

**DEMOCRATS, AUTHORITARIANS AND  
THE BOLOGNA PROCESS:  
UNIVERSITIES IN GERMANY, RUSSIA,  
ENGLAND AND WALES**

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# DEMOCRATS, AUTHORITARIANS AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: UNIVERSITIES IN GERMANY, RUSSIA, ENGLAND AND WALES

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To Alexander S. Revushkin, who first aroused my curiosity  
about the Bologna Process*

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<sup>1</sup>Mattei (2014).

Process, who gave me an immense amount of highly relevant material, and who showed continuing interest in my work as it progressed.

Fortunately, I was too well acquainted with the Siberian winter to go to Russia then. I undertook my fieldwork there rather earlier, in September 2012. I started in Omsk, where Sergei Kostarev and Polina Zakotnova arranged a fascinating programme for me. Polina interpreted for me where it was needed; Svetlana Kostareva provided welcome accommodation after my long flight. In Tomsk, Sergei Kirpotin helped me arrange my interview programme and interpreted at my meeting with the Rector, Georgy Mayer. For another meeting, Peter Tarasenko (who would have been well worth interviewing in his own right) acted as interpreter. Michael Mochalov and Robert Service tracked down the reference to Alexander S. Revushkin's work. Moscow was my biggest challenge; I would not have known where to start if Olga Oleynikova had not arranged a fascinating set of interviews for me. In addition, she took me to the Bolshoi Theatre and to a rather good restaurant! Much later in the progress of the book, Geoffrey Hosking read the whole Russian chapter.

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interest in the progress of the work, reading and commenting on successive drafts of most chapters, and even printing out much of the book when my own printer and computer refused to communicate with each other.

But the views expressed here are entirely my own.

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## Preface

In this book Judith Marquand has rescued the Bologna Process from the condescension that has often been its fate, certainly in the United Kingdom, one of four signatories of the original Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 that foreshadowed this Europe-wide movement of reform in higher education and also two of case-study countries on which she has based her penetrating analysis (she has treated England Wales separately – rightly so, in my view).

It is a remarkable achievement. Too often the Bologna Process has been dismissed in the United Kingdom (or, more accurately, England because both Wales and in particular Scotland have shown greater enthusiasm) as a dry-as-dust matter of interest mainly to university administrators or a pretext for Euro-groups to junket by engaging in a ceaseless round of self-justificatory meetings or, worst of all, utterly irrelevant because the United Kingdom had been doing almost everything required by it already. In fact, as Marquand shows, it is the other way round. England is not super-compliant with Bologna but rather, because of its desire to engineer a free-market revolution in higher education (despite the broad opposition of the universities, bar a thin top leadership class), Bologna has become irrelevant.

In this book, Marquand has succeeded in bringing Bologna alive. She has made it a subject of compelling interest, not simply in the particular terms of the reform in higher education but also more broadly of how networks are emerging to tackle global problems (what is, perhaps rather grandly, referred to as the ‘New World Order’ – ‘disorder’ might be a more accurate label in an age of Trump and Brexit).

Outside the ranks of Bologna-philes, the English response has always been a contradictory mixture of ‘we are doing it all already’ and ‘it’s all irrelevant anyway’. In contrast, in the rest of Europe – even Putin’s neo-authoritarian Russia – it has been used to launch a movement not only of reform but also of renewal of the European university. England, if not the whole United Kingdom (despite its pivotal historical role in that European tradition), is now rather awkwardly semi-detached – a stance that appears to have become generic and endemic in our relations with our European neighbours, as the catastrophic result of the referendum its continuing membership of the European Union with its razor-

thin majority to 'leave' has demonstrated. Maybe our indifference to, occasionally even irritation with, Bologna prefigured Brexit.

In central and eastern Europe, in particular, the Bologna Process has been a key instrument in reconnecting these countries to the European mainstream after more than four decades of totalitarian rule. Outside Europe too Bologna has been admired. I remember a meeting of higher education ministries and funding agencies on the far side of the world in New Zealand where the State Commissioner for Wisconsin asked, only half in jest, how he could 'join' the Bologna Process.

Few of those present when the Bologna Declaration was signed in the summer of 1999 can have imagined the impact of the process that was being initiated that day. A decade-and-a-half later, far from diminishing, that impact is greater than ever. Judged against the stuttering efforts to make progress on other, much higher-profile, global agendas such as climate change that also depend on building international consensus through networks of persuasion, Bologna has been a remarkable success – an exemplar perhaps for all such efforts (although not literally global in its reach, it stretches more than half-way round the globe from Greenland to Vladivostok). For that reason alone, Bologna deserves serious study far beyond the higher education community.

The motives of the original, and subsequent, signatories were inevitably mixed. The Germans were concerned about the length of time students took to receive the *Diplom*, so the attractions of a two-cycle bachelors-masters pattern were immediately appealing. France, despite its supposedly Napoleonic and statist traditions, possessed a fragmented higher education system, divided between universities and *grandes écoles*, and Bologna held out the promise of greater integration. The Italians, and others, saw an external instrument, such as Bologna, as a lever for reform of their universities. For the central and eastern Europeans, as has already been said, Bologna was a powerful symbol of reintegration, even hope for the future. The British... well, we tagged along.

But underlying these particular motives there were two generic concerns. The first was how to cope with the growth of student demand and the expansion of higher education. Here Bologna could provide only part of the answer, by promoting more sensible patterns of study, raising standards and focusing attention on student achievement. The other part concerned the, still sharply contested and unresolved, question of how these greatly expanded systems of higher education should be funded – a dilemma made more acute by the, mistaken but ubiquitous, austerity policies pursued since the banking crisis of 2008. The

second was a desire to make European universities more competitive, grounded in a concern that they were no match for their American peers today (and tomorrow might not be a match for their Chinese or Korean ones).

Here Bologna has provided a fuller answer. It is not difficult to imagine that, with the benefit of historical hindsight, the early years of the twenty-first century will be recognised as a period of renewal for European universities, perhaps a golden age. For that the Bologna Process deserves the major credit. But, as Marquand points out, Europe has had to walk a narrow line between, on the one hand, modernisation, the drive towards improved efficiency and more effective management of universities (which inevitably perhaps raises the question of the role of the 'market') and, on the other, the preservation of what is often coyly labelled the 'social dimension', the contribution that universities can and do make to social justice, civic solidarity and the wider public good. Compellingly she contrasts the 'liberal democratic' origins of the Bologna process with its 'social democratic tinge'.

This book transcends the narrow boundaries of higher education studies in two ways. The first has already been mentioned, the model Bologna offers of doing business on an international level (in this case the reform of higher education on a continental scale). It may be argued that this has been easier in a European context. Although an inter-state process not 'owned' by the European Commission, and indeed stretching far beyond the frontiers of the EU, Bologna clearly benefitted from habits of compromise and cooperation that have grown up since the Treaty of Rome. But this model of the 'New World Order' provided by Bologna is crucial because it relates to the making of public policy; other models of globalisation relate almost exclusively to markets (and, perhaps, resistance to markets).

The second way in which this book transcends narrow disciplinary boundaries is that it offers a clear theoretical framework in which to locate, and understand, the reform of European higher education since the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. Marquand usefully reminds us that the ubiquitous 'New Public Management' is a complex, indeed fractured, phenomenon. She skilfully analyses the inter-relationships between different strands within public management more generally – 'fatalist' (characterised by the collapse of trust and advance of cynicism), 'hierarchist' (where rules are there to be obeyed – without too many questions), egalitarian (when the rules are always 'in play' within a lively democratic culture) and individualistic (when markets 'rule OK' and all forms of collectivism are suspect). She does so at

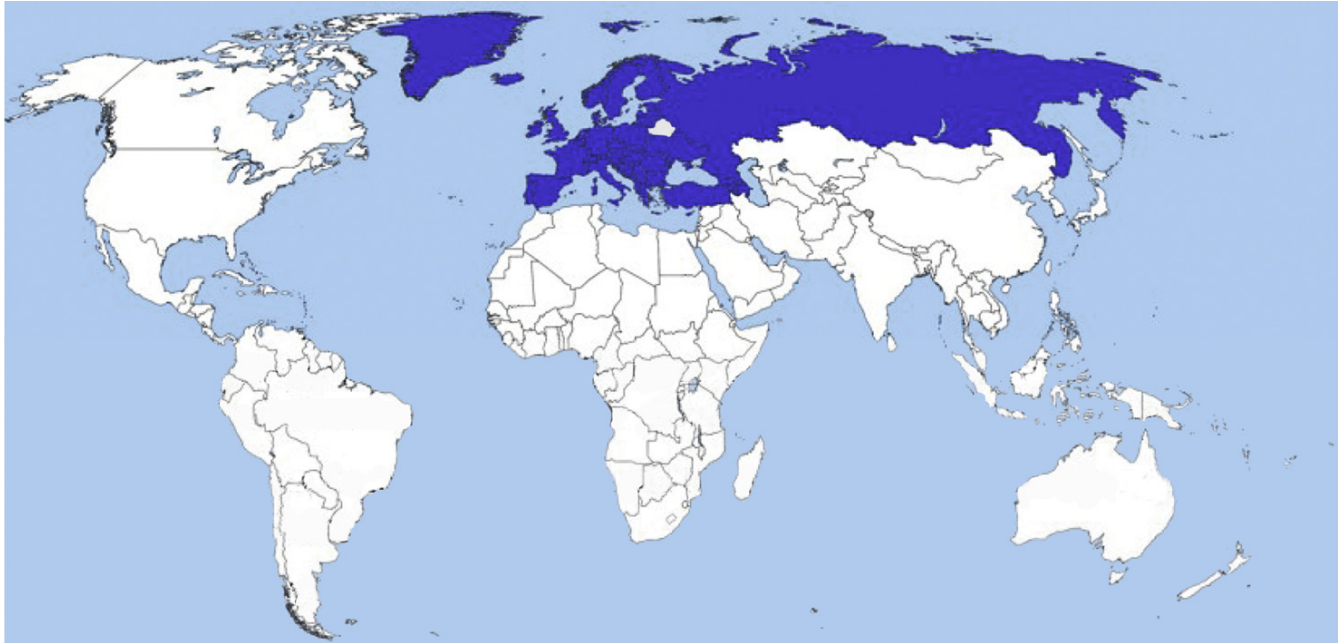
multiple levels, the European Higher Education Area, nation states, higher education systems and individual institutions.

It is tempting to typecast her four case studies in these terms – Russia as enduringly ‘hierarchical’, Germany as a combination of the ‘hierarchical’ and the egalitarian (or collegial), England as the cheer leader for more individualistic, market driven, conceptions of higher education, and Wales as tacking back to a more recognisably ‘European’ and collectivist model. But, as the example of Bologna demonstrates, that is perhaps too simple. Despite Putin’s neo-authoritarianism Russia has held to Bologna, regardless of its liberal democratic origins, a reflection perhaps of an older nineteenth-century debate between westernisers and Slavophiles. Its adherence to Bologna may confirm Russia’s essentially western orientation under Putin, despite rising international tensions with the United States, NATO and, to a lesser extent, the EU. Germany’s rather ponderous implementation of Bologna may demonstrate how deeply entrenched its post-war democratic culture has become, in terms of its deep commitment not only to liberal values (so eloquently displayed by its open-door policies to refugees in 2015) but also to the need to build genuine consent that demands careful negotiation. Her description of Wales’ attempt to chart a different path from England makes me long for a Scottish case-study. Are we really witnessing the slow break-up of the United Kingdom (or perhaps Tom Nairn’s UKania), begun almost a century ago with the independence of Ireland? As for England attitudes to Bologna are, with hindsight, deeply revealing and disturbing, prefiguring the persistence of old dogmas and the advance of new illusions culminating in the insularity and arrogance (but also complacency and insecurity) of Brexit.

The value of Marquand’s book lies in its capacity to stimulate such thoughts. Not only has she provided analytical tools for understanding the Bologna Process better and the wider evolution of twenty-first-century higher education systems, but she has also suggested new ways of thinking about the ‘character’ (and future direction?) of our societies in a more general and fundamental sense.

Peter Scott  
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*London, UK*

## Map of Council of Europe and European Higher Education Area (EHEA) members



*Credit:* Made with Natural Earth. Free vector and raster map data [@naturalearthdata.com](https://www.naturalearthdata.com)

## **European Higher Education Area and the Members Committed to the Bologna Process**

Kazakhstan, while not a member of the Council of Europe, is a member of the EHEA and is committed to the Bologna Process.

Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe, but is a probationary member of the EHEA.

The European Commission is a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

The full members of the EHEA and BFUG include 48 countries (including each of the Belgian Flemish and the Belgian French Communities) and the European Commission. They are party to the European Cultural Convention and have declared their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. They are listed below, with the dates when they committed to the Bologna Process.

---

	<b>Year of Commitment to the Bologna Process</b>
Albania	2003
Andorra	2003
Armenia	2005
Austria	1999
Azerbaijan	2005
Belarus: Probationary member	2015
Belgium Flemish Community	1999
Belgium French Community	1999
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2003
Bulgaria	1999
Croatia	2001
Czech Republic	1999
Denmark	1999
Estonia	1999
European Commission: (Bologna Follow-Up Group)	1999
Finland	1999
France	1999
Georgia	2005

(Continued)

	<b>Year of Commitment to the Bologna Process</b>
Germany	1999
Greece	1999
Holy See	2003
Hungary	1999
Iceland	1999
Ireland	1999
Italy	1999
Kazakhstan	2010
Latvia	1999
Liechtenstein	1999
Lithuania	1999
Luxembourg	1999
Malta	1999
Moldova	2005
Montenegro	2003
Netherlands	1999
Norway	1999
Poland	1999
Portugal	1999
Russian Federation	2003
Romania	1999
Slovak Republic	1999
Slovenia	1999
Spain	1999
Sweden	1999
Switzerland	1999
Serbia	2003
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2003
Turkey	2001
Ukraine	2005
United Kingdom	1999

Source: [www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)>EHEA>Members

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This book has gone through a complex gestation period. It is not a typical academic book; I am not a typical academia. However, I have worked on the fringes of higher education for much of my adult life, first as a lecturer in the 1960s and then as an (economic) civil servant in the U.K. Government for quarter of a century, but with duties that involved commissioning and managing research from universities for much of that time. Meanwhile the dominant economic paradigm had changed; then methods of governance changed around me. I spent a Senior Simon Research Fellowship at Manchester University in the middle of the 1980s trying to understand what was happening. After publication of the book which I wrote there, *Autonomy and Change*,<sup>1</sup> I decided it was time to leave the civil service. I now regarded myself as a social scientist with some managerial experience rather than as an economist.

The University of Sheffield gave me the opportunity to set up a small research and development centre dealing with training policy. The Velvet Revolutions had just taken place; in my last couple of years as a civil servant, I had been intrigued to meet training policy colleagues from the former Communist countries. I spent much of the next 15 years working on development projects, first on education and training policy in Poland and then, as finance became available, on projects with Russian universities and Russian Ecological Committees in Siberia. My underlying motivation was to see how far it was possible to develop democratic ways of teaching, learning and managing in institutions in that turbulent society. I gave an account of the projects in another book, *Development Aid in Russia*.<sup>2</sup> At the end of my active work in Siberia, the Bologna Process was already in existence – even in Russia. I was curious as to what this might lead. My curiosity led ultimately to this book.

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<sup>1</sup>Marquand (1989).

<sup>2</sup>Marquand (2009).

## 2 *Democrats, Authoritarians and the Bologna Process*

I set out here what the objectives of the Bologna Process are, before attempting to analyse it, and its impact. The six objectives to which the ministers of 29 countries committed themselves in June 1999 were:

- the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and postgraduate;
- the establishment of a system of credits, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);
- the promotion of mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff;
- the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance; and
- the promotion of ‘the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regard to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research’, in order to achieve the other objectives.

There was also an objective to increase the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education and to draw it to the attention of countries around the world. In 2001, two further objectives were added. They were of two social dimensions: the promotion of access for disadvantaged groups and the development of lifelong learning.<sup>3</sup>

As I began work on this book,<sup>4</sup> I soon discovered that the Bologna Process had had a significant impact on higher education throughout the whole of Europe, not merely the countries of the European Union. The only country in which it was largely ignored was the United Kingdom (England and Wales) – I had scarcely heard it mentioned there, although the United Kingdom had been one of the original signatories of the Sorbonne Declaration which preceded the Bologna Declaration. But it had been differently received in the different countries. Only a comparative study could begin to lead to an understanding of how and why this was so. Three countries was the minimum which could lead to fruitful comparisons. Three countries was also the maximum which I, working alone and unfunded, could feasibly undertake. As the work

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<sup>3</sup>*The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999*, [https://www.eurashe.eu/library/bologna\\_1999\\_bologna-declaration-pdf](https://www.eurashe.eu/library/bologna_1999_bologna-declaration-pdf)

<sup>4</sup>The bulk of this book was drafted in 2014. When I came to revise it for publication in 2017, it seemed best to leave the majority of the text as it was already, and simply to add new material to expand it and bring it up to date.

progressed, it became clear that I was in fact working with four countries, not three. Wales differs significantly from England and deserves separate treatment.

To complement my obvious choices – Russia and the United Kingdom (England and Wales), I chose Germany. Like the United Kingdom, it had been one of the original signatories of the Sorbonne Declaration. Like Russia, it appeared to have been rather slow to implement some of the fundamental provisions of the process. It proved to be a serendipitous choice, providing a clear contrast with my other case studies.

As I learnt more about it, it became clear that the Bologna Process was a liberal-democratic phenomenon, initiated by a group of Western liberal democracies. It appeared to have succeeded, without any means of compulsion, in bringing about remarkable change not only in most of these countries but in a much larger group of countries, stretching as far as the Russian Far East. Its impact is now being felt worldwide. Why and how did this happen? How far is it perhaps illusory? How far is it succeeding in fulfilling some of the hopes and intentions of its initial members? Could case studies – my own and those of others – provide answers to these questions?

Another example of an international policy without any means of compulsion is provided by climate change. The New Climate Economy Report presented to the United Nations in September 2014 demonstrated that ‘countries at all levels of income now have the opportunity to build lasting economic growth at the same time as reducing the immense risks of climate change’.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there are annexes for individual countries, which demonstrate in detail the feasibility of carrying out the necessary structural transformation over the next 15 years. If the world, as we know it, is to survive, these are the minimum necessary changes. But in many countries, this requires a major revolution in the prevailing mindset and in governance habits. What both agreements, Bologna and the COP (climate change) agreement, have in common is that they are two out of many examples of what Anne-Marie Slaughter has termed *A New World Order*. What she documents there are examples of ‘executive transgovernmental networks’,<sup>6</sup> where civil servants and other representatives of governments from different countries, operating

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<sup>5</sup>Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (2014, p. 8).

<sup>6</sup>Slaughter (2004, p. 61).

#### 4 *Democrats, Authoritarians and the Bologna Process*

without sanctions, negotiate agreements which their ministers then discuss, modify if necessary, and then ratify.

What began as a curiosity-driven investigation of the Bologna Process turned out to provide a window into the varying paths being followed by many societies today. How far can aspects of the Bologna experience indicate a way for some of them to change course? Can higher education have a major part to play in promoting such changes? And it goes without saying that its contribution to technological advance is immensely important. So can the Bologna Process help to provide the flexibility which higher education must have if it is to make these contributions?

My methods in each case study in this book are those of contemporary history, that is, to assemble background information, both historical and current, and then to complement it with unstructured interviews. I do not pretend to a rigorous methodology, but rather to provide a broad comparative picture of a relatively uncharted terrain. After the case studies, I step back and consider what lessons can be drawn.

When it comes to drawing the lessons, I have tried to make explicit the assumptions which underlie the methods used. When I first started to write this book, I found it helpful to follow Christopher Hood in using Mary Douglas' cultural theory, further developed by Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, as an organising framework. It appeared to have the advantages of flexibility, both in terms of the types of phenomena which can be classified and of the different levels of organisation to which it can be applied. It avoided the pitfall, so common in recent years, of assuming that the 'New Public Management' is monolithic, determinate or inevitable. But as work progressed, I realised that this framework was not necessarily sufficient to handle some recent developments and challenges.

The world in 1999, when the Bologna Agreement was first signed, was very different from the world in 2017. In 1999, liberal democracy still appeared to be in the ascendant. By 2017, many apparently stable liberal democracies were trying to combat forms of populism. In other countries, where the veneer of democracy had never been more than skin deep, authoritarianism was in the ascendant. So further discussion was needed of the nature and growth of populism and authoritarianism and their threat to the fulfilment of the Bologna objectives.

However, a brief explanation of cultural theory is still appropriate. Grid-group cultural theory was first developed by Mary Douglas<sup>7</sup> and

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<sup>7</sup>Douglas (1982).

developed particularly by Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky<sup>8</sup> and used specifically in the context of public management by Christopher Hood.<sup>9</sup> In what follows, I shall draw particularly on Hood's analysis.

In 'Cultural Bias', Mary Douglas sought a method of classification of cultures sufficiently commodious to accommodate the wide range of societies, from North America to Africa to New Guinea, which anthropologists had observed, yet sufficiently flexible to inform description of their wide variety of characteristics. Rather than the range of one-dimensional classifications which her colleagues had used, she found that a two-by-two classification, based on 'grid' and 'group', allowed meaningful comparison across the full range of societies. Mary Douglas 'argues that the variability of an individual's involvement in social life can be adequately captured by two dimensions of sociality: group and grid. *Group* refers to the extent to which an individual is incorporated into bounded units. *Grid* denotes the degree to which an individual's life is circumscribed by externally imposed prescriptions. The more binding and extensive the scope of the prescriptions, the less of life that is open to individual negotiation'.<sup>10</sup>

For Hood, the 'individuals' are not necessarily individual people. They can be individual organisations within a broader public management context. (Moreover, different cultures can apply to different institutions within one nation state. This can make any broad generalisation about 'national' culture misleading.) But, whatever the level of analysis, for Hood, as for Mary Douglas, the two dimensions can be combined into a matrix, with 'grid' on the vertical axis and 'group' on the horizontal one. Hood then applies cultural theory to public management organisation.

Hood describes the four basic approaches: 'A "fatalist" approach to public management will arise in conditions where co-operation is rejected, distrust widespread, and apathy reigns – a state of affairs which will be familiar to many readers. A "hierarchist" approach will be reflected in a structure of organisations which are socially coherent and operate according to well-understood rules of procedure. "Egalitarian" forms of organisation are socially distinct from the world outside but the rules of the game are constantly "in play", giving rise to

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<sup>8</sup>Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky (1990).

<sup>9</sup>Hood (2000).

<sup>10</sup>Thompson et al. (1990, p. 5), citing Douglas (1982, 190–92, 201–203).

continuous debate about how individual cases or issues are to be handled. An “individualist” approach to public management, on the other hand, involves antipathy to collectivism and a preference for handling every transaction by trading or negotiation rather than by pre-set rules’.<sup>11</sup>

None of these approaches is exclusive; extreme adherence to any one of them tends to carry the seeds of its own decay. In each case – except ‘fatalism’, where trust is already low – collapse is associated with a decline in trust. For hierarchical systems, the weakness is likely to lie in misplaced trust in authority and expertise; ‘a large edifice comes to be built on shaky foundations’. For individualistic systems, the weakness lies in a tendency to put individual before collective benefit, turning public interest activities into private transactions, with the temptation for individuals to pursue private rent-seeking, even to the point of corruption. The trust in the effectiveness of the market is broken. For egalitarian systems, the weakness lies in unwillingness to accept higher authority to break deadlocks. ‘Debate cannot be closed, feuding and factionalism [go] unchecked, and the organization collapses amid a welter of mutual recrimination’. Trust in colleagues is broken and there is no acceptable system of appeal. For fatalistic systems, there is an unwillingness to plan ahead or to take drastic measures when calamity arises. Even in extreme circumstances, there may be ‘inaction or inability to change course’.<sup>12</sup> There is in any case little trust except in immediate family and friends.<sup>13</sup> In each type of system, the attempted remedy tends to be more of the same, leading towards disaster and complete collapse.

There are indicators of changes in trust. The World Values Survey and the European Values Survey were both first conducted in 1981. Many studies have drawn upon them to document changes in trust. For example, Richard Layard could write in 2005 that ‘unhappily, over the last 40 years, levels of trust have fallen drastically in Britain and America, although not in Continental Europe. In the United States and Britain today the percentage of adults who think that most people can be trusted is half of that in the 1950s’.<sup>14</sup> In 2009, Richard Wilkinson

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<sup>11</sup>Hood (2000, pp. 9–10).

<sup>12</sup>Hood (2000, p. 28).

<sup>13</sup>For an extended discussion of the operation of trust in different societies and at different times, see Hosking (2014).

<sup>14</sup>Layard (2005, p. 226). Layard used other sources to take the comparison back to the 1950s.

and Kate Pickett showed that ‘levels of trust between members of the public are lower in countries [...] where income differences are larger. These relationships are strong enough that we can be confident that they are not due to chance’.<sup>15</sup> And Danny Dorling has shown that the share of the top 1% in income terms is higher in the United States and Britain than in France, Germany, Sweden or the Netherlands, and rising faster.<sup>16</sup> (Note the United States and Britain have greater reliance on impersonal market measures than those in continental Europe.)

An approach to higher education itself through cultural theory has been followed by two of Huisman’s collaborators in his 2009 book.<sup>17</sup> One of these is found in the chapter on Austria.<sup>18</sup>

The other is Hood, who in his Foreword to the book distinguishes between societies where ‘higher education institutions [are] [...] seen as organs of the state or the “establishment”’ – ‘hierarchist’ systems, and societies where ‘higher education institutions aspire to, and may even achieve, a significant degree of autonomy as self-governing societies’. Such societies are in some respects ‘egalitarian’. ‘In still other social settings, higher education institutions can be seen essentially as firms in a market for the production of “knowledge services”’. Such societies are ‘individualistic’. Finally, in some circumstances, ‘higher education institutions can be understood as “organized anarchies”’. Goals are problematic, links between cause and effect are unclear, and ‘decision-making involves an ever-changing cast of characters’. Such a model, he comments, is commonly observable in higher education institutions. It is perhaps a form of ‘fatalism’.<sup>19</sup>

These attempts suggest that it might be useful to try to see how far these cultural categories, together with recognition of the importance of trust, help to explain the different responses to the Bologna Process in the four national case studies and the international process itself?

But before doing so, we must look briefly at another criterion which might be proposed for distinguishing between the different case studies. The growth of New Public Management practices (NPM) over the last 30 years or so has undoubtedly been remarkable, but there is ambiguity about what such practices include and what they entail. At a minimum, they entail the use of new information technologies to store and analyse

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<sup>15</sup>Wilkinson and Pickett (2009, p. 52 and Figure 4.1).

<sup>16</sup>Dorling (2014, p. 19 and Figure 1.2).

<sup>17</sup>Hood (2009).

<sup>18</sup>Meister-Scheytt and Scott (2009, pp. 52–68).

<sup>19</sup>Hood (2009, pp. xxv–xxvi).

data. But there is room for almost infinite variation in the way in which such data is collected, analysed and, above all, used. Labelled variously as ‘modernization reforms’ and ‘new public accountability agendas’,<sup>20</sup> some aspects of NPM have pervaded public management in most, probably all, of the countries within the EHEA. Paradeise distinguishes three different principles, all of which are found under the banner of NPM. First, it is used at individual universities, to carry out various management functions. Second, it is used by public authorities to set central incentives, to measure universities’ performance against these and to allocate funding accordingly. Third, it finds use in linking departments, universities and public authorities in a single chain.<sup>21</sup>

She contrasts the use of NPM with the use of Network Governance (NG), ‘where horizontally organized networks of actors rather than hierarchically organized public bureaucracies formulate, administer and implement public policies’.<sup>22</sup> The case study chapters in Huisman’s book describe a rich range of different NPM and NG practices. And Onora O’Neill has argued that ‘currently fashionable methods of accountability’ – namely, versions of NPM – ‘damage rather than repair trust. If we want greater accountability without damaging professional performance, we need *intelligent accountability*. [...] Intelligent accountability, I suspect, requires more attention to good governance and fewer fantasies about total control’.<sup>23</sup>

Undoubtedly, in different countries NPM has proceeded at different speeds and to different extents. Indeed, as Gornitzka and Maassen point out, even ‘despite certain similarities in policy making traditions and in underlying cultural, institutional and socioeconomic factors in specific clusters of countries in Europe, there are important differences between these countries in reform instrumentation’.<sup>24</sup>

In its most basic form, the NPM is simply a toolbox, making use of the opportunities offered by information technology which allow new quantitative measurements, whether cardinal, ordinal or nominal, to be used to amass and interpret unprecedented amounts of data. It is undeniable that this minimal use of NPM is essential, if large (and growing) numbers of institutions and students are to be managed fairly and

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<sup>20</sup>Mattei (2014, p. 10).

<sup>21</sup>Paraphrased from Paradeise (2012, p. 583).

<sup>22</sup>Paradeise et al. (2009, pp. 89–90) [*Italics in the original.*].

<sup>23</sup>O’Neill (2002, pp. 57–58).

<sup>24</sup>Mattei (2014).

effectively. So the question is not whether NPM itself is good or bad, but *how* it is used.

Quality assurance, in its various forms, is clearly linked to the various uses of NPM and NG. It too varies in style according to the respective weights given to them. The Bologna Process centrally has had respect for the diversity of quality assurance approaches, but ‘many governments have used the Bologna Process as an excuse for bringing about policy changes that go beyond the European dimension’.<sup>25</sup> Thus, what distinguishes different systems is partly the nodes at which data is collected and used, but also, crucially, the *ways* in which it is used, and by *whom*. There is also the important question as to how far other, perhaps older, methods of governance are used to complement or to supplant it. These are cultural questions, for which cultural theory may offer appropriate classifications and distinctions. In each of the national case studies in Chapters 4–7, the Bologna Process has been grafted on to complex, long-established systems of higher education, so we need to characterise the pre-existing systems as well as the Bologna responses.

But the main challenge to the liberal-democratic consensus underlying the initial adoption of the Bologna Process comes from the rise of populism and authoritarianism.<sup>26</sup> How do these relate to the categories of cultural theory and, indeed, to each other?

The Oxford Dictionary defines the adjective ‘authoritarian’ as ‘favouring or enforcing strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom’. And if an essential component of democracy is pluralism, democracy implies a substantial measure of personal freedom. Authoritarian regimes are quintessentially anti-democratic. In *Authoritarianism Goes Global*, the editors distinguish the period from 1990 to 2005 from subsequent years. In the earlier period, there was ‘a significant expansion in the number of countries that had established democratically accountable systems’, but from the mid-2000s onwards, ‘authoritarian schemes that had regained their footing reacted to democratic forces pushing for governance systems that were more accountable and responsive – and less corrupt’.<sup>27</sup>

Populism is different. Jan-Werner Mueller, in *What Is Populism?* explains that ‘populists are always *antipluralist*. Populists claim that

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<sup>25</sup>Sursock (2012, p. 257).

<sup>26</sup>In this section, I draw heavily on Mueller (2016), and on Diamond, Plattner and Walker (2016).

<sup>27</sup>Diamond et al. (2016, p. 3).

they, and they alone, represent the people ... Populists do not claim “We are the 99 percent.” What they imply instead is “We are the 100 percent.” ... Populism is always *a form of identity politics* ... What follows from this understanding of populism as an exclusionary form of identity politics is that populism tends to pose a danger to democracy. For democracy requires pluralism’.<sup>28</sup> He points to a similarity between populism and technocracy, since for technocrats there is only one correct policy solution. ‘For neither technocrats nor populists is there any need for democratic debate. In a sense, both are curiously apolitical’.<sup>29</sup> Populists in power tend to become authoritarian, but authoritarian regimes are not necessarily populist.

The Bologna Process, renamed the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) in 2010, certainly pushes for higher education systems that are accountable, responsive and uncorrupt. How has it fared in those countries where populists are in power and hence tending to authoritarian behaviour, as well as in countries where the regime is undoubtedly authoritarian?

This book began, I thought, as an inquiry into a relatively circumscribed aspect of society. It gradually became clear that it was rather more than this. The Bologna Process turned out to be a window through which to view the very different manners of operation of four diverse nations under the umbrella of a rather successful international institution, within a worldwide setting which appeared stable at first but has become increasingly tumultuous during the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Thus, it starts by looking, in Chapter 2, at some of the psychological and philosophical foundations which underpin the Bologna Process. Far from being peripheral to the main argument of the book, Chapter 2 demonstrates the depth of the connection between some of the Bologna objectives and democratic modes of behaviour. Its arguments are particularly important now that many higher education institutions are facing populist or authoritarian pressures (see Chapters 5, 6, 8). It begins by describing briefly some of what neuroscience and psychology tell us about the learning process. This leads into a discussion of the social nature of learning, the role of cooperation – and their relationship to innovation. A closely related theme is that of the relationship of the learning process to the habit of debate and hence to the concept of

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<sup>28</sup>Mueller (2016, p. 3).

<sup>29</sup>Mueller (2016, p. 96).

democracy in education. It argues that cooperative activity – such as constructive debate – builds trust. Learning is thus not just an individual good; many of the benefits accrue to society as a whole, as ‘public goods’. There have been some attempts to measure these. Finally, the chapter returns to the Bologna Process and the relationship between staff and students which lies at the core of the learning process.

Chapter 3 describes the Bologna Process itself – what it is, how it developed and how it operates. It goes into the history and some of the concepts underlying the Bologna Process. It complements Chapter 2 in explaining in what concrete sense the Bologna Process is a ‘liberal-democratic’ project with ‘social-democratic’ tinges.

In order to illumine different approaches to the Bologna Process – the problems which it solves, the problems which it raises and the problems which it ignores – Chapters 4–7 provide case studies in four very different countries or nations. Each chapter has the same structure – a brief historical survey leading up to a description of the condition of higher education at the time of entry into the Bologna Process, followed by an account of what has happened since, with examples drawn from my visits and interviews. Finally, there is an assessment of the current position in respect of the Bologna Process. Chapter 4 discusses Germany; Chapter 5 discusses Russia and Chapter 6 discusses the United Kingdom (England and Wales), taken together until 1999. The later part of the chapter is concerned with England only. 1999 was not only the year of the Bologna Agreement, but also the year of devolution of powers to a new Welsh Assembly, including responsibility for higher education. Wales since 1999 is the subject of Chapter 7.

In the final Chapter 8, conclusions are drawn from all the preceding chapters, taken separately and together. Questions of populism and accountability are considered as the chapter attempts to situate the Bologna Process – now the EHEA – in the world of 2017.

I have tried to produce a book of relevance not only to the higher education community, nor only to those interested in modes of public administration, but also for the more general reader, concerned to understand the directions which our modern societies are taking. I hope that what I have done can stand by itself.