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# **Part I**

## **Universities and the Europe of Knowledge**



# 1

## Ideas Do Not Arrive Out of the Blue

This is a book about European Union (EU) policy-making in one policy sector, and over a specified period of time. The ‘plot’ of the book centres on the idea that there should be a higher education dimension to EU policy. Why do we know so little about a policy area which has interested European leaders for all of the 50 years of the Community and Union’s existence? More generally, why might the particular case of higher education have something to say about Community policy-making in general?<sup>1</sup>

This ‘plot’ is topical. There is a new and Europeanising process of change sweeping through the universities of Europe at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. European universities, especially those on the continent, are frequently represented as being in crisis. Many of the best known cast envious eyes across the Atlantic. Their dream is to be Harvard or Yale, with their research incomes and endowments larger than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of small nations. But there is another and largely ignored story: this is the story of the efforts of European governments, and universities themselves, and the EU to bring about the changes which will put the regionally integrated universities of Europe in a leading position on a world stage.

Some commentators suggest that over the next ten years, the change that will drive up quality – or make it more evident – will be that increased competition and more cooperation will make the universities of Europe more focussed in what they individually do best. If this is so, the European university scene will shift dramatically. The significant differences in Europe will not be, as traditionally, *between* the culturally different national systems. The most marked diversity will be *within* national systems. This even raises the question of whether all institutions will keep the linkage, which is

fundamental to the European conception of the university, of teaching and research.<sup>2</sup> There is a general forecast of shakeout which puts the elite research institutions in one camp, and the local universities which have absorbed the bulk of student expansion in another. Officials in Britain, if not elsewhere, use analogies with the commercial world of World Cup football. We'll see a university world which has its 'Manchester United' and 'Arsenal' and 'Real Madrid'. But whether or not the future is that dramatic, and that commercial, there is surely a conflict foreshadowed for resources and respect.<sup>3</sup> There are other scenarios, which reflect national higher education-government structures designed to limit competition. But underlying them all is some shared conception of a problem which might be mitigated by turning to European solutions – in terms of a European labour market, European-wide research, and why not, more co-operation between the increasingly familiar university systems of Europe.

The new factor is that we are seeing an astonishing consensus among the governments of a greater Europe, which stretches from the Iberian peninsula to Russia, from Scotland and Northern Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. All believe, albeit more or less strongly that greater unity, in some form, will provide greater strength. Since 1999, over 40 governments have opted for an unprecedented form of *regional* integration of universities. They are anxious to make these universities – over 4,000 of them,<sup>4</sup> more than half of them founded since the end of the second world war, and with over 16 million students – part of a *European* academic area. By signing up to the terms of the so-called 'Bologna process',<sup>5</sup> launched in 1999, governments are committed to building bridges between systems to create a 'European higher education space' by 2010. This potential 'space' is variously interpreted as a barrier-free market and/or a zone of cooperation. It will be characterised by the 'compatibility and comparability' which comes from a common commitment to recognised frameworks for crediting studies, assuring quality and recognising qualifications. The aims are external to Europe, and internal. The goal is not only to make the European higher education area (EHEA) attractive enough to the rest of the world to draw in more of the best foreign students and scholars, but also to boost quality within Europe itself, as a way of making universities more effective within the knowledge-based economy which the world's richest nations regard as the *sine qua non* of economic growth.

The political decision to create the EHEA, covering EU and non-EU institutions alike, coincides with moves by EU leaders, similarly targeted

on 2010, to boost the Europe Union's competitiveness and growth. One strategy for this is the Lisbon process, agreed in 2000, and dedicated to creating 'a Europe of knowledge'.<sup>6</sup> The – possibly unattainable – goal is for the EU to have 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion.' At the same time the EU, having created its single market in goods, is now engaged in creating a single market in services, as part of the 'growth and jobs' strategy.<sup>7</sup>

While both of these EU strategies would introduce new practices into national systems, the Lisbon process does not operate under the classic Community method of directive and regulation, but under an 'open method of coordination', by which governments themselves agree to peer review and benchmarking of relevant policy areas. However, the single market legislation on services, if it is applied to higher education, would be regulatory. It would suppress the right to provide public funding for some university activities. Though the legislation has its supporters, there is widespread resistance to treating higher education as a trade.<sup>8</sup> In any event it will increase volatility and uncertainty. On a minor scale this is already apparent with the competition between universities throughout the continent for the lucrative, or potentially lucrative, market for masters' courses given in the English language and demanding high fees.

The 'plot' also focuses on the European higher education as an exemplary policy area for study. There is a gap in our knowledge. That is to say, much has been written on the impact of *globalisation* and *internationalisation* on universities. Many of the leading exponents foresee 'radical and disruptive' change for essentially national institutions, 'forged in the successful scientific, industrial and democratic revolutions of the past two centuries'.<sup>9</sup> But we know relatively little about the processes of '*europeanising*' policy for higher education, and how EU initiatives interact with institutions which are a byword for their claim to intellectual autonomy and national governments which regard education as an element of national sovereignty.

Yet Europe offers a distinctive frame for action. There is a strong case for saying that aspects of educational policy are now an established part of 'europeanisation' of national policy-making<sup>10</sup> – at the least in the sense of 'europeanisation' as the progressive emergence of common norms of action, the evolution of which may escape the control of any particular member state and yet decisively influences the behaviour of public policy actor.<sup>11</sup> But history, too, weighs heavily. It was in Europe that universities grew their cultural and intellectual roots back in the

12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The European tradition of teaching, scholarship and research as it developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has given rise to different models which have been taken up and translated world-wide. At the risk of over-simplifying, we can say that there is the German or Humboldt tradition, primarily concerned with preparing students to do research; the French model which has set out to provide elite training, and which treats the *grandes écoles* – which grew out of an engineering tradition, and until recently did no research – as superior to the universities; and the British model, exemplified by Oxford and Cambridge, seen as providing an ‘all-round’ education for a future political and administrative elite.<sup>12</sup>

As of today, the European Union’s interest in having universities on its side appears to be in the largely instrumental terms of the Lisbon process. For in advocating this Europe of Knowledge, policy-makers want to see not just an economy which is better geared to strategies of wealth creation derived from world-beating research and innovation, but the wealth itself making it possible to maintain the famous European social model or welfare state in some form. This task is complicated not just by markets shifting to low-cost economies but also by the demographic shift within Europe to older age groups.<sup>13</sup>

A political strategy which supports a knowledge society clearly has to meet a number of conditions – the appropriate economic and institutional regimes, the innovation systems, the informational and communication practices, the human resource policies – but universities are seen by the EU institutions as a key to an expanding knowledge economy.<sup>14</sup> They are characterised by their mass of intellectual resource and their functional involvement in all the processes on which a knowledge economy depends. Through research and teaching and various types of partnership to exploit research, they participate in the production of new knowledge. They provide highly skilled manpower through teaching students, and training them in techniques of learning and research. They are usually a stimulus to local and regional economies. Even today, despite the development of private research institutes, universities pursue 80% of the fundamental research within the EU. They employ a third of the researchers in Europe; and over a third of Europeans now work in the knowledge-intensive industries which themselves are major sites of job creation and wealth production.<sup>15</sup>

Such an analysis leads the EU Commission, at any rate its research arm, to plunge into the politically contentious area of a future pattern for university research. It advocates 30–50 centres of excellence Europe-wide, much better cooperation with business and industry, more

efficient spending – but also a recognition that universities need adequate and sustainable income. Behind the EU concern is that the EU – on the basis of its membership before the 2004 enlargement – lags behind the US and Japan in resources allocated to universities and research, and in added value – and has the chagrin of seeing many of the best students going to the US.<sup>16</sup> It has few mobile students – 2.3% studying in another country, although there are big national disparities. It has fewer engineering students. Yet the overall higher education effort of the EU matches the US. The EU of 15 member states already had around the same number of graduates annually as the US and the same number of institutions – 12 million and 3,300 respectively.

The university Europe of the Bologna process may be running in parallel with the Lisbon process, at any rate for the governments of the EU member states. But the Bologna process, in working for means of convergence which will allow the creation of a common academic ‘space’, gives universities a political voice. Governmental decisions have been significantly shaped by an academic input. Governments are committed to respecting the fundamental characteristics of universities *qua* universities and not simply seeing them as economic engines. The Bologna process is explicitly underpinned by a university ‘Magna Carta’, *the Magna Charta Universitatum*, which combines both aspirations and a process to challenge governments taking action to infringe their autonomy.<sup>17</sup>

The Bologna process also relies on mechanisms which have been pioneered within the EU to support and sponsor different forms of direct inter-university cooperation. The instruments are neither the full EU method of directives and binding legislation nor the gentlemen’s agreements of intergovernmental cooperation, but more supportive regimes, which range from incentive funding to voluntary forms of organised cooperation, and voluntary agreement on common practices, such as the use of a credit system and of quality assurance on criteria which can be understood Europe-wide.

There is thus a situation of significant, if ambiguous, political momentum in favour of a stronger European dimension to university systems. This book sets out to explore that momentum with two aims in mind. One is to provide a better understanding of the historical development of the policy of cooperation in higher education as it developed in the days of the Community, as a contribution to understanding contemporary developments and particularly the Bologna process. The second is to provide a new explanation of how policy has been made, focussing on the processes of policy-making.

In embarking on this course, I have made three assumptions which are current in political science. The first is that no idea arrives out of the blue.<sup>18</sup> If the basic question is 'how and why the Community has developed a higher education policy?' a sub-question we ought to be able to answer is 'what made the idea of a Community involvement acceptable?' The second assumption is that policy develops as much by the operation of day-to-day processes as by the 'history-making' decisions of treaties and high-level political events.<sup>19</sup> The third assumption is that the story can be told in ways which make it not just a *sui generis* case for specialists, but something of interest to a wider political science community. That requires setting the policy scene.

### **The changing Community context, 1955–2005**

The study which follows takes place in a precise context – that of the Community's evolution in the last 50 years, and in particular in the years 1955–87. One measure of the general evolution of the European Community (EC) lies in the statistics. In the years 1955–2005, the Community has grown from six members to 25, and its population from 185 million to 456 million, and its land area has more than doubled from the original Community of 1.2 mn kms<sup>2</sup>.

If we regard the treaties as the major landmarks, we can talk about three periods.<sup>20</sup> The years from 1952 to 1957 marked the creation of three European Communities – the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952, the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1957. The second produced the common market with implications for higher education, due to freedom of movement commitments, and especially freedom of establishment. The third demonstrated that signatories were ready to create a university institution under Community rules.

A long second stage from 1958 to 1991 transformed the EC – effectively the EEC – into the EU. Key moments within this period were the 1965 Treaty establishing a single council and a single commission of the European Communities, generally known as the Merger Treaty. Next came the Community's acquisition of its own resources with the 1970 Treaty amending certain budgetary provisions of the treaties, and the 1975 Treaty amending certain financial provisions of the Treaties, which laid down a budgetary procedure and allocated budgetary powers between the EC institutions. The Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Assembly by direct universal suffrage 1977, effective 1978, made the European Parliament (EP) an

important player. The final decisive agreement of this period was the Single European Act, setting a target for the completion of the single market by 1992. It made research a partial Community competence. The Act was signed in 1986 and ratified by the last of the member states in 1987.

The Treaty on European Union (TEU), more commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1991 and effective in 1993, should, in this account, be seen as the beginning of a third stage. It furthered the integration process by agreeing the timetable and criteria for moving to Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and creating the conditions for intensified or new EU political cooperation in two of the most fundamental areas of national sovereignty: foreign and security policy on the one hand, and justice and home affairs on the other. It also laid out the conditions for the first time on which the Community, in becoming the Union, could intervene to support education. The Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997, and the Treaty of Nice, 2000, shaped by the prospect of EU enlargement to 25 or even 30 member states, were designed to deal with both left-over issues from Maastricht, including institutional reform, decision-making procedures, and the social dimension of the single market, and concern with new issues, notably immigration and asylum and the shape of a common foreign and security policy, in the expectation of EU enlargement to 25 or even 30 member states. The Treaty of Amsterdam, at least, also reflected the changing goals of the EU in an increasingly globalised economy, making it an explicit goal of the EU member states 'to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating.' It also, to the despair of scholars, re-numbered the treaty articles.<sup>21</sup> The draft constitutional treaty signed in Rome in 2004 was a further development in this process.

Another way of looking at these years is to observe the major events and changing political climate.<sup>22</sup> The 1950s in Europe were marked by strategies of reconstruction and reconciliation, following the Second World war, and then the onset of the Cold War. For western Europe, this was the beginning of European integration, as envisaged by Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman in 1950, leading to the three 'Community' treaties by which six continental governments agreed to pool some of their sovereign powers in relation to coal and steel and atomic energy and agreed to create a common market. From 1958 for a decade, this model of European unity was challenged by the French president, General de Gaulle, whose alternative model was based on

the idea of the Community as cooperating nation states – *L'Europe des patries*. The years from 1969 to 1979 are seen by some as a Community in flux, due *inter alia* to the impact of the first Enlargement bringing in the United Kingdom (UK) (1973) and the economic slump which followed the 1973 rise in oil prices. But it was also a period initially of reconstruction and re-launch, symbolised by the call at the Hague summit of 1969 for a Community which was to be widened, deepened and enlarged. The years 1979 to 1984 marked the resolution of some festering problems. This period extended the principle of enlargement to three newly democratic Mediterranean states, which also happened to be poor. Greece joined in 1980. The period also saw the institution of direct elections to the EP, the resolution of the British budget problem, the Community commitment to high technology and the single market, and the European Parliament's draft Treaty establishing the European Union. The years 1985 to 1988 saw the Community at a high point, universally recognised as being transformed. These were the years in which Delors headed the Commission and was strongly backed at European Council level by François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl. Spain and Portugal joined the Community, the single market strategy was devised and the Single European Act ratified. The years 1989 to 1993 saw the EC transformed into the EU. These were the years of the collapse of the USSR and the commitment of the twelve Member States to the inter-governmental conferences and the TEU, signed at Maastricht in 1991. The years since Maastricht's crisis-ridden ratification have marked the emergence of a potentially pan-EC. In May 2004, the Community completed its biggest enlargement, taking in eight countries of central and eastern Europe, formerly part of the Soviet Empire, the islands of Malta and Greek Cyprus, and committing itself to a constitutional treaty.

### **EC higher education in the literature**

On the higher education front, the received view is that the Community had nothing to do with universities, or education in general, before the 1970s. The policy sector was 'taboo', according to Guy Neave, author of the earliest account of EC education policy, because national governments had not given the Community competence for education when they signed the Treaties of Rome.<sup>23</sup> Though this was not strictly true – there was the basis for building up a law of education, if not an education policy, as Bruno de Witte and colleagues powerfully demonstrated in 1989.<sup>24</sup> But the literature has generally

accepted the assumption of the post-enlargement Commission, which took office in 1973, that the first Community education activity was opportunistically rooted in vocational training and the education of migrant workers' children, both issues which did fall within the EEC Treaty, and which attracted political interest during the 1960s.<sup>25</sup> Between 1971 and 1984 Commission and the Council of Ministers worked to agree to an education dimension. A combination of actions by the Commission and the EP, and some favourable interpretations by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), enabled the Commission to propose funded pilot programmes, notably the Action Programme on education of 1976, where initiatives included action for the education of migrant workers' children, school leavers and the young unemployed and for higher education and the promotion of languages. The foundations of cooperation had been laid.

In the literature generally, the period from 1985 to 1993 is seen as the period of transformation which put education policy on the road to Maastricht. This began with a new wave of integration in the mid-1980s, stimulated by the appointment of a new activist Commission in 1985, and by success in agreeing the Single European Act for completing the single market. This led to the formal adoption of a number of EC programmes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including Comett (Community Programme for Education and Training in Technology), Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), Lingua (to fund and promote training and skills in foreign languages), Tempus (Trans-Mobility Programme for University Students) in the late 1980s. Erasmus itself stimulated much activity within the university policy domain. The Commission also initiated the Jean Monnet system of chairs to promote teaching and research on European integration. The Community's subsidiary competence in education was defined for the first time by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1991 after which new and reorganised programmes could be developed by the EU institutions. The Leonardo da Vinci programme was designed to stimulate innovative training policies, and the Socrates programme, which incorporated both Erasmus and Lingua, and extended the EU's educational action to schools, through the Comenius programme. By the 1990s, and in Shaw's much-cited phrase, education had moved from the margins to the centre of Community policy-making concern.<sup>26</sup>

Yet a focus on higher education itself, rather than on education policy as a whole, immediately reveals a potentially different version of history. The other Treaty of Rome – the Treaty of Rome (European

Atomic Energy Community) of 1957 – made provision for the Community to create an institution of university level. In 1971 when ministers of education from the EC met for the first time, they had come to agreement in principle to set up the European University Institute in Florence, as a postgraduate humanities and social sciences institute, under intergovernmental rules, and to cooperate on EC educational issues. In other words, much had happened before the 1976 action programme although that programme launched a pilot scheme for networking among volunteer universities, and set some of the scene for Erasmus (1987). A direct focus on higher education also reveals the extraordinary role played by the European university community. It has been a major agenda setter and a shaper of policy for the Bologna process.

Furthermore, some of the founding figures of the EC were determined advocates for a university dimension to the Community right from the start. People often think of Jean Monnet as saying ‘If I were to start again, I would start with education’<sup>27</sup> – a proposition which those closest to him say would have been entirely out of character.<sup>28</sup> Rather more to the point are the recorded declarations from those who ran the Community in the early days: Walter Hallstein, first president of the EEC Commission, Etienne Hirsch, president of the Euratom Commission, and Altiero Spinelli, a life-long European federalist and the moving spirit behind the draft treaty on European Union, adopted by the European parliament in 1983.

They were expressing ideas which would make perfect sense to proponents of the Bologna and Lisbon processes, Hallstein – as we shall see in this account – was arguing in the 1950s to the 1970s for a ‘common market of the intelligence’ to exploit the electronics-based industries of the future, to close the technology gap with the US, to educate a more European-minded young. But he in a way which seems to have been forgotten today glorified the university as an institution. Was it not ‘the most magnificent form of cultural institution created by the European mind?’<sup>29</sup>

It was in coming across these ideas, and discovering that higher education had a longer policy history and almost certainly a more political one than generally assumed, I thought it relevant to re-ask the question of how and why the Community developed an education policy of cooperation with a focus on higher education. The familiarity of ideas expressed a generation ago piqued my curiosity. How do those individuals who emerge in the policy process as the promoters of ideas affect policy change?

## **Policy change: the conceptual and theoretical choice**

The Community's policy activities in higher education have attracted relatively little attention from a political science perspective.<sup>30</sup> But those who come from an EU specialist perspective have almost all been attracted by issues of Community competence and indeed, in Mark Pollack's phrase, the Community 'creeping competence'.<sup>31</sup> This has produced explanations which are variants on neo-functionalism, i.e. the belief that integration would follow the performance of a functional policy role. That had been the argument of Jean Monnet in pressing for European integration via the creation of sector-oriented bodies, such as the ECSC and the Euratom. Scholars tended to see the functional field of education in the same light, servicing the training and human resource needs of the Community. Hence explanations which present the development of education policy activity as spill-over from the Community's general policy, such as the development of the single market, and the linkage between education and vocational training.<sup>32</sup>

The dominant explanation of the 1980s and 1990s derives from the evidence of the important role of the ECJ in widening the interpretations of the EEC Treaty's stipulations on vocational training, and the trend in the 1980s to broadening interpretations of non-discrimination between Community citizens.<sup>33</sup> This finds a theoretical form in historical institutionalism and path dependency as in Jo Shaw's well known article on how and why education and training have moved from the margins to the centre of Community concerns since the 1970s with, as she sees it, the gradual establishment of an education common market. Path dependency is evident in a situation in which

[T]he Commission has been adept at opening up spaces opened up by the European Court of Justice. This is not to discount the importance of political judgments nor to decry to the discretion and autonomy of policy-makers in 'applying' opportunities opened up by interpretations of the legal framework of the EU. At the same time the policy-makers continue to be constrained by formal decision rules and constitutional principles governing EU law in general and the field of education and training in particular.<sup>34</sup>

But as of 2005, there is a situation in which competence issues for education and training are no longer in need of explanation. They have been defined, giving the EU a supporting role only, competence resting

with the member states. This clarification of the EU's 'subsidiarity' role was an achievement of the Treaty of Maastricht, 1991. It is confirmed in the draft constitutional treaty, signed by the EU governments in 2004 and since submitted to Parliamentary scrutiny or referendum.<sup>35</sup>

Another strand in the literature, and which emerges from higher education specialists, is distinctive in being refracted through conceptual debates which do not interact with EU policy-making – internationalisation, globalisation, marketisation, massification. Guy Neave, Ulrich Teichler and Peter Scott have all been active chroniclers of trends since the late 1970s and an influence of much contemporary comment.<sup>36</sup> Many of those who have worked from a comparative politics perspective – names that come to mind are Maurice Kogan, Mary Henkel, Ivar Bleiklie – have been more interested in the national level than the EU. That has also applied to such internationally known centres as CHEPS in the Netherlands. The Bologna process however looks like changing this as Marjit van der Wende's work testified.<sup>37</sup>

In sum, the pointers to an unexploited and rich political history around the idea of a European dimension to higher education are sparse. The major exception is Palayret's study of the pre-history of the European University Institute in Florence, drawing on EC and state archives.<sup>38</sup> Actors such as Ladislav Cerych,<sup>39</sup> and the actor and historian, Walter Rüegg,<sup>40</sup> have given us glimpses of the conflicts of the early days on the one hand, related to university hostility to the EC as a supranational organisation, and the innovative range of non-governmental higher education activity, epitomised by the College of Europe.

But if we want to understand the policy significance of this history for contemporary developments such as Bologna and Lisbon processes, we might – I suggest here – try another tack. I have chosen to look at the development of an EC policy of higher education cooperation in terms of the general literature of policy change, that is to say I anchor the case in one of the major theoretical preoccupations of political science. This opens the door to a research frame which gets us closer to the political process than in previous studies of EC/EU interest in higher education. In particular, there is a range of relevant scholarship under the umbrella of 'new institutionalism'. This 'new institutionalism' has historical, sociological and rational choice variants which in different ways make institutions part of a causal chain.<sup>41</sup>

Of the two variants most relevant here, historical institutionalism seeks to explain change by the interaction of institutional and idea-related variables, and contingent events. In this school of thought,

institutions interpreted to include formal and informal rules and procedures – structure political situations. It is institutions which shape not just actors' strategies but their goals by mediating their relations of cooperation and conflict.<sup>42</sup> There tends to be in consequence a 'path dependent' flow of policy, punctuated by 'critical junctures' or moments when substantial change takes place.<sup>43</sup> There is much that is helpful in historical institutionalist interpretations for this study. But it is a conceptualisation which, through notions of path dependency, resurrects the a-political neo-functionalism, and naturally provides room for dispute as to what the critical junctures are, and the relevance of different time-frames.<sup>44</sup>

Sociological institutionalism has the attraction of defining institutions much more broadly. Its advocates wish to explain the 'frames of meaning' which help to account for actors' acceptance of institutional rules as due to the rules' legitimate authority, rather than to the objective costs or benefits which rational choice conceptions emphasise. Thus actors orient their thinking to certain ideas not because they are directly persuaded to value them, but because they are placed before a *fait accompli* that they come to accept as an unalterable part of the institutional context. Instead of becoming 'infused with value' through persuasion, certain strategies become 'taken for granted' because certain actors are outmanoeuvred or ignored by those who are successful in advancing their ideas. Over time, arguments for alternative strategies are forgotten.<sup>45</sup> This is a theoretical approach which derives from the observation of culturally specific factors in organisations, akin to the myths and ceremonies of particular societies, and is a new generation's attack on the assumptions of rationality made by the founding fathers of social science, notably Max Weber.<sup>46</sup>

From my perspective, sociological institutionalism offers the advantage for this study of a linkage to models of policy *processes*.<sup>47</sup> These models are based on assumptions which reject any expectation of rational behaviour. A strong theme derived from the sociology of organisations is to explain decision-making in terms of what their proponents back in the 1970s called 'garbage can' or 'organized anarchy' models. James March and Johan Olsen, two of the scholars most associated with these terms, specify a model of decision-making which assumes a match between the situation, the identity of the actor and his/her action.<sup>48</sup>

In this conceptual family, though claiming 'more organization, less anarchy', John Kingdon has also challenged the idea of rational policy processes proceeding in clear stages between agenda setting, decision

making and implementation. His own most famous work, *Agendas, alternatives and public policy* (1984), presents a model of policy-making in the agenda-setting phase, in which ideas advance because of the linkages between three processes with different dynamics: problem definition, policy formulation and the evolution of political mood.

Given my interest in the trajectory of an idea, Kingdon's immediate attraction is that he provides a way of structuring a narrative account as a preliminary to analysis. His analytic separation of agenda-setting events, which determine the issues or problems to be dealt with by decision-makers, and of 'alternative specification' or policy modification events which determine which solutions decision-makers consider when a decision is made, is a helpful – and distinctive – contribution to policy analysis. It enables us to distinguish analytically the type of scenario in which a government wants a policy solution rapidly because there is an urgent political problem to resolve – a new administration has a new programme to put into effect, a catastrophe requires an urgent policy response – from a 'processually' different scenario in which officials, or office holders, who are attached to a particular policy idea, detect a favourable political climate in which to advance it. Kingdon identifies the individuals promoting the idea as 'policy entrepreneurs'. He models the linkage, which explains the advance of ideas, in terms of the opportunity mechanisms which arise out of the interaction of predictable and unpredictable events, and the action of individuals.<sup>49</sup>

However, for a study based on the EC in which institutions are unstable, Kingdon is less helpful. Possibly because of the relative stability of American institutions, his model pays little attention to institutional resources. The present account draws for that on another model, conceptualised by Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones. Though their aim is not processual – they set out to explain the moment of policy change in terms of equilibrium, or not, between institutions<sup>50</sup> – they emphasise the salience of what they call policy domain, as linked to 'issue' and 'venue', and as such draw our attention to the issue of policy capacity or resources.

### **The concept of entrepreneurship**

The reason for lingering, nevertheless, over the Kingdon model, is that the particular analytic twist I have wanted to give to this account of the creation and development of higher education policy in the EC is to explain the action of individuals in the policy-making institutions

considered here. For the historical narrative reveals a number of individuals who played an important part in advancing policy, either as agenda setters or as advocates for a policy solution, or for significantly expanding policy capacity. I detected around 30 – officials from national ministries, ministers of education, commissioners and desk officers, and two dynamic presidents of the EEC Commission, Walter Hallstein and Jacques Delors.

Their presence produced research questions within a general conceptual framework of new institutionalism with a processual bias. How and why do individuals in Community institutions affect policy change? How do position and procedures create resources for them? To what extent are issue careers related to individual careers?

In this account I shall be focussing on seven individuals who can be classified as policy entrepreneurs, all of whom were active at European level, in the Commission or the Council of Ministers. They are, firstly, Walter Hallstein, in his role of head of the foreign ministry of the German Federal Republic in 1955, Etienne Hirsch, President of the Euratom Commission in 1958–61, Olivier Guichard, the French minister of education in 1969–71, and Altiero Spinelli, who was commissioner for industry and technology in 1970–72. Next, Hywel Ceri Jones, who holds the record for longevity as an entrepreneurial individual in European higher education and education, was the Commission's most active policy official on education from 1973, and the top official from 1979–93. (In 1987 when the Erasmus decision was taken he was director for education and youth within DGV Social Affairs). Peter Sutherland, who was commissioner for education, training and youth, and for social affairs in the year 1985, and Michel Richonnier, the Cabinet official working to Peter Sutherland, on education and training questions in the same year make up the seven.

My claim is that if we wish better to understand policy change within the EC we need to take careful account of these individuals. The concept of entrepreneurship derives from economics. Joseph Schumpeter, writing in 1934, gave it currency in defining the heroic identity of entrepreneurs: 'What drives the entrepreneur are primarily three things (i) the dream and the will to found a private kingdom (ii) the will to conquer (iii) the joy of creating.'<sup>51</sup> It was Kingdon who tailored the concept to the political process and stressed the function. The function of the policy entrepreneur is to advance an agenda issue – an idea – towards decision, his or her goal to manipulate the *dominant* understandings of issues and influence the institutions which exert jurisdiction over them.<sup>52</sup>

The political science literature takes the policy entrepreneur to be both a type and a role, with a place in the policy process.<sup>53</sup> The skills of the policy entrepreneur are most evidently those of the advocate. They need creativity, guile and judgement, expertise and tenacity. They have to 'soften up' the policy communities and larger publics, exploit political connections, and use negotiating skills, and above all to be ready to seize opportunities. Like the business entrepreneur, policy entrepreneurs are ready to invest their time, their energy, their reputation and sometimes their money in the hope of future returns. These can come in the form of policies of which they approve, satisfaction from participation or personal aggrandisement in the form of job security or career promotion.<sup>54</sup>

Much of the European-oriented literature of policy entrepreneurship has attempted to explain identity, aspirations and interests – agency – in terms of EC institutions. This literature includes studies of the decisions of the ECJ,<sup>55</sup> the agenda-setting powers of the Commission,<sup>56</sup> the Single European Act,<sup>57</sup> EMU,<sup>58</sup> structural policy,<sup>59</sup> technology policy<sup>60</sup> and telecommunications.<sup>61</sup> In this institutional perspective, the view of the Commission as an entrepreneurial or purposive actor, intent on enhancing its role and powers, is entrenched. Some have noted its educational activities in this connection. Cram's 1994 characterisation of the Commission as a 'purposive opportunist' has been widely used. She cites the Erasmus programme as an example of Commission agency, explained by the Commission wishing to extend its influence by mobilising citizen support at minimal expense.<sup>62</sup> A doctoral thesis by Gertrud Schink 1993 which covers much the same period as I do and which even had policy entrepreneurship in its title, though its focus was competence – *Kompetenzerweiterung im-Handlungssystem der Europäischen Gemeinschaft: Eigendynamik und 'Policy Entrepreneurs'* – drew attention to institutional policy entrepreneurship as driving 'an inner dynamic' of policy-making.<sup>63</sup> A more recent doctoral thesis by Gaetane Nihoul, taking 30 years of educational policy-making beginning in the 1970s as a case study for improving the theory of historical institutionalism, detected policy entrepreneurship at the directorate and unit level of the Commission, at three critical junctures of policy-making: 1986–87, 1992–93 and 1998–99.<sup>64</sup>

However if the interest is in individual policy entrepreneurs, as suggested in the Kingdon analysis, I suggest here that we should look to an emerging and, to me, enlightening EU literature, which is both historically specific, and which considers the impact of *individual* agency and contingency upon structure. For instance, Dudley and

Richardson, in a study of the transference of policy ideas across national boundaries, and into the supranational arena of the ECSC, identified six individuals, during a 50 year period, who intervened as policy entrepreneurs to change policy 'frames'.<sup>65</sup>

Dyson and Featherstone in *The Road to Maastricht, Negotiating Economic and Monetary Union*, provide a convincing analysis of the policy significance of 'flesh and blood people, whose motives were very complex and preferences by no means fixed, whose likes, aversions, ambitions and manners played an important part in the dynamics of the process.'<sup>66</sup> They note that in playing a part in events which have their 'own process of development, their own particular rhythm and shape, specific to the subject matter and the precise historical context', the beliefs and knowledge of these policy entrepreneurs functioned as 'road maps' and were vital in informing how their interests were defined.

This literature persuaded me that that we need to show how the beliefs of policy entrepreneurs, and the opportunities open to them, helped to structure the policy process in EC higher education, within an institutional framework, broadly defined in sociological institutionalism terms.

### **EC higher education as a case study**

What follows is a case study of policy change.<sup>67</sup> The particular research episode covers the years 1955–87. This period is chosen because it covers four distinct policy decisions or outcomes which mark the creation and development of a policy-making function by the EC institutions. The first which needs to be explained is the Treaty of Rome (European Atomic Energy Community) of 1957, which permitted the nuclear energy Community to establish a university institution. The second is the decision in principle in 1971 to agree to establish the European University Institute in Florence – ratified by treaty in 1972. This was historically linked as part of a deal for ministers of education to pursue educational cooperation within the Community under inter-governmental rules and marked the creation of an educational policy domain. The third is the Action Programme in Education of 1976, and the fourth is the Erasmus Decision of 1987, the first EC decision in education made under full Community rules.

The two main questions which have structured the account as an analysis of EC policy change are – as suggested earlier – first, how and why did the EC developed policy making activities in higher education,

and second how do the actions of individuals working in, or otherwise related to the Commission, affect policy change? This second, and theoretical question, gave rise to such second level questions as how position and procedures create resources for individuals who want to influence the 'career' of an issue and policy choice, and also how the trajectory of an issue is related to the career of an individual. In other words these were questions intended to bring into focus the identities and motivations of individuals as well as the repertoire of procedures by which organisations function.

In order to answer these questions I have drawn on both political science and historiography, treating the sequence of policy outcomes as a historical narrative,<sup>68</sup> theoretically underpinned by an agenda-setting framework. The primary explanatory framework used is that of Kingdon (1984) whose agenda-setting framework structured the historical narrative. The Kingdon framework is supplemented by Baumgartner and Jones (1993) on issue-definition and venue. The analysis of policy entrepreneurship relies heavily on the concepts in compatible frameworks from the family of sociological institutionalism, and notably those developed by March (1994) on decision processes.

As will be obvious from the text, I have made heavy use of interviews.<sup>69</sup> The case for and against interviews is well known. There is a real problem that actors often rewrite the script. Their stories are ones in which they are the heroes. However I found interviewing participants or observers of the EC higher education policy process of irreplaceable value in a study which looks for part of the explanation in the beliefs or motivations of actors, and felt myself fortunate to have talked to some whose memories went back to the earliest days of the Community.

The three types of primary documentary sources for this study are the documents of the EC institutions, the historical archives of the EC and the private papers of some actors. The choice of a historical approach made the splendid archives and library of the EC Historical Archive in Florence an obvious goal.<sup>70</sup> The unexpected prize, thanks to the director, Jean-Marie Palayret, author of the study of the history of the European University Institute, was being able to use material relevant to the higher education issue from the personal files of Emile Noël, the Secretary-General of the EEC Commission 1958–87. Coming across his marking up and personal commentary on official documents, and his exchanges of correspondence with EC actors was to have confirmation of the need to get behind the official documents with actors' own accounts if we want a better understanding of how the EU works.

## The structure of the book

The case study is in three parts: the theoretically underpinned historical narrative of the creation and development of EC higher education between 1955 and 1987, the analysis of policy entrepreneurship based on the outcomes in those years, and what I have termed an epilogue, though it can be considered part of the 'case'. It is a study of the creation and early development of the Bologna process.

*Part I* consists of the historical narrative, its 'plot' being how the idea or vision of EC higher education has progressed, and at times was blocked, under the pressure of events, institutional rules, the mechanisms of the policy process and the tenacity of particular individuals.

*Chapter 2* – 1955–57 – recounts the emergence of the idea for a European University to be set up by the Community and its incorporation in a rather vaguer form into the EC's forgotten Atomic Energy Treaty – the Treaty of Rome 1957, EAEC.

*Chapter 3* – 1958–61 – recounts the attempt to implement the Treaty article concerning a university institution and the failure of the first policy design for Europeanising all higher education in 1960.

*Chapter 4* – 1961–69 – recounts the failure of the alternative model: intergovernmental cooperation through the Council of Europe.

*Chapter 5* – 1969–72 – recounts how the idea of some kind of Community-driven cooperation was taken up by EC ministers of education, solving en route the problem of the European University, and how the Commission responded in creating a rudimentary bureaucracy for education.

*Chapter 6* – 1973–76 – recounts the effective way in which a policy design was agreed and the inventive solutions to policy development and decision-making which made pilot action possible.

*Chapter 7* – 1977–84 – recounts the new clash over competences between and within the Commission, the Council and the Parliament and how the European Council revived activity in EC higher education policy.

*Chapter 8* – 1985–87 – recounts how the Erasmus programme was devised and eventually decided, surviving breakdown to become an exemplary (if small scale) achievement in europeanising higher education and thus contributing to the Europe of Knowledge or the Europe of Learning, about which so many had dreamed for so long.

*Part II* takes up the theoretical question of policy entrepreneurship and draws general conclusions in the light of what we have learned

about policy-making processes and policy entrepreneurship from the historical narrative. It presents the argument as to why, if we accept that the beliefs of well placed individuals matter, we should understand their life experience, as well as the institutional rules under which they function.

*Chapter 9*, analyses the efforts made by policy entrepreneurs and the opportunities open to them as a partial explanation of the creation and development of EC higher education policy.

*Chapter 10* discusses the general conclusions we can draw.

*Part III, the Epilogue* looks at the Bologna process in the same analytic terms as have been applied to the issue of the European University and of Erasmus. It concludes with a discussion of the opportunities and constraints of 'europeanising' higher education.

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