

Changing Subjects of Education in the Bologna Process. From Learning for Citizenship to Learning as Citizenship

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Abstract: A recurring theme in the Bologna Process *communiqués* is the notion of citizenship. The occurrence of citizenship might appear strange in a series of documents which profess to be only about the homogenisation of degrees; there are roughly two perspectives which could explain this. The political scientists who notice an increasing tendency of 'governing through pedagogy', and the educationalists who detect how the political language is encroaching upon the educational realm. In both cases we have a usurping of a territory: either educational language entering the political realm, or the political entering the educational realm. However, we will show in this article that the ways in which citizenship is constructed in the BP *communiqués* cannot be explained by neither approach. This article presents the results of a textual analysis of the *communiqués* informed by Mindus' framework on distinguishing the different types of citizenship behind the misleading terms. Our analysis traces how citizenship changes its meaning and scope through the years, and this will help us show that citizenship is part of a process of legitimation. In the BP 'citizenship' in itself is not an issue, but rather an external reference point that was meant for re-enforcing why Europe needs the BP at all.

Key-words: Bologna Process, citizenship, Europe of Knowledge, social citizenship, educational policy

Introduction

Nowadays there is an increasing interest in constructing citizenship through education (Kymlicka 1996). In Europe education for citizenship has been traditionally a matter of content in the curriculum, usually placed in secondary education [ref here]. Yet a recent development in the 'education as citizenship' trend is the claim that citizenship should be developed also through higher education. One of the classical places where one can find this claim is in the Bologna Process (BP) *communiqués*. In the very first *communiqué* issued in 1999 the BP presents its initial aim - the building of an European Higher Education Area - as meant to 'consolidate and enrich the European citizenship' (Bologna Declaration 1999). This claim is puzzling to say the least because the curriculum in higher education differs radically from faculty to faculty. How is one to promote citizenship in a faculty of medicine or engineering? Did the BP intend require mandatory courses of citizenship education in all European universities? And how can one make citizens out of students who are usually adults and already legally citizens?

The Bologna claim on promoting and constructing citizenship is not accidental; it appears all over the *communiqués* issued from 1999 until the present day. Yet Bologna never claimed that it can influence the curriculum of different universities, it merely restricts itself to the formal process of equivalent degrees. Hence the interesting question arises for us: how can one promote (European) citizenship through merely formal changes in higher education? What kind of

citizenship could be constructed in a purely formal way, without touching the curriculum? We need to analyse the Bologna claim for citizenship in a larger context in order to understand what exactly is this citizenship that will be achieved through mobility of students.

The debate on constructing citizenship through education has been traditionally analysed from at least two different perspectives: the political scientist's and the educational one. These approaches do not communicate with each other, as they are part of different fields, though they seem to share similar concerns. For the political scientists the main problem is the increasing pedagogisation of the political realm, in other words the educational language which creeps in political matters. Discussions about the 'pedagogical state' (Kaplan 2006) and 'governing through pedagogy' (Pykett 2010, 617) are starting to become an important point of attention for political scientists. These discussions focus on the ways in which different political actors - both state-bound and independent - are trying to 'shape, care for and enable liberal citizens' by employing the language of pedagogy (Pykett 2010, 617). The main problem with the educational language would be how it removes agency from citizens who need to be 'educated' into citizenship (Biesta 2009).

On the other hand, educational researchers complain about the increasing encroaching of the political language in the territory of education. For example Depaepe and Smeyers describe the ongoing trend to translate social problems into learning problems; this trend of 'educationalising' the social and political issues shifts the blame, hence the solution, into the courtyard of education, away from the policy maker's responsibility. (Depaepe and Smeyers 2008, 379) A direct consequence of this move would be that education becomes too precious to be left in the hands of educationalists. If education is construed as the mainstream way of promoting citizenship, than policy makers need to design education from top to bottom, to insure that education achieves its goal (Fejes 2008).

In this article we would like to propose a different approach to the issue of pedagogisation of citizenship through a philosophical analysis of the normative language of the BP *communiqués*. We start from the observation that the terms surrounding citizenship in the BP *communiqués* are always normative: citizenship is not already constructed through education, rather it 'should be'. We will therefore analyse the claims on citizenship which occur in the BP by drawing both from the political science and educational scholarships, but we will keep an overarching philosophical perspective on the normative language. We hope that this new perspective will bring to light new distinctions that have not been noticed before by classical scholarship.

1a. The Bologna Process

The Bologna Process (BP) is a voluntary intergovernmental policy that aims to standardise study programmes and degrees (Horstschräer and Sprietsma 2010, 22) in order to facilitate mobility of students and teaching staff. This policy is developed and maintained through regular ministerial meetings - usually scheduled every two years (Reinalda and Kulesza 2005, 9). The initial goal of the process was to create a European Area of Higher Education by 2010 and now, once the

EHEA has been created, to further expand this area. The EHEA is comprised of 46 European countries, not all of them members of the EU.¹

The actual domain affected by the BP is not the curriculum, but rather the formal aspects of higher education that could pose an obstacle for mobility such as diplomas and credits. Thus the BP tries to enable 'the transition to the three cycle system, the use of ECTS credits, the issuing of Diploma Supplements, the enhancement of quality assurance and the implementation of qualifications frameworks, including the definition and evaluation of learning outcomes' (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, 1). The BP uses the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as the main way to implement its policies. OMC is an intergovernmental method of so-called soft law in which the states agree on a line of action and then implement it under the surveillance of the Commission, without any sanctions in case of failure; it is a steering mechanism and not a legislating one. The main force of OMC is the 'peer pressure' that is generated by other member states.²

The most visible aspect of the BP are its ministerial *communiqués* which are issued every two or three years and prepared in advance by the two secretariats of the BP: the secretariat of the current organising country and the secretariat of the previous organiser. There is a certain continuity of ideas throughout the *communiqués*, visible also in several phrases which occur almost identical throughout the *communiqués*. Once the *communiqués* are written, these become the site of negotiations among the signatory countries, words are added or removed as a result of these discussions. In the end the *communiqués* are the collective work of many authors, with the intent of expressing the prevailing point of view among the signatory countries concerning higher education. In this respect the documents are a valuable source to be studied, because there we encounter the converging point of compromise as a consensus, the lowest common denominator on which most politicians agree.

What does the Bologna Process have to do with constructing citizens? The first thing that strikes any reader is that the BP does not aim to promote national citizenship, but a kind of European citizenship which is hard to be defined because it is not EU citizenship. In later *communiqués* we find out it is all about citizenship in the Europe of Knowledge, a policy area of the EU. Hence the most obvious question arises: what kind of citizenship is the citizenship in a Europe of Knowledge? Is it political, civic, social or any other type? In order to begin answering this question, we must understand first what is 'Europe' doing in the BP discourse.

1b. The meaning of 'Europe' in the BP

The Bologna Process promotes itself through a discourse of the 'Europeanisation' of education where 'Europe' is understood roughly as the member countries of the European Council. A pervasive question arises in the BP scholarship: why did the BP, as a supra-national initiative, need to use the European dimension? Especially, why did the BP use the EU discourse when it started as an initiative positioned explicitly outside the EU institutions? Several answers have been offered by legal and political science scholars.

¹ The word 'Europe' in the EHEA does not designate the continent Europe, nor the EU. The EHEA is roughly coincidental with the Council of Europe since the criterion for inclusion in the Bologna Process is the previous signing of the European Cultural Convention and all members of the Council of Europe have signed it.

² http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm

Sacha Garben was among the first scholars to tackle this question from a legal perspective. According to Garben, the BP tried to avoid the EU encroaching on the territory of education at all costs. Garben argues that, if the members of the BP had wanted a European dimension, they could have initiated the BP inside the EU legal structures. Yet their explicit avoidance of the EU institutions while also keeping the EU discourse points to an unusual choice which uses 'Europe' as a 'smokescreen' for avoiding the 'growing influence on higher education by the Community.' (Garben 2010, 210)

On the other hand, from an educational policy perspective, Ruth Keeling thinks that the EU discourse was adopted because it granted prestige and other tangible benefits to the BP: 'By adopting and contributing to this hybridised research-Bologna policy discourse, universities are able to redefine their missions positively, representing themselves as the 'powerhouses' of the new Europe.' (Keeling 2006, 214) This 'Europeanised' discourse also led to the Commission sponsoring and officially endorsing the BP meetings.

We tend to agree with Keeling's assessment that for the BP it was a matter of gaining prestige by using the European lingo and placing their initiative in a larger European context. We only have to think about the legitimacy crisis of the universities which happened after the nation-state ceased to be the main 'social glue' holding together the community. According to Bill Readings, previously there used to be an unwritten contract between the state and the university in which the state sponsored the university in return for the production of 'national subjects' unified under the same concept of culture (Readings 1996, 46). Yet at some point in the 20th century this contract state-university was silently dropped. Readings described how the legitimacy crisis of the universities was solved by adopting the empty word of 'excellence' thus replacing the idea of promoting national culture through the universities (Readings 1996, 21). The BP appeared after Bill Readings wrote his seminal book and we can read this as a new development in the movement to externally legitimise the universities. If excellence is an empty word, then the universities needed something bigger than the state to swear allegiance to. This movement is best illustrated by the Sorbonne declaration.

The Sorbonne declaration (1998) was issued by the four ministers of education from France, Germany, Italy and the UK, and is now regarded by most authors as the inciting incident for the BP. Sorbonne is the pre-history of Bologna as the first BP *communiqué* issued in 1999 refers to Sorbonne declaration as a legitimising document. The four ministers signing the *Sorbonne Declaration* in Paris first agreed to enhance interstate mobility among the students of their respective universities and then called for the creation of a European Higher Education Area. 'Europe' appears here as part of the policy-area 'Europe of Knowledge' and it is already giving a new purpose to the universities which are entrusted with the mission to 'strengthen and build upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent.' (Sorbonne Declaration 1998) Although the oldest functioning institutions in Europe [source], the universities never before took it as their mission to construct Europe. Now, in 1998, two year after Reading's book, we can see how 'Europe' starts to replace the nation-state as the main legitimising narrative.

1c. The collective writing of the BP *communiqués*

A textual analysis of the normative language in the BP *communiqués* presupposes answering first the question of authorship. Who is writing the BP *communiqués*? We know for certain who signed the *communiqués*: the ministers of education of the member countries. Yet the actual

writing, drafting and negotiations occurred behind closed curtains. At the first meeting in 1999 the ministers gathered in a ‘little chamber immediately before the signing to discuss the last controversial questions, before entering the former church where the official signing-ceremony took place’ (Feldbauer 2008, 96). This procedure changed afterwards as a follow-up structure of workshops and meetings was established in order to discuss the past *communiqués* and foreshadow the future ones (Feldbauer 2008, 101). Increasingly the texts of the *communiqués* were established by teams of experts representing the ministers of education, whereas the ministers signed something they had not been actively involved in. Therefore we cannot expect the same coherence of vision from the BP authors as we do from a policy document written by one agency. Yet it is also interesting to notice that the writing teams did not choose to issue exactly the same *communiqué* every two years. Something needed to be changed with each *communiqué* and these changes were the sites of multiple negotiations. It is probable that the changes between *communiqués* should say more than what remained the same.

Because writing the *communiqués* was a continuous process of negotiations, it is easy to understand why there are no clear definitions of crucial issues such as citizenship or education. These controversial issues could not have been defined directly by a supra-national agreement which had no business in offering normative definitions of what it means to be a European citizen or what are universities for. But the BP had the right to a normative language in one area alone: its own purpose. In defining the EHEA as the target of the entire BP, the *communiqués* were able to introduce a normative language which presupposed other normative understandings of citizenship, education, mobility, etc.

The specific nature of ‘patchwork writing’ involved in the BP raises specific problems: what is kept between *communiqués*, what is discarded, what is taken from other sources, what is truly original? Therefore task of textual analysis of the BP *communiqués* must focus on at least two issues: on one hand to not attribute to the BP vision what they borrowed from other organisation’s and institution’s *communiqués* (such as the OECD, UNESCO, or the EU Commission) almost verbatim; the other task involves reading between the lines the parts where the BP defines its mission and purpose in order to find the unique ‘Bologna vision’. We do not want to see what the BP borrows from others, but rather to understand what they are bringing new into the policy arena. We think that this genuine voice can be found in the places where the text becomes normative in trying to explain why a Bologna Process was needed. But who needs to hear this justification?

This justification for the BP is addressed to a general public, it is written by politicians which do not represent their parties in the negotiation, but their countries. But the emerging voice in the BP *communiqués* is the voice of ‘Europe’, not that of the nation states. Regardless whether any specific country has particular reasons to sustain and promote its HE institutions, at the European level specific European reasons had to be found, or else the BP would have been impossible to justify. The outcome of the *communiqués* is the political vision of Europe regarding HE, its purpose and its goals. Hence it is relevant to look at who is constructed as the subject of education in the BP *communiqués* and for what is the purpose of HE in European context because the BP claims to be about European education. Who exactly is the ‘European’ subject of education in the Bologna vision?

2. Finding the subject of education in the BP documents

Who is the subject of education in the BP documents? From a classical, national perspective, the subjects of education are easily defined as the students. But the BP proposes an European perspective, hence it is interesting to see whether they keep the students as the main beneficiaries of the BP reforms, or whether someone else becomes the subject of education. In order to trace the intended subject of European higher education, we analysed the text of the BP *communiqués* looking for the phrases where the main goals of the BP were defined, and thus searching for the subjects on which those goals were predicated. We found three major periods outlining three different subjects of education.

The first period stems from 1998 to 2003 when four *communiqués* were issued: Sorbonne, Bologna, Prague and Berlin. In the Sorbonne declaration (1998) issued by the four ministers of education from France, Germany, Italy and the UK, and now regarded by most authors as the inciting incident for the BP, the subjects of education are the students. The stated intention of the Sorbonne agreement is to facilitate the free movement of students between universities and degrees. The benefits of mobility are explained from two perspectives: for the students it is to become better professionals; for Europe is to have 'continuously improved and updated education for its citizens' (Sorbonne Declaration 1998). Thus citizenship is introduced already at the end of the Sorbonne declaration but not as a goal in itself; Europe already has its citizens, the purpose is to make them more educated. But there is still room for the individual goals of the students - presumed to be professional goals - alongside the goals of Europe itself.

In 1999 the Bologna Declaration consistently refers to the subject of education as 'citizens'. The word 'students' is used only when the authors need to distinguish the types of mobility as separate from the professor's mobility. The subject of education is the 'European citizen' while the main purpose of the BP is 'the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability' (Bologna Declaration 1999). The distinction between students and citizens which still existed in the Sorbonne declaration has collapsed. This trend continued in the Prague *communiqué* (2001): when speaking of the larger aims of the BP, the subjects of the BP we consistently named the citizens: 'that citizens can effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills' (Prague Communiqué 2001); but when making distinctions inside the educational community between different roles and the corresponding mobilities, then students, professors and researchers appeared as roles. In Berlin (2003) the same trend continues unquestioned, the BP is constructed in order 'to improve opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education.' (Berlin Communiqué 2003, 6) whereas the students appear as temporary roles during this whole process.

The second period starts in 2005 with the Bergen *communiqué*, when the subject of education suddenly changes: the students come centre-stage and citizens fade away as learning subjects. The students are the subjects of education, but there is no space left for them to define their own goals out of education; whether they want it or not, education will make them good employees and also good citizens in the future: 'The European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, where each level has the function of preparing the student for the labour market, for further competence building and for active citizenship.' (Bergen Communiqué 2005, 4) Citizenship appears in a nexus with labour market and competencies. The London communiqué in 2007 continues the same trend, thus the purposes of the BP are: 'preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society; preparing students for their future

careers and enabling their personal development;' (London Communiqué 2007, 1–2) Career and citizenship go hand in hand and are seen as the main desirable goals; students continue to be the subjects of education but with no agency to declare their own goals. The same discourse continues in the Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve *communiqué* in 2009: 'Student-centred learning and mobility will help students develop the competences they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens.' (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009, 1) In 2010, with the Budapest-Vienna *communiqué*, a slight change occurs - the subjects of education are construed as 'learners' instead of 'students' but the aims remain the same: 'providing the learners with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and competences furthering their careers and lives as democratic citizens as well as their personal development.' (Budapest-Vienna Declaration 2010)

The third period which continues until today removes the students as subjects of education and replaces them with impersonal terms whose references are hard to grasp. In 2012 the subjects of education are some undefined 'all' which will become later graduates: 'We will pursue the following goals: to provide quality higher education for all, to enhance graduates' employability and to strengthen mobility as a means for better learning.' (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, 1) For the first time in the whole declaration series there is no mention of citizenship in the entire document. This 'all' is there to underline that education is for all and that anyone can start learning again at any age, through life-learning programmes. It is suggested that one never ceases to be a student because there is always something more to learn, some newer competences to acquire. In the latest *communiqué* issued in 2015 in Yerevan, the subject of education is so impersonal that it does not even receive a pronoun, it is talked about but not mentioned: 'higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights; and where educational opportunities provide the competences and skills required for European citizenship, innovation and employment.' (Yerevan Communiqué 2015, 1–2) Who is provided these competences and skills? Who will become the citizen? We are not told. It seems that European citizenship as an abstract goal which will be realised without the actual citizens. However the students reappear as the subjects of these reforms in all other parts of the document, but not in the goal statement. It is implied that students through mobility and graduates through employability will realise the Europe of Knowledge in the future.

From 1998 to 2003 the subject of education has been the (European) citizen whereas the student was just a temporary role taken by the citizen in order to become employable. Then from 2005 to 2010, the student became the main subject of education, but a subject without agency, as the main goal of the education was to construct the citizens of the Europe of Knowledge. Citizenship is no longer the assumed starting point, but a goal to strive for once the studies are over and employability is gained with the diploma. In the more recent *communiqués*, from 2012 until the present day, the subjects of the BP reforms are not mentioned specifically, they seem to coincide with everybody. Everyone needs to go through the roles of students or learners in order to become graduates and later, perhaps, citizens in the Europe of Knowledge, a Europe always deferred to a future yet to come. What kind of citizenship does Europe of Knowledge imply then? We will explore this issue in the next section.

3. The 'Bologna' notion of citizenship

Methodological concerns in exploring notions of citizenship

In our analysis of the Bologna *communiqués*, we used the framework developed by Patricia Mindus (2014) in which we looked for the opposite of the citizen in the BP documents. We used this model because a straightforward definition of citizenship is nowhere to be found in any of the BP documents, yet the ways in which citizenship emerges from the text seems to assume a particular view. In order to unveil this ‘Bologna notion of citizenship’ we looked in all the documents for the answer to the following question: ‘What is the opposite of a citizen?’ (Mindus 2014, 738)

Mindus reconstructs three models of how citizenship is addressed in different fields. By looking at how different scholars in different disciplines use the term, Mindus delimits three prevailing uses which correspond each to a field: law, political science and sociology. Thus, each field has a specific conception of the notion of ‘citizenship’ which is consistently used. For lawyers, the opposite of the citizen is the ‘individual who does not belong to a given legal order: For example, both aliens and stateless individuals.’ (Mindus 2014, 738–39) For political scientists, the opposite of the citizen is the ‘subject’ of the political order made by others, meaning the ‘passive or disenfranchised member of the community who does not participate in collective decision-making. Yet, he or she is subject to laws that others (citizens and/or their representatives) have chosen.’ (Mindus 2014, 738) Finally, for the sociologists, the opposite of the citizens is the marginalised person. The sociological conception, based on the work of Marshall, is a gradualist one, meaning that ‘there are intermediate positions in between full exclusion and full integration. This is why it makes sense to speak of ‘limited citizenship.’ (Mindus 2014, 739)

This model elucidates why, when different scholars use the same word - ‘citizenship’ - they may assume diverging perspectives; to uncover the assumptions we need to search for the opposite of the citizen. This methodological approach seems to be appropriate also when dealing with the Bologna Process because this is a soft law instrument meant to steer the higher education policies across Europe. But in doing so, the Bologna Process does not fully fall into neither category of discourse - it cannot be completely explained by law, political science nor sociology. Even politicians and experts who write policy documents may work with multiple models of citizenship, mixing discourses especially when the policy documents are so heavily negotiated between parties.

In the next pages we will try to elucidate which one(s) of these three meaning(s) of ‘citizenship’ the EU policy makers have in mind when redacting the BP policy. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to the opposite of the citizens as those who are foreigners or stateless, powerless subjects of the law, or the marginalised and oppressed.

Citizenship according to the Bologna Process: a chronological analysis

The term ‘citizen’ was present in almost all the BP *communiqués* with the exception of the 2012 Bucharest declaration. More importantly, citizenship was always present when stating the goals of the BP and when describing the subjects of education. Regardless whether these subjects were students, learners or ‘all’ - their educational path was conceived in relation to the goal of becoming a citizen in the Europe of Knowledge. Hence the question ‘What exactly is this

citizenship in the Europe of Knowledge?’ becomes most pressing if we want to understand what BP is standing for exactly. Therefore in this section we shall explore how the Bologna notion of citizenship unfolds in the ministerial *communiqués*. This non-specific notion of citizenship is already circumscribed from the first Bologna declaration to a ‘European citizenship’ which it is not to be confused with the EU citizenship, because not all Bologna members were also EU countries. Therefore we want to find out what ‘European citizenship’ means in the Bologna vision and what exactly is the role of this special type of citizenship in higher education policy.

In the Bologna declaration of 1999, the notion of ‘European citizenship’ appears when the authors try to explain why there is a need for a Europe of Knowledge:

‘A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.’ (Bologna Declaration 1999)

There seems to be a connection implied between Europe of Knowledge, which needs Higher education in order to cultivate certain competences, and European citizenship which needs the Europe of Knowledge by its side, as ‘indispensable’. In other words, European citizens need higher education, Europe needs its universities.

The ‘European citizenship’ is construed as social citizenship because the threats which seem to worry most the authors are unemployment and lack of mobility. Thus the purpose of the EHEA is to remove these threats, ‘to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system’ (Bologna Declaration 1999) In Prague 2001, the same social understanding of citizenship occurs, as the citizens need the EHEA to ‘effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills’ (Prague Communiqué 2001) in order to counter the threat of unemployment.

In the Berlin *communiqué* (2003) something happens to citizenship, it becomes a potential state to be achieved by the students. Studying abroad is needed ‘so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability.’ (Berlin Communiqué 2003, 6) This is again a social reading of citizenship, because, as the legal and political models are binary, one does not have a potential to become a citizen, this potentiality makes sense only in the sociological model which was gradualist. Most European students are already full legal citizens of their own countries when they start to study, and most of them can vote and act in the political arena, but it appears that they are not yet citizens of the Europe of Knowledge. They must earn their way up to this special type of citizenship by studying abroad, learning foreign languages, and becoming employable. Their passport for the Europe of Knowledge will be their graduation diploma.

In 2005, in the Bergen *Communiqué*, the notion of ‘active citizenship’ appears for the first time. It occurs again in the context of defining what EHEA stands for: ‘The European Higher Education Area is structured around three cycles, where each level has the function of preparing the student for the labour market, for further competence building and for active citizenship.’ (Bergen Communiqué 2005, 6) It is no coincidence that ‘active citizenship’ appears now in the BP *communiqué*, as this was a hot topic on the Commission’s agenda, with several white papers and studies issued previously in the same year. But if we were to compare the notions of ‘active citizenship’ between Bologna and the Commission, a striking difference

emerges. The Commission uses a political notion in its *communiqués*, defined as ‘participation in political life, civil society, community life and the values needed for active citizenship (recognition of the importance of human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding)’ (Hoskins 2006, 11) But in the BP *communiqué* from the same year, active citizenship is understood as mainly a way of preparing for employability. ‘Active’ here means active on the job market, with no political connotations, hence we find again a social reading of citizenship.

The BP never professes a clear definition of the citizenship in a Europe of Knowledge, nor of the ‘active citizenship’, but these can be inferred from the connections which are made with other areas. For example in the 2007 London *communiqué*, active citizenship is linked to democracy, for the first time a hint at the political dimension of citizenship occurs: ‘Those purposes [of the EHEA] include: preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society; preparing students for their future careers and enabling their personal development;’ (London Communiqué 2007, 1–2) Yet employability continues to be the main justification on why Europe needs higher education, it even receives its own sub-chapter in the declaration.

In 2009, in the Leuven *communiqué*, the threat of ageing population is a novel addition. The response to this threat must come from each citizen, everyone must maximise their potential: ‘Faced with the challenge of an ageing population Europe can only succeed in this endeavour if it maximises the talents and capacities of all its citizens and fully engages in lifelong learning as well as in widening participation in higher education.’ (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009, 1) Democracy re-appears in connection with active citizenship: ‘The aim is to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full range of purposes such as preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society’ (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009, 1). But in the same document the active citizenship appears connected with employability again: ‘Student-centred learning and mobility will help students develop the competences they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens.’ (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009, 1) Here the policy makers seem to hold two diverging ideas about ‘active citizenship’ at the same time: on the one hand is the prevailing political understanding, which implies participation in democratic processes, but on the other hand it seems to be a social reading because the focus is on empowering citizens to be employable all their lives. But since the political notion is never fully developed, whereas the employability gains more and more importance, it is our hypothesis that the democratic nuances introduced in the ‘active citizenship’ were just lip service. The 2010 *communiqué* repeats the same tropes as the previous one, without any new additions.

In 2012, in the Bucharest *communiqué*, the word ‘citizenship’ is never used, but we can see again that the employee status is the most desirable one, placing the unemployed in the role of the outcast again and again. The graduates have the double role of promoting both the GDP and the democracy: ‘We will support our institutions in the education of creative, innovative, critically thinking and responsible graduates needed for economic growth and the sustainable development of our democracies.’ (Bucharest Communiqué 2012, 1) We notice again the mix of the social with the political language and the unexplained causal nexus between a prosperous economy and the level of democracy.

The latest *communiqué* issued in 2015 in Yerevan outlines the ‘Bologna vision’ for 2020. As in the previous *communiqués*, again employability and political rights are mentioned in the same breath: ‘higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights; and where educational opportunities provide the competences and skills required for European citizenship, innovation and employment.’ (Yerevan Communiqué 2015, 1–2) Therefore, while a clearly social understanding of citizenship seems to trump all others, the political and legal terms keep reappearing in a mix that is hard to explain.

We conclude from this textual analysis that the BP promotes a very particular notion of social citizenship under the name of ‘active citizenship’. Until 2005 citizenship was about the citizenship in a Europe of Knowledge which was hard to define, as it was not a political nor a geographical entity. But since 2005, at the same time when the Commission which launches a discourse on ‘active citizenship’, the BP adopts this concept but gives it a peculiar twist: active citizenship is a type of social citizenship, focusing mostly on employability, whereas the political understanding lurks in the background. What are the reasons for this specific re-reading of citizenship as employability in the BP documents? In the next section we will propose several possible explanations for this.

4. Active citizenship as social citizenship

Any discussion on social citizenship must acknowledge the importance of Marshall’s contribution in defining and outlining this particular notion. Social citizenship in Marshall’s work is defined as ‘the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society.’ (Marshall 2009, 149) It is the newest type of citizenship, coming after the classical notions of political citizenship - ‘the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body.’ (Marshall 2009, 149)- and civil citizenship - composed of the rights which are ‘necessary for individual freedom - liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice.’ (Marshall 2009, 148)

One can notice that, while the civil and political forms of citizenship have a logically dichotomous structure - either one is a citizen, or one is a non-citizen - with a clear distinction between those which possess these rights and those who do not, the social citizenship is measured on a gradual scale; thus, one can be more socially integrated than another individual while both possess some degree of social citizenship, and in the same time both individuals enjoy a status that the immigrant or the homeless do not. Social citizenship is more vague and ambiguous because the standards of welfare or of ‘civilised life’ differ greatly from country to country, and to some aspect are culturally rooted. For Marshall, a significant feature of social citizenship was its being an ideal which can change according to each age: ‘societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed’ (Marshall 2009, 150). Hence it is very important who gets to formulate the ideal to which everyone will look up to in a given age.

If we analyse the language of the Bologna *communiqués* we notice at once the language of ideals, especially in the passages concerning the role of education in solving all the problems in society: 'Higher education should play a strong role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities and raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society.' (London Communiqué 2007, 5) The learners/students/citizens need to be empowered, helped, encouraged and so on to reach certain stages. All this apparatus of BP is put in motion so that people at the end have careers or at least are employable. Yet employability never appears alone as a goal, it is surrounded by other more abstract targets such as realising European citizenship or building the Europe of Knowledge; we could say that employability is hidden in a cloud of idealistic goals. In such a noble companionship, employability itself becomes an ideal to strive for. Bologna is not merely about getting a diploma which will lead to a job; the job in itself is posited as the European dream. In this context, defining active citizenship as employability implies the very redefining of the social citizenship as an ideal.

Active citizenship became a major topic in the EU discourse around 2005 when several white papers and communications of the EU Commission were issued. Active citizenship in the EU discourse is usually defined through several measurable indicators such as 'participation in political life, civil society, community life and the values needed for active citizenship (recognition of the importance of human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding)' (Hoskins 2006, 11) All these indicators strive to construct an ideal type of citizen who will engage in the local community, will vote, and will have political or social bottom-up initiatives. Some educational scholars argue that this portrait of the active citizen is still quite passive as it aims to preserve the status-quo, for example active citizenship is never about encouraging political dissent (Biesta 2009, 148). Nevertheless, the 'active citizen' in the EU vision is still someone very active - engaged in politics, social and civic movements - who does not reduce his or her civic engagement to mere employability.

Parallel to the BP discourse on the 'European dimension' of education, we also notice a converging discourse from the EU on the mission and role of higher education. According to Keeling, EU constructs higher education as 'purposeful education' (Keeling 2006, 209). The BP borrowed this idea of purposeful education from the EU discourse as shown by Keeling: 'A key message embedded in the Bologna objectives and the EU's research policy is that higher education leads somewhere — for the individual and for wider society.' (Keeling 2006, 209) But what kind of supra-national purposes could the members of different countries agree upon? In the case of BP the ministers agreed that education should be 'economically beneficial for both individuals and society' and, more specifically, this came to be translated in higher skills for the European labour-force: 'According to this discursive logic, higher education results in and corresponds to the 'up-skilling' of the workforce. In this depiction, knowledge is produced and then traded.' (Keeling 2006, 209)

Hence the idea that education is for employability was a common point of agreement between the BP and the EU in framing higher education. Employability was clearly important for EU in order to build its policy on Europe of Knowledge. But for the EU employability was never 'active citizenship' whereas the BP reduces 'active citizenship' almost exclusively to employability. This reduction of an active and political notion of citizenship to a passive quality of employability needs further explanation.

The BP constructs ‘European citizenship’ as ‘active citizenship’ understood as social citizenship whose maximal ideal is employability. The most puzzling term in this picture is the ‘European dimension’. What has ‘Europe’ to do with employability? We have already seen that the European dimension in the BP can be explained either as a ‘smokescreen’ for avoiding the ‘growing influence on higher education by the Community’ (Garben 2010, 210), or as a source of prestige (Keeling 2006, 214). The explanations proposed by Garben and Keeling have their merits in explaining the complicated relation between BP and the EU, but do not account for the ideal Europe, and why this ideal is constructed as employability.

We think that BP’s attempt of redefining active citizenship could be explained as the Bologna way of proposing a new ideal for social citizenship. By using overly idealistic terms about the importance of education in achieving employability, and then casting employability as the one true way to achieve European citizenship, the BP drafters raised the importance of higher educational policy to unprecedented levels. While education was never a EU competence area, by borrowing the EU inspired language, BP managed to make out of education a vital issue for the construction of the Europe of Knowledge. Educational researchers have noticed an increasing tendency to re-frame large societal problems as learning problems, thus making them solvable through more schooling. For example the problem of unemployment in Europe would then not be a systemic issue arising from capitalism, but a problem of insufficient skills. According to Simons and Masschelein, ‘The framing of problems in society in terms of lack of citizenship and the translation of this lack into a learning problem can be regarded as a specific way to handle the crisis.’ (Simons and Masschelein 2009, 204)

The BP answer to the EU raised interest in higher education was to re-frame education as the one solution needed to tackle major European problems. But in order to do this, the BP signatories needed to reduce social problems to something that could be solved through education. By re-constructing active citizenship as employability, the problem of citizenship in Europe of Knowledge became a problem of mere lack of skills. In the process they had to redefine the very ideal of social citizenship as a life-long learning of employable skills, but in the end BP and its universities came out as the most indispensable thing that Europe needs.

Conclusions

The notion of ‘citizenship’ as a recurring theme in the BP *communiqués* needed further explanation. In a supra-national soft-law process meant to homogenise university degrees, what role does citizenship play? We have tried to show that ‘citizenship’ construed as ‘active citizenship’ and ‘citizenship in Europe of Knowledge’ played a strategic role of justifying why the BP was needed at all. Citizenship was used as an instrument, and at sometimes an empty word copied from EU Commission’s *communiqués*.

There are roughly two perspectives which could explain the presence of ‘European citizenship’ in the BP - although none of them tackles directly this issue. The political scientists describing the increasing tendency of ‘governing through pedagogy’ could conclude that education was used as a strategic means to push some policy agendas through non-democratic means. For the educational scholars, who see the political language as encroaching upon the educational realm, this might be seen as more EU influence in an area of national competences which is education. In both cases we have a usurping of a territory: either educational language entering the political realm, or the political entering the educational realm. However, we think

that the ways in which citizenship is constructed in the BP *communiqués* cannot be explained by neither approach. Our textual analysis has traced how citizenship in the BP borrowed a term from the EU discourse - namely 'active citizenship' - and then re-interpreted it to mean employability as a social ideal. This particular reading of 'citizenship' in the BP serves neither the interests of EU, nor that of educational actors. But it does serve to legitimise the BP as the necessary process that Europe of Knowledge cannot do without. If this strategy succeeded, then the BP has a long future ahead.

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