

# **Higher Education and National Development**

Universities and societies in transition

*Edited by*

**David Bridges, Palmira  
Jucevičienė, Robertas  
Jucevičius, Terence McLaughlin  
and Jolanta Stankevičiūtė**

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Contemporary universities in many parts of the world are subject to changes driven by the collapse of the former Soviet empire, by the triumph of neoliberal economic policies and by the mobility of capital and the ease of communication that are features of the global economy. They are also responding to the re-configuration of social, political and economic structures in which global, regional, national and local identities compete for attention. Nowhere, perhaps, have all these changes been more dramatically felt than in the Baltic States that are the source of and focus for a number of contributions to this volume.

Universities are increasingly expected not merely to respond to these changes but to drive economic and social development in the new environment, contributing to business competitiveness and innovation through (in the language of the contemporary discourse): 'knowledge transfer', 'research-based business start-ups', 'demand-led education and training', the development of 'the learning society' and the contribution of higher level skills to 'the knowledge economy'. At the same time, perhaps, they struggle to retain a sense of more traditional roles in the formation of an intellectual leadership, the education of a democratic citizenry or the cultivation of a wise, as well as a skilled, community.

The intersection of these changes in society and higher education provides the themes for this wide-ranging text by an international group of contributors. *Higher Education and National Development* includes concrete illustration of these developments, analysis and critique. It will be valuable reading for all higher education researchers and policy makers.

**David Bridges** was Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia until 2000 when he became founding Director of the Association of Universities in the East of England. **Palmira Jucevičienė** is Professor of Kaunas University of Technology, Head of the Department of Educational Systems and Director of the Institute of Educational Studies. **Robertas Jucevičius** is Professor and Head of the Strategic Management Department at Kaunas University of Technology. He is also Director of the Business Strategy Institute at the same University. **Terence McLaughlin** was formerly Professor of Philosophy of Education at the London Institute of Education. **Jolanta Stankevičiūtė** is a Research Associate at the Von Hugel Institute, St Edmund's College, Cambridge. She was previously an Associate Professor at Kaunas University of Technology.

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**Terence H. McLaughlin**

Terry McLaughlin, one of the authors and co-editors of this book, died on 31 March 2006 shortly after completing work on the manuscript. Terry was a colleague and friend dear to all those who have contributed to this volume, which we dedicate to him with gratitude and affection.

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The task of editing (and in some cases translating) this collection of work from different countries has been a substantial one, and the editors could not have managed without the dedicated, untiring and excellent assistance of Victoria McNeile in particular, and the secretarial staff of the Institute of Educational Studies at Kaunas University of Technology.

Finally, we would like to thank the Master and Fellows of St Edmund's College and the Rector and colleagues in Kaunas University of Technology for the warmth of their welcome to international visitors and their support throughout this collaboration.



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# Introduction

*David Bridges and Terence McLaughlin*

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The focus of this book is on change in higher education in the context of, in particular, the multi-dimensional transition experienced by countries of the former Soviet Union over the last decade and the interconnected phenomena of globalization and the knowledge economy.

These are large themes, and in grappling with them we have perforce been selective. Among 'countries in transition' we have (for reasons relating to the origin of the book) focused on the Baltic State of Lithuania in particular and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in general. These contexts repay attention in themselves in regard to transitions relating to contemporary universities and societies and also illustrate issues and themes which have wider significance and application. The wider issues and themes chosen for attention in this collection are also inevitably selective, although they embrace matters of central contemporary significance.

In this introduction we will briefly indicate some of the transitions relating to societies and to universities which are the concern of the present collection and will outline the structure and themes of the volume.

## **Transitions in societies**

The first (complex) societal transition which provides the background to many of the following chapters is that which has been experienced over the last decade by countries of the former Soviet Union. These have in a very short period achieved political independence, embraced one form or another of a liberal polity and economy and, most recently, become part of the expanded European Community. These countries are often referred to as 'countries in transition' and this term will be used throughout the present collection. In his chapter in this volume Giedrius Jucevičius discusses whether the dramatic changes affecting these societies are not better expressed in the language of countries in *transformation* rather than merely *transition*. The case which is most frequently referred to in this collection is that of Lithuania, but all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe share to a greater or lesser extent in the political, cultural and economic changes which have taken place over the last fifteen years or so.

The interrelatedness of these changes is manifest, although political, cultural and economic aspects can be distinguished for our present purposes. Politically, these societies have embraced forms of liberal democracy and face the wide range of demands and challenges which arise in relation to the requirements and implications of a democratically elected system of government, including the formation of democratic citizens. Culturally, these societies have had to adjust to a range of changes arising in the post-Soviet era such as the expansion of the domain of personal autonomy and action (in relation, for example, to the expression of previously suppressed religious commitments and to the exercise of individual initiative in many matters), an openness to cultural influences from the West (via, for example, 'liberated' mass media and increased opportunities for travel overseas) and challenges relating to the reassertion and appropriation of cultural identity (in its individual, communal and national aspects) in the new circumstances in which these societies find themselves. Economically, these societies have faced changes of very wide-ranging significance. The societies have experienced the loss of a huge internal market for their traditional products, the liberalization of their economies and the exposure of their businesses to market competitiveness as well as to new freedoms of movement and expression which have themselves opened national businesses to new opportunities and new threats. Though the economic changes indicated here have been especially fast and dramatic in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, more mature market economies like the UK, Australia and the USA are still adjusting to the economic liberalism introduced in the Thatcher/Reagan era. Failing businesses and whole business sectors are allowed to collapse with effects that would have elicited heavy government intervention in a previous era.

The wider context of societal change which is of significance for this collection is provided by the interconnected phenomena of globalization and the knowledge economy. Here we are invited to observe the combined effects of the revolution in communications, which makes it as easy to exchange ideas with a person on the other side of the world as with a person in the next office, and the revolution in the movement of capital and the means of production, which allows global corporations to access raw materials and skills wherever these may be most found at the lowest price and/or highest quality and to deploy these to their benefit and profit. In such an environment, business competitiveness, so the analysis goes, requires that companies are constantly innovating in their products and drawing (in particular) on cutting-edge developments in science and technology to remain at, or to win their way to, the front of the field. The ICT revolution not only supports innovation in what are essentially traditional fields (like motor car design and manufacture or photography) but it opens up whole new possibilities for the production and communication of knowledge. Education becomes linked to the huge resources of media-based industries to become one of the fastest growing *businesses* of the twenty-first century. An economy develops in which (i) all sectors of the economy become increasingly dependent on the sophisticated application of ICT and upon innovative ideas;

(ii) especially significant growth is to be found in sectors like pharmaceuticals and communications, which depend almost entirely on cutting-edge science and technology for their competitiveness; and (iii) knowledge itself becomes a high-value commodity to be packaged, marketed and retailed like any other. For 'countries in transition' these global changes are a special challenge, but they are also shifting the requirements which are placed on different sectors of society – not least among them the higher education institutions – in all countries. 'One point is fairly clear', observed Carnoy and Rhoten. 'If knowledge is fundamental to globalization, globalization should also have profound impact on the transmission of knowledge' (Carnoy and Rhoten 2002: 2).

## Transitions in universities

The third set of changes which we are interested in here, and which provide the main focus of the book, are in the universities and the broader higher education system but are driven, at least in part, by the broader societal changes to which we have referred.

It is not just 'countries in transition' which have been experiencing a turmoil of change in universities, though clearly the changes in their own political economies have led to new demands in, for example, the teaching of economics and the requirements for business and management education (see, for example, Giedrius Jucevičius' chapter in this volume). In the UK the application of market principles to universities has led to a range of transitions: a shift of responsibility for the cost of higher education from government to individual students; the assessment of quality in university research and the linking of public funding to demonstrable quality; the assessment of the quality of teaching and the publication of these assessments as a basis for student choice of programme in a higher education market; and the development of more transparent costing of higher education activity as a basis for business-style decisions about which activities are financially viable and sustainable. As Kwiek argued in a keynote address to the European Education Research Association: 'We are facing the simultaneous renegotiation of the postwar social contract concerning the welfare state in Europe and the accompanying renegotiation of a ... modern social pact between the university and the nation state' (Kwiek 2005: 1).

Economic requirements for 'higher level skills' have joined with principles of social inclusion to demand wider participation in higher education. The bringing of major areas of professional education and training (for teachers, professions allied to medicine and social work, for example) into the context of the university has been part of this process. The net effect has been what has been called the 'massification' of higher education on a model more traditionally associated with the United States of America. Some 'countries in transition', like Poland, have been leading the way in this development, though, interestingly, in this case by developing private sector provision of higher education.

With massification has come increasing diversity in the forms of provision of



higher education. Bridges has described elsewhere (Bridges 2000) the way in which the traditional defining features of the university have been deconstructed by these developments:

*The identity of place* has been challenged by the acquisition by some universities of up to twelve or fifteen new institutions (e.g. former teacher training colleges, agricultural colleges, colleges of nursing or art and design) and new sites scattered over a region extending forty or fifty miles from the central institution; by the rapid development by traditional universities of distance or distributed learning systems, and also of franchising, validation and accreditation, which enable a student to study for a degree of University X at a further education college in the region, at a higher education institution overseas or at a computer at home (one US higher education provider operates under the slogan 'Let's get the cost of real estate out of education!', Marchese 1998). In the professional fields in particular the development of work placements, work-based learning, school-based teacher education and clinical attachments have extended the HE learning environment from the university into the workplace. Widespread access to e-mail has rendered the face-to-face contact between student and supervisor in the university, and even visits to the library, in some contexts a rare rather than a routine part of the experience:

The distinction between 'distance education' and regular instruction – even the relevance of distance and other spatiotemporal markers as the key distinction between different types of teaching or different categories of student – is beginning to disappear.

(Burbules and Callister 1999: 1)

By contrast, the University of Cambridge still tries to maintain a learning community in which students and academic staff are required to live within a certain distance (three miles in the case of undergraduates and ten miles in the case of graduate students and academic staff) of Great St Mary's Church – a landmark in the centre of Cambridge – and in which eating together in the collegiate environment is still seen as a central part of academic interaction.

*The identity of time* – the idea of a tightly contained academic year of intense interaction broken by long periods of separation, or even of a day in which teaching is largely confined to a period between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. has been challenged by demands for part-time evening courses, short courses, day seminars at the weekend and summer schools as well as the need in, for example, health-related subjects and teacher training for years which match the schedules of hospitals and schools and give time for extended practical experience. The units of study have themselves become fragmented as customers weaned on the McDonald's service culture demand 'bite-sized chunks of learning' and 'just-in-time learning' rather than a commitment to a three-year degree.

*The identity of the scholarly community* has been extremely difficult to sustain as HE institutions have grown exponentially; have spread, as already indi-