

## **British and German Higher Education: Staff and Students in a Changing World**

### **Background**

The restructuring of higher education systems according to market force principles has become an almost universal trend in Western countries. In the development of the modern university, the German and the British models were the two most seminal in the world, and also influenced American universities. They are therefore particularly worth studying. The aim of the present research was to investigate whether attitudes and values among British and German staff and students are changing in response to neo-liberal influences, marketization and financial stringency specifically within the subject area of Education.

Implementation of neo-liberal concepts brings the removal of government-imposed restrictions in order to create an open world economy leading to international economic integration (see Bauman 1998:15-16). In a higher education system strongly characterised by neo-liberalism, institutions are disciplined by competition, resulting in

choice and institutional differentiation. Funding that had once been a social responsibility assumed by the state becomes increasingly privatised. This paradigm is being transferred to many sectors of public life, including schools and universities where the educational *status quo* of traditional values is being influenced by the marketized regime of massification, evaluation, accreditation and quality assurance, all taking place within the context of falling state funding for higher education. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the United Kingdom (UK) could be regarded as positioning themselves at different points along a developmental continuum from 'more marketized' (UK) to 'less marketized' (FRG) (Daxner, 1999:40).

Neo-liberal trends may affect academic values, relationships and behaviour in many ways. Traditionally, the relationship between staff and students was intended to be a close pastoral one, and indeed collegiality was supposed to prevail between the academics themselves. However, Trow (1974:57) claims that the massification of higher education entails '...a loss of a close apprenticeship relationship between faculty members and students'. Good relations *may* be compromised within a neo-liberal university. The question arises too whether in a more marketized world, it is possible to induct students into the traditional principles and ethos of research. In fact, Wilkin (1996:146) states that '...for the [UK] Thatcher government, theory within [teacher] training creates inefficiency': she argues that for the neo-liberal reformer, the theorist interrupts the market relationship between the teacher who actually produces teaching and the consumer (student). This anti-theoretical bias may well direct students' attention away from any interest in research and in the more theoretical aspects of their subjects. In a higher education system subject to the influence of market forces, the primary purpose may shift from the promotion of knowledge to that of serving the economy, thereby marginalizing traditional liberal and personal education. The university is expected to become an engine of wealth generation rather than a means of searching for 'truth'. In the post-modern concept, truth value is regarded as contestable and may be superseded by the criterion of social usefulness (Henkel 1999:13; Välimaa 1999:24). Lyotard (1984) has claimed that the status of knowledge changes as universities enter the post-industrial world: knowledge is no longer an indispensable element for training the mind, and is being subordinated to the principle of performativity with the result that whole systems become dedicated to performative behaviour (Cowen 1996). Under these concepts, one could expect student attitudes to be instrumentalised, and career expectations to become more materialistic.

In a system subject to market forces, students are seen as clients who are allowed to choose their institutions, informed and attracted by league tables assessing quality of teaching and research. Barnes (1999:188) suggests that in a market system, students may find that their needs are taken far more seriously. A positive experience validates the higher education institutions' claim to *alumni* support after the students have left, and further strengthens the market model by helping to collect money from private sources thereby reducing dependency on the state when hard money goes soft (Clark 2004:67). Student satisfaction levels with their higher education institution will obviously be important in coaxing them to make donations to their *alma mater*, once they are launched upon their careers. Yet it is also important to balance staff satisfaction against student satisfaction. An inverse relationship between the two (one achieved at the expense of the other) may be an unhealthy indicator that student satisfaction is being won at the expense of staff wellbeing (or vice versa).

In a system which is supposed to decrease reliance on state funding, there is an increased need for entrepreneurial skills to help earn 'new' money. Clark (1998:37) is well aware that 'central government in Britain has become an undependable university patron, often a hostile one', and waiting for the government to come up with increased resources

is seen as an option ‘only by those who [do] not face reality’. How to cope with this situation? In the face of external threat, managers need to be able to act swiftly: according to Clark (1998:5) ‘They need to become quicker, more flexible and especially more focused in reaction to expanding and changing demands. ... A strengthened steering core becomes a necessity’. Clark (2004:90) emphasises that ideas need to acquire a social base of behaviour: culture is real when it is embodied, so the extent to which such values are internalised in staff may be important for the future functioning of the institutions.

The role attributed to the state in a neo-liberal climate is particularly important for a study in comparative higher education. Scholars such as Beck (2000:104 & 108) and Fisher and Rubenson (1998:79) claim that the state is indispensable not just for geopolitical reasons but also to guarantee basic rights, and give political shape to the process of globalization by helping to regulate it internationally. Other scholars argue that globalization is making the nation state almost redundant. Indeed Slaughter and Leslie (1997:24 and p. 61) in their study of academic capitalism note that ‘system effects’ can be so powerful that higher education policies in access, curriculum and research autonomy converge. They state that the public universities of most Westernised countries are moving towards academic capitalism, ‘pushed and pulled by the same global forces at work in the English speaking countries’. Scholte (2000) believes that the traditional model of the sovereign state as answering to no higher authority is outmoded, and that it will become ‘post-sovereign’. If he is correct, this would imply a convergence in educational structures and cultures, and a move towards greater homogeneity. In this case, the historical product of a national education system would effectively cease to have a function in the new order. It was an aim of the study to explore the role of the British and German nation states in positioning higher education within a neo-liberal context.

### **Objectives Academically Intrinsic to the Study**

- To explore staff and student perceptions of their mutual relationship.
- To explore the extent to which traditional academic values continue to prevail.
- To compare student and staff satisfaction in each country.
- To investigate personal and professional values among the respondents.
- To evaluate the state’s importance in relation to the current HE regimes of the UK and Germany.
- To search for a theory that might account for why the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the United Kingdom (UK) are at different points along a marketization spectrum (→ ‘Regulation Theory’).

### **Methods**

The research was both quantitative and qualitative. The author conducted semi-structured interviews with staff in twelve HE institutions in the UK and twelve in the Federal Republic, and during the course of these interviews she asked the staff to fill in questionnaires. Students too were given questionnaires, normally distributed during or at the end of class so as to avoid non-response rates. Pilot studies had indicated that sending them envelopes to return the questionnaires gave such poor results as to be

unviable. The personal approach was also important for staff, as it enabled the researcher to select a sample, contact the people and set up appointments with them. This was a labour-intensive mode of work, but proceeding in this way did minimise non-response rates. These can be very considerable in academe: in the Carnegie study of the academic profession (Altbach, 1996), the German response rate was just 28% and the British was 50%. A sample of 90 staff was aimed for in each country; 87 in the UK and 82 in the FRG completed both questionnaires and interviews, hence the response rate for both questionnaire and interview success was 96% in the UK and 91% in Germany. The background of the staff was varied: there were many high-status academics with international reputations in their fields, as well as those who were working closer to the chalkface. Numbers of students in the study were as follows:

**Table 1a: Numbers of Students by Country and Gender**

Gender	UK	FRG
Male	332 (22.3%)	236 (23.9%)
Female	1145 (76.9%)	749 (76.0%)
Not given	12 (0.8%)	1 (0.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1489 (100%)</b>	<b>986 (100%)</b>

**Table 1b: Numbers of Students by Country and Age**

Age	UK	FRG
18-21	390 (26.2%)	167 (16.9%)
22-24	461 (31.0%)	446 (45.2%)
25+	618 (41.4%)	373 (37.8%)
Not given	20 (1.3%)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1489 (99.9%)</b>	<b>986 (99.9%)</b>

Three quarters of the students in each country were doing programmes relating to teaching, and one quarter were doing Education-related degrees for a variety of other career outlets (e.g. administration, community work or in Germany the profession of 'social pedagogy').

**Table 2a Types of Course Being Followed in UK**

Course	UK
PGCE	768 (51.6%)
B.Ed	344 (23.1%)
B.A. and B.Sc.	372 (25.0%)
Not given	5 (0.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1489 (100%)</b>

**Table 2b: Types of Course Being Followed in Germany**

Course	FRG
Teaching Preparation (Lehramt)	477 (48.4%)
Degree in Education (Diplom)	245 (24.8%)
Magister	239 (24.2%)
Not given	25 (2.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>986 (100%)</b>

The questionnaires for both staff and students consisted mostly of statements that were analysed by calculating frequencies and percentages; the categories of strongly agree/agree and disagree/strongly disagree have been collapsed for ease of reporting in

the present report, and percentages are rounded up or down. Chi-square tests were applied to determine significant differences. The statements contained a number of 'mirror questions' with similar or equivalent wording to discover staff and students' perceptions of each other or of a common phenomenon; the two parties were thus considered as part of a role set (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). The questionnaires also featured a small number of open-ended questions (one for students and three for staff) which were analysed using NUD\*IST software). Verbatim quotations below are taken from responses to such questions or from interview material (staff). Since the intention was to survey one particular academic specialism, the research was basically targeted at staff and students in Schools or Faculties of Education, and this needs to be kept in mind when interpreting the results. Disciplines like Medicine or Physics might have a different profile, and this might form a focus for future research.

## Results

### Staff-Student Relationships

British students claim much more strongly than their German counterparts that their lecturers make an effort in human terms. Over two thirds of UK, but under 20% of FRG students, feel that their lecturers try to achieve a good relationship with them. High percentages of staff in both countries claim that the students consult them about personal problems, but over half the German students actually *deny* that they do so. It is clear that the German academics do care about their students: 86 % of them regard the relationship as 'very important', and in open-ended answers, they put 'Work with students' as their top source of professional satisfaction. Some German students complain that staff are 'condescending and awkward', even arrogant. Somewhat more of the German students disagree that they have sufficient access to their teachers when they need academic advice, and just over half, compared with three quarters of the British students endorse the statement that the university is a good place to get to know people academically like themselves. This item was intended to tap perceptions of the university as a community. Ahier et al. (2003) claim that this 'sociality' is important for the development of democratic citizenship, and it does not seem to have been destroyed by 'the market' in the UK.

It is true that class sizes are large in the Federal Republic (Staff-Student-Ratio is about 1:17 in UK and 1:46.7 in FRG), but this is not the result of neo-liberal forces in HE. On the contrary, it is the result of a constitutional provision guaranteeing the right to free choice of course under the Basic Law (in effect the Constitution) (Article 12 (1)). HEIs must use their existing capacity fully before restricting entry. UK students' concern about class sizes is very low on their list of HE criticisms, yet this is the more marketized system. So obviously they are being instructed in circumstances where massification does not necessarily produce large classes and impersonality. This is a case in which national factors outweigh the supposed effects of globalization, and the specific has more explanatory force than the general.

### Academic Engagement within the Human Framework: Unity of Research and Teaching

Because the German university was originally the 'research university', it may come as something of a surprise to find that significantly higher percentages of the UK than of the German students a) believe that their course gives them an induction into research, b) would like to go on to some form of higher study, and c) would be attracted by the academic profession themselves. Surprisingly, it is the British students who agree more strongly than the Germans that they and their lecturers are 'joint seekers after

knowledge', although this typically 'Humboldtian' item might have been expected to appeal more to Humboldt's compatriots.

High proportions of students (>80%) in both countries are very interested in their subject. Over 60 % of the German students (but only 11 % of the British) believe that their lecturers are more interested in their research than in their teaching, but this does not chime with the empirical findings. More British than German staff *actually* agree that research is more important to them than teaching, and put 'research' top of the list of things that they most enjoy about their job, whereas the German lecturers most enjoy 'work with students'. However, the majority of the staff in both countries *reject* the idea that research takes absolute precedence over teaching.

Yet despite student interest, there are reservations on the part of the British staff about the academic balance of their course programmes. When they were posed a country-specific statement 'Sometimes I think that our students are not being sufficiently challenged intellectually', almost 54 % agreed, and 45 % also agreed that there was '[T]oo little academic input in British teacher training course'. Some of the UK students too wanted more university input.

Syllabuses, examinations and structures were compared in the two countries and it could be surmised that the British students are being exposed to a Mode 2 (applied/experiential) rather than a Mode 1 (theoretical/scientific) type of knowledge (Gibbons et al. 1994). In Mode 2, knowledge has to be marketable, and it is characterised by quality control which emphasises context- and use-dependence, resulting from the expansion of knowledge producers in society. This more practical orientation may be the reason why attitudes towards study and research do not necessarily become more negative in a more marketized system. Mode 2 is less theoretical but may also be more motivational to students, and when the German system moves to a BA/MA structure -- as it is doing under the EU Bologna Convention -- it may also undergo some epistemological changes that will bring it closer to Mode 2 which can be linked with marketization. National curricular development and tradition thus seem to be important in supporting the *type* of knowledge mediated within the higher education system.

### Liberal Education and Materialism

The German students agree more strongly than the British that what they expect above all from university is that it should promote their personal development (UK 51%: FRG 58%). The German *staff* take the same view, almost half agreeing with the statement 'What I expect of the university above all is that it should promote the personal development of the students' (UK 17%: FRG 48%); so there is concurrence between staff and students in this respect. The German students are clearly less materialistic than the British, more of whom 'could not wait to leave university and earn money' (UK 43%: FRG 30%), and more in the FRG want to do socially beneficial work 'which will be useful to the community' (UK 74%: FRG 80%). The British are much keener on money than their continental counterparts: almost half of them compared with just over one third in Germany agree that 'It is very important to me to earn a substantial salary later on when I get a job.' So the students in the more marketized system do manifest more intellectual and more materialistic attitudes towards HE.

### Satisfaction Levels in Staff and Students

Students in UK are much more satisfied with their HE than those in Germany. Almost 92% of them evaluate their course summatively *Good* to *Very Good* compared with 62% of the Germans. One third of the German students rate their course just *Moderate* (UK 33%: FRG 7%). On open-ended questions, the German students feel that

there is an enormous deficit of practice in their programme, and want better relationships with schools.

Some samples of German students' comments are:

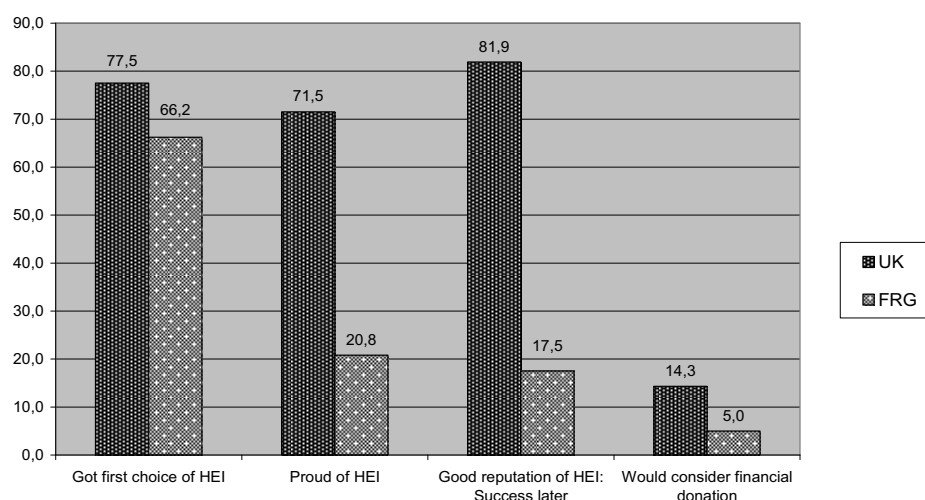
- Practice, practice, practice; not every student is an academic *in spe*.
- Lecturers should undertake more practice in the schools and do six months' teaching there every few years.
- There should be closer cooperation between the university and the schools.

It looks as if the more client-centred system is providing more satisfaction to its stakeholders, but even in the UK there are criticisms, the most important of which relate to organisational matters. Students call for less paperwork, more time spent on subject knowledge, more variety of and spacing between assignments, and shorter courses. Comments are:

- Tutors [need] to spend more contact time with students, not be patronising and be available during the week more instead of staying at home doing their own research.
- More personal support [needed] from course lecturer, including more understanding and sympathy.

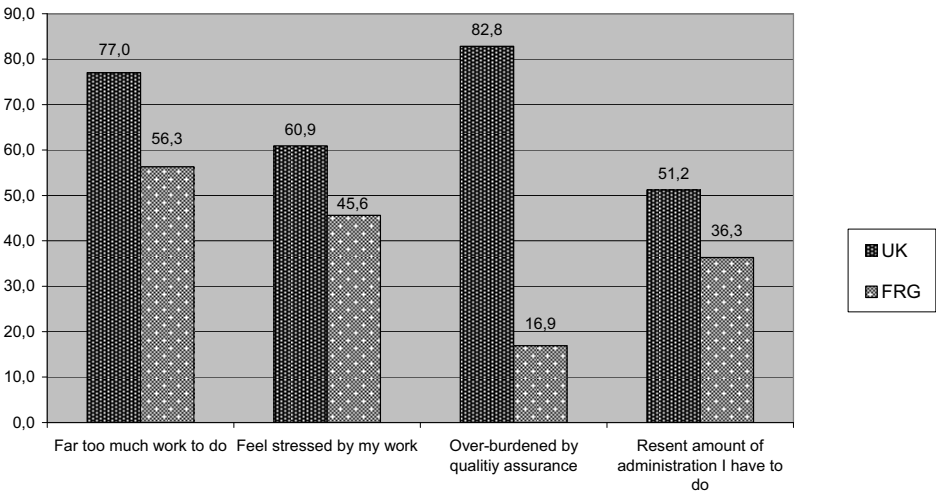
**Institutional Loyalty and Alumni Behaviour:** More British than German students are able to access their first choice of university, are proud of it and think that its good name will help them to build success later in life (figure 1). Despite these high British figures, only 14 % of the UK students would be prepared to make a donation to their *alma mater*. In the UK, let alone in Germany, much remains to be done to associate institutional loyalty with a culture of giving on the American model if lack of state support is to be compensated. The FRG students' lack of institutional loyalty and enthusiasm is in part historically determined, but it is very weakly developed and this is regrettable. It would be good to know that they feel happy and well-taught within their universities; and German university teachers' morale would rise if more than a minority of them could honestly believe that their students were 'satisfied with teaching' (viz. UK 86%: FRG 34% -- untabulated).

**Figure 1: Students' Enthusiasm for their Universities**

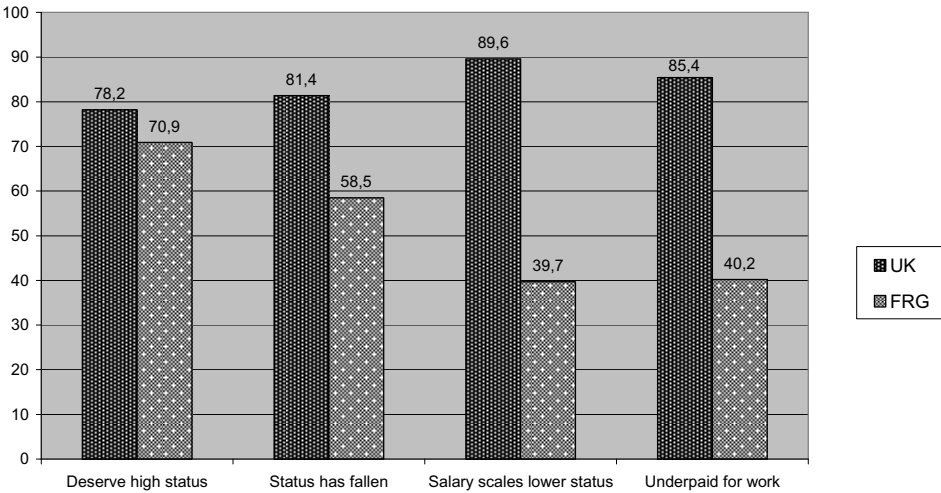


**Staff Satisfaction:** Turning now to staff, we find that the British academics are far from satisfied. They feel stressed, over-worked, over-burdened by QA, and resent their administrative load to a much greater extent than their German colleagues (figure 2). They also believe to a much greater extent than Germans that their status has fallen in recent times, and that they are underpaid for what they do (figure 2). They endorse the proposition ‘I would like to have more time for research’ much more strongly than the Germans, but very few people in either country wish to reduce their teaching load (figure 3).

**Figure 2: Academics’ Feelings about Work**

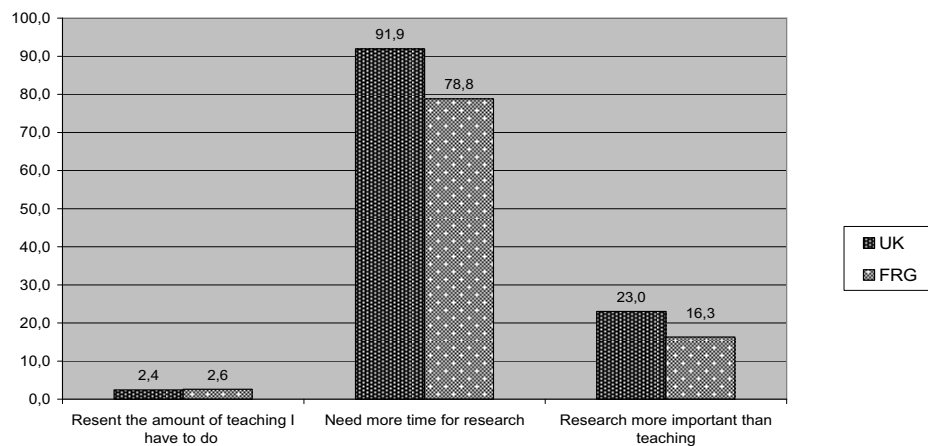


**Figure 2: Perceptions of Status among the Academics**





**Figure 3: Attitudes towards Core Academic Tasks**



In interviews the British complain about the following:

- Wasteful audit culture.
- Cowardice of the institution, and failure to 'stand up for itself'.
- Poor management, inefficient financial systems and motivation.
- Lack of theoretical input in course programmes.

However, the German academics too have their pain. Their greatest professional worry turned out to be a construct that we have termed 'personal anguish' which included items such as the following:

- The struggle of all against all for resources.
- The fact that I am so beset by these senseless struggles that I can hardly manage to do anything important.
- I am in the last quarter of my professional life, and I am over-whelmed with tasks which in themselves are not unreasonable, but which I can hardly manage.
- The question of whether my achievements are up to standard.

These are very frank admissions, and they are combined with a feeling that the university as they have known it in Germany is passing away. The academics are certainly conscious of the end of an old age and the dawn of a new age which arouses no enthusiasm in them: the advent of market force higher education.

- [T]he critical aspect of *Wissenschaft* (knowledge and academic scholarship) is becoming more and more lost, in favour of a commercial or capitalistic orientation; ... academic education is becoming short-sighted vocational training.

In summary then, the British students are much more satisfied than their German counterparts; the opposite is the case with the British staff who are much less satisfied than the Germans. The conclusion may be drawn that in the more marketized system, there is indeed an inverse relationship between staff and student satisfaction to the detriment of the former. There is a need to redress the balance in each country.

### **Executive Power and Entrepreneurialism**

More Germans than British feel that the good functioning of their HEI is impeded by excessive state-sponsored interference (UK 69 %: FRG 89 %). The German academics begin from a lower baseline in terms of embracing a more executive and entrepreneurial style in the finance and running of universities, and some even want more of it whereas many of the British find that it has already gone far enough. In fact, 70 % of British staff express dismay at further attempts to privatise universities, and over 60 % believe that their HEIs need to stand up to the government more than at present. In the end, a clear majority of people in *both* systems disagree with making universities more entrepreneurial, the British even more intensely than the Germans. This may be because the UK respondents have more experience of what it is like, and also because of the acrimonious relationship that prevailed between academe and government, especially under the Thatcher regime. Entrepreneurial values and approval of executive power are not deeply embedded in either country: most academics have not learned to 'own' them or view them in as positive a light as those institutions studied by Clark (2004) have clearly been able to do.

### **Have Neo-liberal Forces Made the Nation State *passé*?**

The research results show many cross-national differences and it is clear that the notion of *convergence* in the direction of market forces cannot be unproblematically sustained from the data. True, there are underlying developments that will promote convergence in the medium term. Examples would be the Bologna Process associated with the European Union, and the fact that there are new salary scales and conditions of service in Germany that may eventually depress academics' status. There is a certain convergence too in the fact that many British staff in the present study wanted to wind back privatisation and executive power, whereas the German staff were prepared to move some distance towards them. In academe the German response to the market force 'imperative' has been slower than the British, less acrimonious and less centralist in implementation. The German system has many defences against centralism of the type that has made the relationship between academe and government so bitter in the UK. It does have quality assurance requirements but they are decentralised, and mitigated by federalism. A system of federal checks and balances exists, and the commitment to freedom in the Basic Law (Article 5 (3)) helps to protect the position of staff.

Historical and institutional factors are still important in accounting for the differences between the two countries. Prange (2003), in a review of Science and Technology policies in Germany, argues persuasively that, notwithstanding globalizing trends, European and national factors come *first*, and *domestic* institutions determine the depth and direction of national policy. Vaira (2004) too believes that the way organizations translate the institutional patterns gives rise to unique combinations. The nation state therefore remains important in communicating imperatives to staff and students within the higher education institutions under its jurisdiction, and has a very direct, immediate influence upon them. Although policy *directionality* may be shared to some extent between European nations, countries hybridise policy in their own ways, thereby ensuring that the nation is still of central importance in theorizing the global market. It is unlikely that German HE will become a clone of British HE: it does slowly seem to be finding a 'Third Way' between the extremes of traditionalism and neo-liberalism. The post-sovereign world of higher education has not yet arrived.

## Regulation Theory

The UK is more prone to full-blooded neo-liberalism than the FRG, and centralist power has been exercised to promote student satisfaction at a cost to staff in terms of work-life balance and personal stress. The question can be posed: how did such centralist power arise? Jessop (2001) accounts for UK/FRG political differences in terms of Regulation Theory. It requires the establishment of a relatively stable relationship between the mode of accumulation (systems of economic growth and distribution) and the mode of social regulation (MSR) which includes habits and customs, social norms, enforceable laws, state forms and history (Peck and Tickell, 1992:152, 154). The nature of the state and of government power are a vital element in modes of regulation.

In the post-Second World War (WWII) period under Ludwig Erhard, a democratic, federal, social market model was established that aimed to ‘combine prosperity with entrepreneurial opportunity’ in a system that ‘could not be exploited by centralist political forces’ (Lewis 2001:119). The stability, longevity and *continuity* of the German model provided the basis for resistance to a purely neo-liberal strategy and made a break along neo-liberal lines unlikely. The Thatcherite ‘revolution’, faced with a long-term structural decline and the need to respond to the crisis of the 1970s, broke with the post-WWII settlement and socialism to create a popular capitalist basis for a neo-liberal accumulation strategy (Jessop, 2001:134). Thus the British government from Thatcher onwards actually experienced a **break** with post-WWII consensus which exposed it more to neo-liberalism. There was a vacuum into which authoritarian politics could enter and be exploited by a dominant leader. This was manifested in all domains of public life, including education, which became more centralized through a national curriculum and quality assurance measures (ibid.:129). Such macro-societal features as these may help to explain the differential impact of the market on British and German academics.

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## Activities

Conference papers were delivered as follows:

2005

- Max-Planck Institute Berlin
- The University of Leipzig.
- The Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich. This resulted in a paper: "Dozenten und Studenten der Erziehungswissenschaften in globalisierenden Institutionen: ein britisch-deutscher Vergleich." Forthcoming in *Datenreport Erziehungswissenschaft* edited by H. Merckens and R. Tippelt, Opladen: Leske and Budrich. This book will be published by the German Society for Educational Sciences, founded in 1963, and will be an influential publication with a wide circulation.
- The Bavarian State Institute for Higher Education Research and Planning. This resulted in a paper: "Education Staff and Students under Neo-liberal Pressure: a British-German Comparison." Munich: *Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung* (Contributions to Higher Education Research), journal of the Bavarian State Institute for Research into HE Research and Planning (IHF), Vol. 27, No. 4:6-29.

2005

British Educational Research Association (BERA) University of Glamorgan, Wales. Title: "**Are Staff and Student Attitudes in British and German Universities Converging?**"

- 2004 British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE), University of Sussex, Brighton. Title: **“Student Values in British and German Higher Education.”**
- 2004 Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER), Enschede, The Netherlands. Title: **“Staff and Student Attitudes Towards Higher Education in the UK and Germany: How Useful is ‘Marketization’ as a Means of Accounting for their Relationships, Feelings and Values?”**
- 2004 European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR), Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona. Title: **“Staff and Students in British and German Higher Education: Roles and Responsibilities.”**
- 2003 Society for Research into Higher Education, Royal Holloway and Bedford College, University of London. Title: **“University Teachers in British and German Higher Education.”**

## Outputs

In print.

- 1. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. (2005) “The Influence of Market Force Culture on British and German Academics.” *Comparative Education*. Vol. 41, No. 4:433-454.
- 2. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. (2005) “Education Staff and Students under Neo-liberal Pressure: a British-German Comparison.” Munich: *Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung* (Contributions to Higher Education Research), journal of the Bavarian State Institute for Research into HE Research and Planning (IHF), Vol. 27, No. 4:6-29.

The following articles have been accepted.

- 3. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. “Trends in the Restructuring of German Universities.” Forthcoming 2006 in *Comparative Education Review* (USA).
- 4. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. “Relationships and Values Among Staff and Students in British and German Higher Education.” Forthcoming 2006 in *Tertiary Education and Management* (EAIR Journal).
- 5. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. “British and German Students in a Shifting Scenario.” Forthcoming 2006 in *Higher Education Management and Policy* (OECD).
- 6. PRITCHARD, R.M.O. “Dozenten und Studenten der Erziehungswissenschaften in globalisierenden Institutionen: ein britisch-deutscher Vergleich.” To be published 2006 in *Datenreport Erziehungswissenschaft* edited by H. Merkens and R. Tippelt, Opladen: Leske and Budrich. This volume will be published by the German Society for Educational Sciences founded in 1963, and will be an influential publication with a wide circulation.

## Impacts

The impact will depend upon the publications arising from the research. Since most of these are in press, their effect cannot yet be assessed. However, the work has had a resonance in Germany where even those findings that are not very ‘flattering’ for the FRG have been accepted and are being disseminated. In the UK, the work aroused considerable interest at the conferences where it was presented. Colleagues in the field were enthusiastic about a new data set for comparative education, especially as not many scholars are using a mixed methodology like this. The work has been readily picked up. Thus, a conference paper offered to the EAIR resulted in a paper for their journal TEAM, and Munich presentations resulted in a book chapter and an article. The findings of the research have some clear indications for policy which could fuel change. The inverse relationship between staff and student satisfaction, for example, is clearly a matter that needs to be addressed -- though there is also a kind of academic ‘essentialism’ that makes academics dedicated to their work, notwithstanding difficult conditions. If neo-liberalism is irreversible, then the UK needs to avoid bludgeoning staff and should ‘re-package’ it in a way that can be owned and fruitfully used by practitioners (as in some US HEIs).

## Future Research Priorities

1. The present research could meaningfully be extended to disciplines beyond Education. *Academic Tribes and Territories* by Tony Becher is an important book about academic identities, recently updated and reissued in joint authorship with Paul Trowler, but many people think that it is no longer ‘fine-grained’ enough. It was, after all, completed in 1989. There is now scope for further empirical research on academic identities within a disciplinary framework. A sample of varied disciplines could be predicated upon an epistemological model and subjected to the same treatment as was given to Education within the present study. This would be a good way of exploring the reality of ‘Academic Tribes’ within a neo-liberal context and counterposing it with the notion of academic essentialism. Gender could possibly be inserted as an additional dimension of study. The original Becher research used only qualitative data (interviews) and not quantitative, so it would be useful to add the questionnaires.
2. Comparisons of academic values and neo-liberalism in higher education could be extended to other countries too, e.g., the Republic of Ireland, by means of a seminar or by a qualitative/ quantitative methodology such as that employed in the present study. A roster of theoretical and practical questions could be constructed on the basis of the present research findings to guide authors towards exploration of common themes. If a conference were to be organised on this basis, an interesting edited book could be produced.