inappropriate as a solution to the pressing issues of the globe. Global problems not only force the interaction between nation-states to take new directions, they call for new identities and solutions beyond the nation-state, with the globe, and not its subunits as point of reference.

This, however, is where the analogy to the computer stops given its developed world perspective. It is a paradox, that the state which should have made these global networks possible, in many developing countries has not reached a level of sophistication high enough to make them players on the global arena. This paradox is particularly visible when it comes to knowledge, particularly in the shape of higher education and research. These are both preconditions for nation-state development and for participation in the global world.

Knowledge is involved in processes of globalisation in a number of areas; from the economy to human rights, but has also become a global sector in itself as providers and sellers of knowledge services of all kinds. Knowledge institutions are involved in the creation of the new globality through the way they reinterpret reality, (re)connect knowledge(s) and create networks between knowledge producing institutions. How knowledge is created with the globe as a point of reference shapes our understanding of the global issues.

But knowledge about the global distribution and use of knowledge also informs us that knowledge is unevenly divided between different peoples on the globe, is focusing on problems and issues more relevant for some parts and people than others, that it tends to define particular interests as global, and is easily allied with regional economies as in the creation of the “European Research Area”. There is generally a tendency to portray as universal or value-free the knowledge which increases the knowledge cleavages in the world, or contributes to the continuous domination of the strong over the weak within the global capitalism.

### **Global growth in higher education – new dilemmas?**

Higher education and research has been through an enormous growth. Global institutions with links all over the world are emerging parallel with and complementary to national and international higher education systems. The new global providers are primarily linked through the market for educational services and they have been given much attention as symbols of the future global knowledge society. They are seen as a new kind of institutions, knowing no borders, neither in terms of ownership, nor in terms of content. The fear, however is that these global institutions represents new cultural, social and economic types of domination, a domination going right to the hearts, heads and hands of the citizens of the most vulnerable of nations and the poorest of the states.

In this book we focus on some of the emerging conflicts between the nation-state type of knowledge creating systems (primarily higher education) and the new globality of borderless higher education and research. This new globality, whether it expresses itself through the market, as new social movements or as new ideas about what is valuable knowledge, must also be seen in relation to a number of international initiatives – mainly the regions like

ASEAN, NAFTA, EU - that is more directly competing with the nation state, and whose future depends on the delegation of powers from member states.

But also some of the nation-states continue their expansion into the international area of higher education, using the market as well as other networks of exchange where the nation - states are connected in international networks, promoting collaboration between higher education institutions, and also more and more giving space for direct networking between the sectors themselves. And sometimes there is an alliance between the sector as a global business, and the state, as seems to be the case in England<sup>1</sup>.

The new globality however, with the globe as the starting point, based on a new social identity with our global problems, has little institutional backing apart from the support global issues have in social movements, in multilateral organisations, and in the global public debate about the destiny of spaceship earth, and in the higher education sector itself, within the research giving priority to these problems, the curriculum focusing on global issues.

Attempts at mediation between the nation-state and their international relations on the one hand, and the globe on the other also penetrate the multilateral organisations. Many of them identifies with the global issues, tries to promote a new understanding of the globe as a social unit, but is limited by how international commitments are created as compromises between states. So is also the case for knowledge and higher education networks. It is one of the most burning issues of our time how relations between the national/international and the global in the area of knowledge production, higher education and research will develop now that new market relations, new interstate types of collaboration, and a new role for the multilateral organisations is emerging ?

## **The transformation of higher education - perhaps (also) a global identity?**

At the beginning of the new millennium, universities located both in the south and in advanced industrial countries are challenged by new demands. Massification of higher

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<sup>1</sup> "In January 2000, the United Kingdom launched a "UK education brand" in order to co-ordinate better the individual marketing initiatives of UK institutions. The brand and marketing campaign is managed by the British Council, but several government departments and national agencies are involved. The British Council works in 109 countries worldwide, and has a staff of 7300 and a turnover of EUR 650million" (OECD.2004.p.111).

education, growth in the private sector and demands for market oriented reform go together with the new role of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the dissemination of knowledge which this technology makes possible (World Bank 1998; World Bank 2000). Traditional universities are challenged by the use of new technology and the growth in number of degree programmes which are more or less “campus free”. Each and everyone with the energy and the money can shop around on the internet or within virtual universities for courses of more or less high ranking and reputation. A number of new organisations are set up, new types of agreements are created, and the global market for higher education expands at a high speed. Many of these organisations are also targeting students in the South, those with money but also the brightest.

It is the growth of the market that has caught the attention of most of the actors in the field - what we here term knowledge shopping. The question is how does this relate to the old role of the universities as creator of nation-state identities, and also to their potential new role; as creators of a global public space and common global values? Or; as globalisation develops; How the market will influence the creation of a global knowledge identity in competition with ideas about global public goods? How will knowledge shopping confront identity formation at different levels from the level of the nation-state to the most general level of the new globality?

### **Are there knowledge borders?**

Already the establishment of UNESCO (1947) raised these issues. It was taken for more or less granted that knowledge by definition knows no borders, and that the freedom of knowledge should be watched over so as to avoid borders preventing the free knowledge exchange. However, the typical system of knowledge development has been allied with the building of nation –states and national identities, and exchange of knowledge between academics has had the development of the nation and the State within it as its project. Knowledge has been a mean for other ends, but also creating the identity of parts of the ruling elites. Education has been the way the division of labour has been promoted in modern society, but also a way of creating identity with the social unit. This has given meaning to different specialisation, the different experts. And this social unit has primarily been the nation –state up to now, until international networks (particularly regionalisation) have become more important. Much of the ideology and policy connected to University vs.

Multiversity relates to this function of communal identity formation. What is new in the time of expansion of both higher education and research is that knowledge becomes a product mediated by not only the market but also a number of other mechanisms of exchange where knowledge takes the shape of more or less culture - free product. Knowledge transforms from being expressions of statements linked to a certain space and person of origin to become a commodity or a product more or less detached from social space and from the process and persons of creation. Thus we may talk of a conflict between knowledge shopping and knowledge as identity formation, whether this formation of identities is local, nation-state or global. If we see that global identities are coming more and more to the forefront as people identify with our common destiny, risks, opportunities or misfortunes not to mention the global inequality, in what way does this identity take shape as a knowledge identity in relation to other units of identification? And how is this type of identity formation related to the act of shopping knowledge products in a market dominated by a few primarily English speaking actors? Is there a conflict between knowledge shopping and knowledge as identity formation?

## **The new global focus**

There is today a fast growing literature on this issue. There are a number of conferences debating these transformations, particularly among the multilateral organisations (OECD, UNESCO, World Bank, WTO, ILO) as well as within the new regions (EU, NAFTA, ASEA), and within a number of international organizations created to promote the interests of higher education and research, or within organisations created to control and evaluate the cross border type of knowledge exchange.

What is common for all discussions are the rapid transition of the education- and research systems from being a nation – state affair to becoming a cross-border issue. How will new boundaries be drawn between what is public and what is private, and at what level? Can education and research be a global public good, or a human right as promoted for example by UNESCO? While we so far have taken for more or less granted that the “public” in the public good or public welfare is given by the constitution of the nations, usually secured by a central state, this political identity no longer guarantees what is considered ethically correct or good for the community. The engagement for education and particularly research today goes beyond the needs of the individual nation-state, and the activities within the sector itself is appealing to entities and identities beyond the nation state, either through the market for services, through research networks on global topics, or more fundamentally, in the understanding of the social unit knowledge is made valuable for. However, it is still very unclear how knowledge is valued within the new globality, or how such valuation could come about? The work UNESCO has started to clarify this issue carries us part of the way (see also chapter 3).

In UNESCO`s “Synthesis Report on Trends and Developments in Higher Education since the World Conference on Higher Education” (UNESCO, 2003), which is an evaluation of changes since the World Conference on Higher Education was convened in 1998 in Paris, now calls for a “Global programme for development and cooperation in Higher Education”. This call can be seen as an attempt to start producing global values, or a global ethic as a basis for valuation of knowledge creation and diffusion in a space not controlled by the nation state.

It is an urgent need. If we just look at the student numbers, the 100 million to day will grow to about 125 million in 2020. Already to day more than 30 percent are within private higher

education, and the percentage is going up, in correlation with the growth of higher education institutions in the south. The role of privately own institutions is now so common, that the dividing line in terms of management principles on the global arena, is said to be between for-profit and non-profit, not between public and private. For Europe, this of course still is a strong overstatement.

The gap between industrially developed countries and the developing countries has grown since the first World Conference on Higher Education. The divide between the haves and the have-nots correlates with the divide between the info-rich and the info-poor. This also of course strongly influences the ability to transform life experiences and values into knowledge of a formally codified and identity producing kind. This situation, together with public poverty, particularly in the south has made most national system open for private initiative, student fees and other non-state/public ways of mobilising resources. The growth in private actors, and the perceived need to mobilise the private sector also creates a new situation for cross border types of knowledge supply, through the market for a growing number of profit-institutions, and through types of cross national or multilateral agreements for the non-profit private providers. This new situation – the need to “close the knowledge gap”, the opening up for private providers, the growth in the student population, the demand particularly in the south for higher education of all sorts, has also given space for a tremendous growth (for example in the Asian and Pacific region) of distance, open or e-learning initiatives as the most visible expression of a general growth in all kinds of Trans-national Higher Education systems of providers (what already has become the social fact contained in the abbreviation “TNE”)<sup>2</sup>.

The new situation for higher education and research globally thus is a product of two important types of influences, that are mutually reinforcing: the immense growth in demand for higher education combined with a growing private supply, and the strengthening of initiatives beyond the nation-state, both in the international and the global sphere.

## **Why should Knowledge Shopping threaten Identity Formation?**

The term “knowledge shopping” refers to two phenomena, which runs counter to traditional ways of thinking about education and research. It refers to the idea that there is a market for knowledge products, and a competition between products of comparable kind. There is, and

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<sup>2</sup> “The volume of e-learning provided by the corporate sector grew by 68 percent in 1999, and its volume turn out is estimated at 65 billion dollars for the year 2003” (UNESCO 2003:23).

can be, a distance between those producing knowledge and those consuming it, a distance, however, which needs the market to mediate between the producer and the consumer. Secondly: knowledge shopping refers to the idea that the knowledge economy, which is a global economy, can only survive and prosper to the degree it is able to privatize knowledge and recreate them as virtual or material products. In other words, knowledge shopping from a knowledge industry is contradictory to the free and open creation and dissemination of knowledge - which again, and this is the fundamental contradiction – is a precondition for the creativity of actions, whether it be for business or for life. A knowledge economy, based on a knowledge industry, is thus a threat to most kinds of identities; from the individual creativity to the common global public discourse and represents an unsolvable contradiction within our knowledge economy.

In our public or “traditional” way of reasoning, we see the creator of knowledge often also as the mediator, and the user of knowledge as closely linked and in contact with the mediator. This leads to the second term “identity formation”. The process of knowledge creation is also a process of identity formation, and as such a process which links the “producer and consumer” within a common medium, the university. The university (or equivalents) is thus a community of learning, where the constant search for new knowledge goes together with the creation of persons identifying with the kind of processes leading to new knowledge. The distance between the creator or producer of knowledge and the “learner” should ideally be as short as possible. In the times of the creation and development of the nation-state, the role of identity formation gains particular importance. The identities created through the process of knowledge acquisition became cultural identities or identities carrying a particular responsibility for the state formation of the nation, what is most clearly expressed in the German term “Bildungsbürger”.

There are several reasons why the “nation –states” which to day are striving for development experiences the contradiction between “knowledge shopping” and “identity formation”. One reason is the way multilateral organisations tries to shape the global knowledge society.

Knowledge has become a topic of the multilateral organisations, whether they are created to deal with this issue (like UNESCO) or they have other primary goals, like the World Bank

(now also known as "Knowledge Bank"<sup>3</sup>). From OECD to UNDP, knowledge, and thus the system for higher education and research are in focus in one way or another<sup>4</sup>. The reasons for the interest in knowledge differ, however, and so does the different conceptions of what is good knowledge and how to come about it, and there are different opinions about how good knowledge can be used to construct the common goal; the creation of a knowledge society.

Much of the discussion of the past decade culminated in the report called *Peril and Promise*, combining the efforts of the WB, UNESCO and a number of other important donors (UNESCO/WORLD BANK, 2000). Its launching at the beginning of year 2000 marked the start of new phase of the global debate on knowledge and education. The main argument of the report is that knowledge shopping and identity formation can not easily go together. Each country should design its own general curriculum. "Indeed, the exercise of developing a national - though not nationalistic - general education curriculum should be socially useful, requiring a country to examine the state and direction of human knowledge and clarify priorities for its higher education system" (Chapter 6). Not only is higher education a necessary precondition for the creation of democratic identities as "enlightened citizens", but also for the creation of a collective (national) memory. The universities have a moral responsibility, as well as crucial role to play in the mediation between nations. The universities stands out as a medium for communication between equals according to certain standards of knowledge set by the global knowledge communities. Thus, knowledge shopping may perhaps contribute to the development of sectors of society, but only knowledge as identity formation develops the nation - state and prepares its citizens for global interactions on equal terms. To develop the university as a medium for knowledge creation according to responsibility for own curriculum emerges as the primary goal, and to achieve this the system of knowledge creation has to be independent of both state, economy and cultural/religious interests.

The presuppositions underpinning the WB report "Knowledge for Development", on the other hand, seems to indicate the future for developing countries lies more in the shopping of knowledge than in identity formation through knowledge (WB, 1998). Knowledge generally

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<sup>3</sup> Pincus, and Jeffrey (2002) in *Reinventing the World Bank* discusses changes under Wolfenson's leadership, among them the creation of the WB as a "knowledge bank."

<sup>4</sup> See UNDP/Arab Human Development Report (2002), which deals extensively with the crises of Higher Education in the Arab countries and highlights a number of reforms needed in all the Arab countries, as also discussed in chapter 5.

becomes “information”, which in many instances relies on trust in the informer to be mediated and received by the one to be informed. When knowledge is information it is also objectified, at a distance from its creator, accessible through the web, books, products, pictures or other images. Knowledge as information is only limited by the limits of the information society itself, and the receiver’s willingness to trust, to sort out and choose, and to apply. Knowledge is important because it contains information that can be put to use, and the value of knowledge lies in its applicability (presently therefore the most important knowledge in the south is engineering and science, accounting and economics). On the basis of these presuppositions, as we interpret them, the focus is “knowledge shopping” for the narrowing of the knowledge gap. According to the report this should be through the following steps: “Acquiring knowledge” by tapping what is already there, and then add on what must build on indigenous knowledge, improve the ability, through basic education, to “absorb knowledge”, and develop the information infrastructure so that knowledge can flow; “communicating knowledge” by help of all kinds of communications technology. “Tapping” is the primary way to learn (see for example p.39). Identity formation does not presuppose an acculturation of the person through the higher education system (University) as knowledge - creating medium. Rather, the acculturation of the person goes through the institutions of economic activity and the institutions for collective actions needed for the promotion of this activity.

Through the report *Peril and Promise* on the one hand and on the other “Knowledge for Development” the classical divide between “knowledge shopping” or “knowledge” as identity formation presents themselves. The present debate about modes of knowledge and the relation between knowledge for economic development and knowledge as a precondition for democracy represents recent expressions of the possible conflict between knowledge as something which can be objectified and knowledge as something that must be part of “Bildung” or identity formation (Delanty 2001). What is at stake, thus, is the definition of society itself: Shall knowledge shopping contribute to the development of an economy which may or may not prosper in collusion with the nation state, or shall knowledge and the knowledge creating institutions shape the kind of identities which may give the (preferably) democratic nation-state citizens, with selves that reflect and respect this societal entity. And when today this social identity is becoming linked with a global identity, how should this linkage come about?

If priority is given to global knowledge shopping, the consequences for the knowledge producing institutions, its way of organising its relation to students, to society and to research will be different from a situation giving priority to the formation of new global identities with the globe as social reference point, building on a variety of national cultures.

## **Massification as commoditization of knowledge**

The expansion of higher education from elitist to "education for all" represents in itself an argument for the idea that we already are in the times of knowledge shopping. To give knowledge to the masses presupposes types of standardisation of knowledge packages more and more to be paid for by the user. The ideal link to research and originality has to be relaxed. The role of the higher education institutions is not to shape individual intellects and selves, but to certify and to classify. The students do not ask for knowledge but for certificates that may give more or less privileged access to the labour market. Only a few should carry the burden of producing new knowledge in accordance with social ideas about problems and progress. What matters for most students is the exchange of knowledge packages for formal accreditations, and more and more students are willing to buy accreditation through for-profit organisations.

When we ask the more general question, for what societal unit knowledge is given meaning, the answer may be that knowledge shopping gives work orientation, certain skills, employability and career –patterns for a working life, or generally a guarantee that the employed performs certain functions which in the knowledge economy can no longer be controlled by the methods of "Taylorism". In other words; knowledge as something you can shop, as pre-packed and thus something that does not presuppose the university as a medium, does not involve, in principle, commitment to the social community. Not even a common symbolic orientation, whether this be the nation-state or the global. It presupposes only the ability to connect a package of knowledge to the value of a certificate (which may, or may not, give access to the working life). Identity formation, on the other hand, we argue, presupposes the medium of the university as a common space for communication and cultural transformation of the self and the social commitments. But foremost the university is a place to do research, to reflect on the consequences of own practices and consequences of practices following the certified knowledge, a kind of knowledge more and more people on the globe today "shop for" rather than seek to achieve.

A new global ethic will be hard to achieve if all its knowledge transactions take the shape of market like exchange. The universities will also deteriorate from being a medium for social change to being a meeting-place for exchange of knowledge packages, or for narrow licensing of skill and professional qualifications.

Thus, our reasoning may seem to be similar to the conventional ideas about the difference between knowledge as a means and knowledge as enlightenment. Enlightenment is always in relation to something, so unless the social unit which gives identities meaning is identified, enlightenment also becomes relatively meaningless. When we argue about a difference about shopping of knowledge and identity formation through knowledge, it is a difference between purposes. Both purposes may be considered useful by actors external as well as internal to knowledge. However, if "knowledge shopping" becomes dominant, the future of the universities as institutions for the shaping of a public space is at stake, and this is particularly at the global public level.

Internationalisation has not only made all kinds of knowledge shopping possible, it has also challenged established ideas about identity formation within, and between nation-states. One answer to this development is to globalize properly, to link the global citizen and the nation-state citizen in new ways. To create such identities the universities today have a crucial, but yet not very much utilised role to play. To be able to play this role the sector needs to work with the multilateral system more directly, less through their foreign policy representatives, traditionally concerned about international affairs.

## **The multilaterals and “ good” globalization**

The multilateral organisations have different strategies towards the developing world, illustrating different ways of balancing knowledge shopping with identity formation. The first and most discussed relate to the trade in educational services (see chapter 2 and 3 in this book). The GATS negotiations takes for granted that there is an already tremendous sale in educational services through student exchange, e-universities, franchising, course material, teaching personnel, and that this trade needs to be regulated. OECD estimates for example that for the United Kingdom, the value in US\$ of educational services is about 3758 in terms of export, in terms of import 150 for year 2005. The WTO mode of regulation is building down barriers along borders, that is, to delimit the role of the State, and increase the role of borderless networks, particularly those using the market. The content of the negotiations is about how countries like US, England, Australia (where export in educational services is the third largest) and others who have a tradition from privately owned universities (and who have the English speaking world as its potential market) gain entrance in other countries. No country can be forced to give up their national policies on higher education; on the other hand, the number of commitments for liberalisation is increasing.

The second, but far less discussed strategy, relates to the global debate organised by UNESCO on accreditation, quality, evaluation and certification within the borderless knowledge society. “The First Global Forum on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications” held in Paris, October 2002, gathered representatives from the different UNESCO regions to discuss how knowledge, no longer guided only by the rationality of the singular nation-state, could be given value. This was seen both as an alternative to the market development, as well as a way of intervening in the market to prevent it from eroding any idea about quality (degree-mills, misuse of student, deflated certificates etc.). When different cultures with different standards meet, how should one decide whose standard is valid, how does one secure cultural variation, support of the weak systems as opposed to the highly developed, how do we define a university in times when the title is inflated and used in all kinds of connections (corporate universities, e-universities, franchise-universities, etc)? The idea is that the value of borderless education will be enhanced if global ideas are developed, securing the interests of the students and the academic communities standards of quality. Norway is eagerly participating in this debate, so is SA, on

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<sup>5</sup> See Kurt Larsen et.al.(2002).

a number of occasions as the voice from the South, arguing the need to be given time and opportunity to “catch up” according to indigenous values<sup>6</sup> (ASMAL, 2004). For Norway it is not so much own standards vs. global standards, rather how to create secure systems of student mobility across continents.

The third strategy emanates from the corridors of the World Bank (perhaps more specifically previous chief economist J. Stieglitz (Halvorsen in Halvorsen and Michelsen 2002), also picked up by David Held, see Held (2004)). The idea is that knowledge needs to be taxed when used, and funds redistributed to the parts of the world where knowledge production is lacking behind. The system of patent, the TRIPS agreement, the academic power of some countries to steal and codify knowledge-resources in other countries, particularly in the south, and generally, the tendency to under utilise knowledge, a commodity that does not tear by use, legitimises this taxation and redistribution. The starting point for the Bank is not the system of education, but “knowledge production” where ever this may happen. Knowledge production may be public, private or in combination of these. What is needed is an institution like the WB to administrate such a tax- and redistribution system, and the relation must go more to networks and nodes in the global system of knowledge production, less (as the Bank is forced to today) through the nation –state.

These three multilaterals with their different strategies are partly in contradiction to one another, partly complementary. These contradictions evolve particularly around the question of quality. What is quality in terms of knowledge production, what is quality in terms of knowledge dissemination? The WB idea of quality is usefulness and useful users, for UNESCO it is Human Rights, culture, identity and democratic behaviour, for WTO the market decides what quality is worth pursuing. Any university leadership will have to develop some ideas about quality and knowledge standards. They are ingrained in the quality of the personnel chosen for research and teaching, they are part of the curriculum development, and they are part of the criteria for student certification, and so on. However, quality can not be defined (in itself), it only carries meaning in reference to values. For UNESCO for example, quality of education must be measured according to ability to improve communication between cultures, produce identities, which are democratically oriented. And quality will be connected to tangible processes of learning; how to go from a bad to a better PhD programme,

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<sup>6</sup>See The Implications of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in Africa. Proceedings on Accra Workshop.

how to make the not so clever utilise their resources better, etc. WTO leaves the question of quality to the market as mentioned (the demand from the singular students aggregated into collective effects). That a particular supply of knowledge services creates its own particular demands is not part of the reasoning; quality evolves out of the collective effects and need no other regulations. Usually singular students and her wish to gain certificates with a status in the market generate the demand. The focus is on the utility of the education for the labour market. The more status the certificate has (according to reputation of the educational institutions and the profession), the greater chances in the labour market, particularly as the labour market also becomes global. For the WB the focus is on knowledge production and knowledge use for the sake of economic development. However, the use of knowledge is enhanced by the quality of the academic community, and this quality again is associated with values of independent reflection, democratic behaviours, etc<sup>7</sup>. Knowledge production for the sake of economic development needs closely nit “professions” for copying and own knowledge production. So while WTO is concerned about a knowledge dissemination which may be “pre-packed” and thus passively received by a “user”, without connection to research what so ever, or the persons producing the curriculum, the WB sees the importance in replicating knowledge producing groups and networks. However, in both these cases is the quality given by more or less universal criteria developed within the centres of global power. For UNESCO on the other hand, the starting points are the local and regional specificities, the cultural variation and the relation between utility and identity.

The negotiations on General Agreements on Trade in Services, were supposed to be finished by January 2005. These negotiations, initiated at the end of and following the Uruguai round of the WTO /GATT negotiations, will have far reaching consequences for the interaction between national states and the role of states as service providers. Education, as part of these negotiations, has more and more come to the centre of the public debate, and will probably also remains there for a number of years to come. As we witness the growth in educational services crossing borders, the WTO argue that this service needs regulations (as well as to be promoted, which is the primary task of WTO). The crossing of boarders of these “services” blurs the line between public and private in every nation – state, thus strengthening the need of a market type of regulation. If a German public university (as most of them still are)

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<sup>7</sup> These elements are discussed in the latest WB report (2002) “Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education”. The World Bank . Washington D.C. For a critic see Halvorsen and Skauge 2004.

establishes a Campus in Malaysia or in Cairo (as they have under the name The German University of Kairo, GUK), is this then a public or private establishment? Most likely, what is public in Germany, is considered a private actor in Malaysia, and expected, despite its public leadership in Germany, to act as a market agent to certain extent. However, the degree of commercial or non - commercial behaviour may vary (i.e. non – profit orientations may be common for foreign establishments). Is a private non-profit provider in need of market regulations? These shifting lines between public and private, national and international, profit or non-profit are the kind of issues GATS is dealing with. But underneath it all, it is of course a question of how to control knowledge and the resources mobilised to create and disseminate this knowledge. An elaborate system to deal with the interaction between public/private divides, degrees of commercialisation and the different member states peculiar combinations of these has been developed as guidelines for the negotiations (Pierre Sauvé 2002). Despite the commitment of some 45 countries, higher education is still one of the least committed areas for negotiations. The refusal from a number of OECD countries, most importantly France and Canada to make commitments in the educational sector also indicates the reluctance of important countries to at all enter this system of governance of education. This variation in degree of commitment, however, and also the acceptance of important OECD countries non – commitment, is part of the system of governance of the educational market through GATS.

When describing how the GATS negotiations intend to govern, and promote, the market for educational services, it is easy to be led astray by the complexity of the WTO jargon. For our purpose it is particularly important to focus on possible consequences for the north south relations, and how this governance contrasts or complements governance through systems of accreditation or systems of taxation of the global knowledge good.

It is quite common to insist that the present arrangements guiding the GATS negotiations both promotes the interests of the countries in the South<sup>8</sup> and also satisfies the need for trust in a system otherwise guided by the unequal powers of the market. Such a proposition of course, needs to be tested against the actual arrangements being installed for the trade in educational services themselves and how they are practised. So far only a few indicators as to how this

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<sup>8</sup> “Trade agreements don’t come much more flexible than the GATS. The Agreement is arguably the most development-friendly of all the Uruguay Round pacts, as is evidenced by the fact that no GATS-related issues appeared on the laundry list of implementation concerns raised by developing countries prior to and at the WTO’s Ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar” according to Sauvé (2002: 3).

system will work have been settled (The GATS agreements are suppose to embrace all services, except governmental (or state) services<sup>9</sup>).

## **Protecting global public values: is it possible?**

### **Just an example**

The University is more and more caught between the demands for national development according to local priorities and educational demands on the one hand and on the other the need to be a “node” in the global network of knowledge dissemination and production. Universities are challenged by globalisation in at least three ways: Its role as creator of civic and patriotic cultures, the homogenisation of teaching and the emergence of global research, and the tendency to become detached from the welfare state, that is the tendency to make them into businesses even within the frame of the nation –state, thus threatening the right of access to high quality knowledge for all<sup>10</sup>. The classical university as we know it from nation-state development in Europe may thus dissolve in the developed world, and never be fully developed in the less fortunate countries in the south.

In a situation like this it is interesting to highlight an example of how old Europe, with its ideas about what a university is, proposes to use one of the most global economic mechanisms, *to protect as a global public good*, what used to be an institutions for the nation state (Scott 1991).

The new developments are by the defenders of classical values in Europe considered a threat at least to the ideas about the role of a university and particularly what a university is. The so-called Coimbra Group<sup>11</sup>) raises the issue “Should the Coimbra Group protect the meaning of “University” through the TRIPS agreements. Representatives of this gathering of universities suggest that the TRIPS agreements should be used to set curtain standards as a “trademark” for what a university is. An organisation called World Historical Universities, should – as an

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<sup>9</sup> Excluded from coverage are “services provided in the exercise of governmental authority which, in turn, are defined as services that are supplied “neither on a commercial basis, nor in competition with one or more service suppliers” according to Article 1:3.

<sup>10</sup> ACE/CHET Seminar on globalisation: Durban, August 2000: [www.chet.org.za/debates](http://www.chet.org.za/debates).

<sup>11</sup> ([http://www.coimbra-group.be/03\\_publications.htm](http://www.coimbra-group.be/03_publications.htm))

This group was founded in 1985 (Charter 1987) according to its own mission statement “ as an association of a long-established European multidisciplinary universities of high international standard committed to creating special academic and cultural ties to promote, for the benefit of members, internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, and service to society. It is also the purpose of the group to influence European educational policy and to develop best practice through the mutual exchange of experience”.

expansion of the Coimbra group outside of Europe – seek to protect the trade mark University. The way WTO now is organised, and given the role of higher education in the GATS – discussions, such a global initiative is considered to be highly urgent. In the article where this idea is launched, the question is asked: “Is the protection of University as a collective mark an old-fashioned reaction to the modern Globalised World?” The answer is no, rather global issues of identity needs global answers: “We believe that the opposite is true: in a modern open world, national states cannot easily supervise and regulate Universities and international collective marks can be required to guarantee a competition that selects the best practices”. It is also argued that with the new global openness as well as competition for knowledge, there is a stronger incentive to privatise knowledge, reduce public spending and thus focus more on “closed access science” than “open access science”. Thus in the new global economy, Universities “should as often as possible remark that, like the air that we breathe, basic knowledge is a global common that can only be appropriately safeguarded (and funded) at a global level. This is also why there is a need for a “Collective University Mark” that highlights the public good character of knowledge.

Five points are mentioned as central to the possible characteristics of a trademark to be authorised by the TRIPS agreements. These points indicate institutions of higher learning that stand out in contrast to much of the tertiary education which the WB sees as central actors in countries in the South. The first point relates to the idea of knowledge as new and accessible to all: “1) The specific mission of Universities is the production and transmission of open-access original knowledge.”

The second point, about academic freedom is more concerned with political than economic power, however, given the focus of the whole text, the one does not rule out the other: “2) Universities are engaged in the process of the certification of validity of knowledge and in its transmission. Political power should not interfere with this process. Academic freedom and self-government are defining characteristics of Universities.”

The third point argues that a university must be composed of academics of a certain variety and size, and also that there is some interaction between them – and most importantly of all, that it is the university that organises the division of labour within the organisation: “3) Universities organize the division of labour related to the production and the transmission of knowledge. The existence of a substantial community of scholars, engaged in different

disciplines, is a defining characteristic of University. This community is necessary to favour both the specialization of scholars and their awareness of other related fields of knowledge. The existence of a significant community of scholars is also necessary to evaluate the moral and social consequences of research activities“.

The fourth point is one of the most debated to day, not only in England, and is the qualifying characteristics not often referred back to old Humboldt:“4) The unity of research and teaching is a qualifying characteristic of University. Universities guarantee to the students that their lecturers are also engaged in scientific research and can transmit knowledge with the critical qualities that are typically acquired by the active members of a scientific community.”

The last point highlights what is today the most dominant characteristic of all higher education and research, the need to regulate the global development of the knowledge society itself:“5) Universities cooperate in national and international associations that monitor the quality of their members”<sup>12</sup>.

These points undoubtedly are easily recognisable, at the same time as it show that many institutions that today call themselves universities; from the for-profit Sylvan group to university of Dar es Salaam (which now by the World Bank is declared a "Reformed University"), to a number of upgraded Technicons and colleges around the world will loose the right to call themselves universities if “University” becomes an intellectual property right along the lines presented for discussion by the Coimbra group. The proposal will, if followed, put a quality stamp on all networks according to global knowledge values, values that will override all market based networks of knowledge dissemination by providers falling outside such networks. The global public will gain the upper hand in its competition with the market forces.

Generally this little example illustrates the difficulty in finding ways of governing global public good in a world more and more dominated by market relations. If this debate is to give a broader meaning, however, a common understanding of some of the traits of the new globality have also to be debated.

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<sup>12</sup> What we here call the classical university relates to the three dimensions of higher education and research: renewal of knowledge, transmittance of a cultural heritage and the creation of a certain ethical attitude, expressed most often in the German term “Bildung” to penetrate the working habits of the educated as leaders.

## **Global trade needs global governance based on global identities**

We have taken internationalisation to be different from globalization. In the last instance the socio-political reach are beyond states, regions of states or interstate collaboration. According to the global perspective, we are now experiencing epochal change. Towards the end of the second millennium, we are leaving the Modern Age and entering the Global (Albrow 1997) or Information Age (Castells 1997). This historical break fundamentally affects the role of the state, the way capitalism is organised, how social relationships are structured, and - what is most important here - how culturally defined identities are conceptualised. According to Martin Albrow, there is a change in how the nation coupled the state with its people. Thus, he states that: "Only when the state has to bow to the autonomy of the social has the modern age run its course. On our account, that cannot happen through ideas alone, but only when the projects loses its hold on the organisation of everyday life and the daily practices of ordinary people" (Albrow 1996, 172). What we have been experiencing for a time now, is that the state is losing its grip over the social. Manuel Castells voices a similar approach: "The state's capture of historical time through its appropriation of tradition and the (re)construction of national identity is challenged by plural identities as defined by autonomous subjects" (1997:243). During the epoch we, according to Albrow and Castells, now have left, nation and modernity are given meaning by the power of the state. Space and time interact in a uni-linear direction of development under state domination. The process of globalisation, however, does not have any specific direction, no territory and no time linearity. While the modern nation-state project is characterised by totalising discourses and directedness, the new globality is characterised by a plurality of discourses and connectedness (Albrow 1997:110). Thus, globalisation undermines the assumption that the nation-state can provide the dominant frame of meaning for the citizens. Most clearly, the new globality is revealed through the state's growing inability to regulate and control the economy. As an effect of increased economic competition between nations, a main building block of the nation-state's legitimacy, the welfare state (or welfare arrangements), is seriously threatened. Thus, the basis for the public funding of higher education is also threatened, other sources of funding needs to be mobilised. The market is one obvious source. For many nation-state dependent higher education institutions, this de-linking from the state is also considered a liberation given the kind of political domination they have been victims of. The threat from the state is in many parts of the world seen as worse than the threat from the market. In England we find this fear

of the State to be a rather stable historical value, often reproduced in many of its former colonies, and to day in the way the sector for higher education is promoted as a global business in its own right. From this perspective and with these experiences in mind, globalisation is therefore not only associated with an uncontrollable external force, but on the contrary, the new globality is, as Albrow also indicates, associated with the recovery of free sociality: “The citizen, colonized by the modern state, acting within the frame of the new globality, exploits the openness of global institutions, expresses the new-found globalism and draws strength from a community and commonality of feeling which the nation-state can neither control nor even define” (1997:122). The question however is, if the freedom of the market really leads to this kind of freedom, or if it just leads into new kinds of international domination and skewed distribution of knowledge opportunities.

A more common view than ours, however, is to see globalisation as intertwined with and part of internationalisation, or as “best (..) understood as a process or set of processes rather than a singular condition” (Held et al. 1999:27). In stead of an historical break, we have the idea of continuity. Processes of globalisation can be identified in different historical epochs, in the pre-modern as well as in the contemporary (Held 1999:26). Through a set of categories, like the extensity of global networks, the intensity of global interconnectedness, the velocity of global flows and the impact propensity of global interconnectedness, it becomes possible to determine the shape of globalisation in different epochs, i.e. as one processes among many characterising historical periods. For Universities then, there can not be such a big break as we have argued, rather new and different ways of relating to one of its dimensions, the international and global. So if “globalization is a central driving force behind the rapid social, political and economic changes that are reshaping” contemporary societies, then these changes emerge out of the past, and do not represent a break with it. The old nation-state universities as the Coimbra group indicate may perhaps yet be transformed into universities for the new global order, by building on its self made universal (global public good) commitments.

However, most of the material presented above indicates that the momentum, of the borderless higher education is acquired from a new kind of economic, social and political commitment that can only be understood if we think in terms of “new historical epoch”. Even the “historical universities” need a global institution beyond nation state stretching to protect it. While the processes of globalisation are conceived as a process of stretching of the nation-

state through more and more international economic interaction, the Coimbra group suggestion seems to appeal to the new globality in order to preserve the old values of the university, but with a new social unit, the globe, a point of reference.

We are now experiencing a new level of organisation in the world history which challenges ideas about what is useful and valued knowledge. This new level of organisation, the globality, implies that increasingly the globe in addition to the state becomes the reference point of the knowledge community. Under globalized conditions, the sources of legitimacy as well as the cultural attributes on which academics, professions etc. are founding their identity, are multiplied and diversified, and access to knowledge of all kinds becomes a means and a precondition for the deepening of such plurality of identities. The guiding ideas of modernity like directedness, territoriality, given communal collectivity, and hierarchy defined by the nation-state, and exploitation of nature as the basis of unlimited growth following the competition between national economies, are losing their persuasive and self-evident power, thus also making much of the research and knowledge production going on non-relevant for the new globality (Beck 2000:88).

Up to now it may have been possible to identify the emergence of globale values as a highly elitist phenomenon. This is slowly changing, but how these changes will come about depends on how knowledge producing institutions contribute to the openness and democratisation of knowledge relations in the world. As individuals and social groups are experiencing that the state is no longer able to govern the development due to the emergence of global forces, and that they simultaneously are losing their faith in the dominating institutions of civil society (e.g. the Church(es), labour unions, political parties, etc.), many react by organising meaning around primary identities (e.g. religious fundamentalism, nationalism, ethnicity or territorial identity) (Castells 1997:7,12), but others, and that is important for the choice between networking or the market, choose to trust new knowledge new networks pursuing the unknown as it emerges as the new globality. Thus, in a globalised world, the question of identity formation takes many directions, what directions will dominate is much up to the responsibility of higher education and research.

## **So what about the developing world**

Returning in the end to the Task Force on Higher Education and Society convened by the World Bank and UNESCO we find that the Task Force writes that “[i]t is the educated people of a nation, even a poor nation, who will assert their nation’s interest in the increasingly complex web of global economic, cultural, and political interactions. Without a better higher education, it is hard to imagine how many poor countries will cope”. (UNESCO/World Bank 2000:43). Given the poor state of many systems of higher education in Africa in particular, it is a real danger that many African countries will become even more marginalised and isolated intellectually and economically in the emerging new global economy if they are not able to improve the management of their **national** “innovation systems”.<sup>13</sup> The linking between nation -state and the global economy needs the highly educated. However, these people also needs to be part of the networks of the new globality, since it is in the realm of the new globality ideas about justice, poverty reduction and redistribution, sustainability and the threats form the new risks are discussed. Until recently, higher education has been closely linked to the project of the nation-state in most of the developed countries, but this need to be strengthened as a strategy for the developing countries. None the less, knowledge creation and production has always had its own institutional criteria shaping its ways of organising, often in tension to both state and market demands and expectations. To day it is a question of how these institutional criteria will relate to and absorb the new globality. After a long period of “service” to the nation-state project, this has had lasting effects on both content and organisation of the academic community. Knowledge as a public good with an obligation towards the global citizen has most forcefully entered the discourse among countries in the South.

This is also a challenge to the different stakeholders of higher education, particularly in the North, whose different interests in the new global community may vary in way that more than ever challenges the unity of the university<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> According to Michael Gibbons and colleagues, a national innovation system “comprises both traditional scientific and technological knowledge producing institutions and the knowledge base of its industries, the entrepreneurship of its public and private sectors and the values cultivated by its schools and universities” (Gibbons et al. 1994:63).

<sup>14</sup> At the conference in Accra, Ghana, the implications of WTO/GATS for higher education in Africa finds that the whole continent is most vulnerable to knowledge shopping. They conclude that this shopping is a threat to their identity both as citizens of a nation state, as member s of the African community and as global citizens with a commitment to global justice.

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