International Donor Impact, Funding Infrastructure and Academic Discourses in Humanities and Social Sciences in Latvia during the Democratic Transition

Policy paper

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Introduction

Universities influence society in a number of ways, and teaching students in only one of them. Scholars of Humanities and Social Sciences are the ones who produce the bulk of academic texts touching on issues of political importance for the whole society. They are also the ones who react to various challenges in the public policy community globally and nationally, by transforming dominant discourses according to the logic, or 'culture' of their disciplines or 'tribes' (Trowler, 2001). It is important, therefore, to see what kind of discourses these scholars produce and reproduce in society.

Latvian higher education system faced many of the challenges with which universities across the world were confronted due to major structural changes in many societies in the 1990s (WB, 1994). Reforms in Latvia's academic sector have been considerable and, to a large extent, successful. It is also a country that has achieved a remarkable record of democratisation and economic growth for a post-Soviet transition society.

At the same time, the problem of spreading of exclusionary, nationalist and statist discourses is not irrelevant to Latvian society. As in many places across Europe today, levels of intolerance among politicians are part of the issue. Often politicians' statements in the media and journalists' observations concerning policy-making processes provoke questions about the depth of democratic orientations among opinion leaders. Part of political elite reproduces nationalist and exclusionary discourses that have an impact on ethnic polarization of society (Zepa, 2005). The debate about normative implications of the involvement of 'external' actors – such as Soros Foundation Latvia - in political agenda-setting has been sparked in the summer of 2004 and is still going on, with members of Saeima (Parliament) and National Security Council sometimes labelling the work of networks such as Open Society Institute as a 'threat' to national security. This debate has shown that the concept of open exchange of normative and intellectual influences across national borders in the area of public policy is by no means taken for granted by the public.

In a society with a certain extent of ethnic polarization, it is especially important that intellectual elites and media provide an arena for political debate, where informed and responsible critique of political elites would be possible.

After more than a decade of political, economic and academic reform, this may be the right tome to focus on the discourses produced and reproduced in the academic milieu of Humanities and Social Sciences. One of the questions arising out of the mapping of academic discourses is: what role does the record of university departments' involvement with external actors (EU-related, OSI-related) play in this process?

The policy-oriented output of this paper is an assessment of the impact of international actors – both EU-related, OSI-related and other (e.g. UNDP) - on academic departments of Humanities and Social Sciences in Latvia and through them – on discourses produced by scholars across this range of disciplines. For the sake of providing a broader context to this study, some examples from another CEE country – Romania – will be used for comparison.

1.1 Research Objectives and Methods

The paper is based on the following research and analysis:

1. Analysis of a body of texts produced by scholars at the selected departments of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Latvia – including conference papers, newspaper publications by academics and policy documents produced by scholars of respective departments and by government institutions in cooperation with the scholars.

2. Analysis of impact of international donor organisations on the activities of academic departments in Latvia and in Romania. For this purpose, the types of activities implemented by departments with the support of EU-related and OSI-related institutions (e.g. CEP, HESP, Robert Bosch Stiftung and others), as well as other international organisations, were analysed. This was done through a series of interviews with representatives of university departments (in the case of Latvia – the same departments where texts analysed in Part I were produced).

3. Analysis of structural factors (such as reorganisation of departments and programmes and available research funding infrastructure) that may have influenced the spreading of discourses in given academic milieu.

The choice of the University of Latvia and its departments as object of primary study to test these questions is pre-defined by the role this university plays in the Latvian academic community. While other universities, university colleges or institutes may be equally important in the system of higher education, the University of Latvia is the single most influential body in most areas of academic research, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and in the structures regulating the development of higher education and research in Latvia. It is also the most 'complete' university from the point of view of the number of academic disciplines it accommodates in its departments and research institutes. The University of Latvia can thus be viewed as a 'microcosm' of Latvian higher education and academic life.

In Latvia, the study covers five departments in Social Sciences, and six departments in Humanities, four of which are grouped together for analysis because they implement joint study programmes and their academic staff sometimes fluctuates between departments (History of Latvia was analysed together with History of Western Europe and USA, and Baltic Philology was joined with Latvian Literature).

1.2 Departments and discourses

In the beginning of this research project, it was assumed that when a university department in Latvia in the 1990s chose to engage teaching staff affiliated to organisations with an articulated democratising mission, or participated in projects funded by organizations with democratising agenda, it could be expected that not only new practices, but also new discourses would be introduced. However, there are factors normally influencing educational transfer and the borrowing of discourses. Structural factors, including first of all the existing teaching and research infrastructure, policies and funding patterns, are important, and so are 'cultural' factors, such as the dominant discourses which exist in a given society (Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). It takes effort to introduce new discourses, and even when structural reforms point in the direction of democratisation, disappearance of exclusionary discourses cannot be taken for granted.

Cultural factors, such as the role of Humanities departments as a locus of nationally oriented academic counter-culture in the last decades of the Soviet rule, will not be, for the most part, discussed in this paper. They deserve a separate study and it is to be hoped that such study will be one day produced in Latvia. This paper limits itself to an anlysis of structural factors.

In order to see, to what extent academic departments in Humanities and Social Sciences participate in the introduction of liberal discourses in society or, on the contrary, reproduce exclusionary, nationalist or statist discourses, a small systematic study of texts produced by academic personnel working at the departments of the University of Latvia was undertaken. Taking into account that it takes time for new discourses to be introduced and developed, publications from the early 2000s – following approximately ten years of political and academic reform – were selected. The methods developed by the school of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were used to analyse these texts. (See Appendix 1 for the criteria of text selection for discourse analysis).

As criteria for analysing the texts the following principles were used:

I. The scale of **nationalist/ exclusionary** discourse:
The extent to which the author(s) of a text use access control (e.g. use constructions that imply that some groups or individuals in society can be excluded from debate over defining some issue, or their opinion is less valid) shows whether the text could be described as producing/ reproducing exclusionary and nationalist discourses (Van Dijk, 1993).

An example of nationalist discourse is the following phrase: 'Involving Russians in cultural projects would significantly foster positive attitude of the members of this group towards the state, greater loyalty towards it... Their joy would be our joy.' Here, the ethnic minority group is excluded from the 'we' category of those who make policy.

In texts where a high extent of access control was in evidence, strategies of *discursive construction of national identity* (as described, for example, by Ruth Wodak et al. - Wodak 1999), were identified.

Elements of *racist discourse* as defined by T. Van Dijk were identified.

II. The scale of **statist discourse**
Instances of *statist discourse* – constructions creating hierarchies in which state is the primary agent of politics and social/cultural change while society is shown as the object of state interference – were identified in analysed texts. In conjunction with nationalist discourse, statist discourse creates and reinforces power relations between state and society and between majority and minority groups in society in a hierarchical way, stabilises existing power relations and justifies them.

An example of statist discourse is the following phrase : 'The teaching of Latvian history as a separate subject would foster the young generation to look at the world and from the position of the Latvian state, thus getting a better awareness of their national identity.'

III. The scale of **commercialisation/ internationalisation** and **professionalisation/ internationalisation** discourse.
The texts were also grouped according to the presence of *commercialisation/ internationalisation discourse* (describing processes in society, research and education as driven by market and

globalisation, both shown as threats, and thus 'deviating' from what is assumed to be true values of education and culture), or to the *professionalisation/ internationalisation discourse* (describing processes in society, research and education as moving in the direction of increasing professionalisation in adherence to European and international standards). Another type of professionalisation discourse often present in the analysed body of texts could be described as the *professionalisation/ communication discourse*, constructing public policy as a field of informed debate.

Summing up the conclusions of discourse analysis, the 'maps' of discourses produced by respective departments emerge.

Taking first the presence of nationalist discourse as a criterion (Table 1.1), one can see that while some individual texts reproducing nationalist discourses have been produced at Social Science departments, the absolute majority of such texts 'gravitate' towards the Humanities departments, with the important exception of Department of Practical Philosophy (Hum I).

Table 1.1 Nationalist discourse

Department(s)	Text I	Text II	Text III
S Sc I			
S Sc II			
S Sc III		▓ (yellow)	
S Sc IV			
S Sc V			▓ (yellow)
Hum I			
Hum II	▓ (yellow)	▓ (yellow)	▓ (yellow)
Hum III + IV	▓ (yellow)		▓ (yellow)
Hum V + VI	▓ (yellow)	▓ (yellow)	▓ (yellow)

The 'map' of statist discourse more or less repeats the same pattern (Table 1.2)

Table 1.2 Statist discourse

Department(s)	Text I	Text II	Text III
S Sc I			
S Sc II			
S Sc III		▓ (red)	
S Sc IV			
S Sc V			▓ (red)
Hum I			▓ (red)
Hum II	▓ (red)	▓ (red)	▓ (red)
Hum III + IV	▓ (red)	▓ (red)	▓ (red)
Hum V + VI	▓ (red)		▓ (red)

A slightly different picture emerges if one attempts to map the spread of professionalisation/internationalisation and commercialisation/ internationalisation discourses (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Professionalisation/ internationalisation (marked in blue) and commercialisation/ internationalisation discourses (marked in grey)

Department(s)	Text I	Text II	Text III
S Sc I	███	███	███
S Sc II	███	███	
S Sc III	███	███	███
S Sc IV	███	███	███
S Sc V	███	███	███
Hum I	███	███	███
Hum II	███	███	███
Hum III + IV			
Hum V + VI			███

It can be concluded that:

1. While the *professionalisation/ internationalisation* discourse permeates most of the texts produced by Social Sciences departments, it is not evident in the texts produced by Humanities departments with the exception of Department of Practical Philosophy.

2. The presence of nationalist and statist discourses is much more visible in the texts produced by lecturers at Humanities departments.

This may have to do with two factors: 1) the lesser exposure of researchers in Humanities to international academic discourses and public policy discourses (through externally funded activities) and 2) the ideological and discursive frameworks set for government-funded research in Humanities.

The influence of these factors can be seen from the following analysis of activities funded during the 1990s by international donors, and from the analysis of the infrastructure of available funding for research. It is necessary to see, to what extent the spread of nationalist and statist discourses coincides with a lesser degree of structural change influenced by external/ international donors and to what extent the reproduction of *professionalisation/ internationalisation* discourse coincides with more systematic exposure to structural change and impact by international donors.

A question of funding ?

2.1 International donors and the funding of academic activities: a cross-cut

In order to make any conclusions concerning the evidence of impact of external donors on academic

discourses we first need to see, which departments made use of available external funding from international organisations that came to the country with a democratising mission, and for what types of activities they used it.

While changes of curriculum and, to a lesser extent, of teaching methods have taken place in virtually all study programmes of the departments included in this study, the scale of change (including organisational aspects such as restructuring or creation of new departments, number of international exchange lectureships, such as CEP or Fulbright Fellowships, per department, creation of new departmental libraries) has been greater in the case of Social Science departments.

Table 2 Involvement of external (international) donors in the activities of departments and individual lecturers/researchers at the departments. University of Latvia, 1990s.

Department(s)	Department created anew in the 1990s	Types of activities sponsored by international donors (according to interviews)	OSI-related agencies, US and EU government agencies, UN agencies up to 2000
Political Science	Y	Curriculum and programme development, library development, international conferences, international research projects, individual, departmental and interdepartmental research projects, visiting lecturers❖ ('several every year'), exchanges, creating German-Latvian centre for social science literature (DELA), creating Eurofaculty (with the assistance from several EU countries and US), individual mobility	SFL, CEP, HESP, CEU (CRC) UNDP, TEMPUS, Phare, Fulbright, Volkswagen Stiftung
Sociology	Y	Curriculum and programme development, individual, departmental, interdepartmental and international research projects, conferences, visiting lecturers, individual mobility, participation in CEU summer schools/ seminars	SFL, HESP, CEU, UNDP, Phare, Fulbright, DAAD or Robert Bosch 'all donor organisations that there have been in Latvia'
Communication Studies	Y	Curriculum and programme development, library development, individual, departmental, interdepartmental and international research projects, conferences, visiting lecturers, exchanges, individual mobility, participation in CEU summer schools/seminars	SFL, CEP?, HESP,CEU UNDP, Nordic Council, Phare, Fulbright
Psychology	Y	Curriculum development, individual, departmental, interdepartmental and international research projects, visiting lecturers, individual mobility	SFL, CEP, UNDP, Phare, Fulbright
Teacher Training		Curriculum development, book projects,	SFL, TEMPUS, World

Department(s)	Department created anew in the 1990s	Types of activities sponsored by international donors (according to interviews)	OSI-related agencies, US and EU government agencies, UN agencies up to 2000
		development of state standards of education for schools, individual and international research projects, visiting lecturers, individual mobility	Bank, Robert Bosch, DAAD, British Council, Katolisches Akademisches Austauschdienst
Baltic philology/ Latvian literature		Book projects, one course development, visiting lecturers, international conference, individual research projects (also individual involvement in international research projects), individual mobility	SFL, Fulbright, UNDP, TEMPUS, DAAD, Nordic Council, NORFA
History of Latvia/ History of Western Europe and the USA		Book projects, individual research projects, German-Latvian information centre – library, visiting lecturers, individual mobility, conferences	SFL, Robert Bosch, Humboldt Stiftung, Volkswagen Stiftung
Practical Philosophy		Curriculum development, book projects, individual research projects, visiting lecturers, international conferences, individual mobility	SFL, HESP, DAAD, Nordic Council
History of Philosophy		Book translation projects, individual research projects (also individual involvement in international research projects), visiting lecturers, individual mobility	SFL, Fulbright, DAAD, Volkswagen Stiftung

❖ By 'visiting' lecturers here meant only lecturers (Fulbright, CEP, others) teaching for at least one semester

<u>Abbreviations</u>: SFL – Soros foundation Latvia, CEP – Civic Education Project, HESP – International Higher Education Support Programme, CEU – Central European University, CRC – Curriculum Resource Centre, UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, DAAD – Deutsches Akademisches Austauschdienst

The nature of activities mentioned by representatives of departments and implemented with the help of external international donors can be roughly subdivided into 2 categories:
- **individual activities involving academic mobility, research, book translation**
- **department-based activities involving development of new curricula, programmes, procedures and collective research projects (also involving several departments), as well as organisation of inter-departmental and international conferences.**

It can be seen from Table 2 that while representatives of both Humanities and Social Sciences departments have taken part in the first (individual) type of activities, the difference lies in the extent of involvement in larger-scale curriculum development and collective research projects (going beyond the boundaries of one department), where the Social Sciences Departments have been more active. This

especially concerns activities aimed at the (re-)construction of curriculum and of whole study programmes.

Four out of five analysed Social Science departments have been subject to greater organisational transformation than Humanities departments analysed here. They or the study programmes they implement were created anew, with significant role in this process played by funding and other support from external international donors. In 2000, the departments of Political Science, Sociology and Communication Studies became part of the newly created Faculty of Social Sciences. Thus their administrative and symbolic separation from their earlier 'roots' in the organisational structures of disciplines such as History, Philosophy and Philology was complete. The department of Psychology, likewise a product of transformations that came with democratisation and independence, is part of the (also largely transformed) Faculty of Pedagogic and Psychology, so is the Department of Teacher Training. The Faculties of History and Philosophy and of Philology, on the other hand, have preserved their administrative structure from the Soviet times largely unaltered, not counting some restructuring and the disappearance of 'ideological' departments. This leads us to the conclusion that **the impact of external donors on Social Sciences departments was combined with the impact of structural innovation and change**.

The following conclusions are relevant for the present study:
1. The types of activities implemented with the support of international donor organisations at Social Science departments differed from the types of activities implemented at Humanities department, and more often concerned major structural changes in the organisation of teaching (such as development of new programmes) and collective research projects.

2. Social Science departments have been created anew or underwent great structural changes, including development of study programmes in new disciplines, in the 1990s. This is for the most part not the case with Humanities departments.

2.2 Attitude towards changes in academic life since the early 1990s

Interviews (at least two lecturers from each department and deans of two faculties have been interviewed for this study) have revealed a difference in evaluation of the main aspects of organisational and academic changes that have taken place in Latvia since the late 1980s. While individual lecturers of the Social Sciences departments differ as to the extent of impact external donors had on the transformation of teaching and research practices at their departments, almost all assessments coincide in describing the changes that took place in their area in the 1990s in terms of *internationalisation* and *professionalisation*, moving towards what many called 'international' or 'western' standards in teaching and research. Internationalisation is mentioned also by the lecturers of the Humanities departments, however, in their interviews processes connected with the opening up of their academic domain towards the west are seen as more contradictory, often with negative connotations of *commercialisation* and erosion of what is viewed as 'true' standards of scholarship. The impact of external donors is evaluated differently, with more emphasis on the funding inequalities inherent in the positions of Humanities and Social Sciences and sometimes with emphasis on the internal inequalities of funding in international projects, e.g.: 'I know the rules set by the European Commission, I know that a certain Heinrich from Denmark is getting several times as much for the same work that I am doing' (Lecturer, departments of Baltic Philology/ Latvian Literature).

While the reconstruction of study programmes has taken place everywhere, in the Humanities the interviews reveal that it was first and foremost viewed as reconstruction/change of ideological approach. When asked about the main changes in academic life since 1991, 'creative freedom, demise of Marxist ideology' and 'disappearance of ideological pressure' were mentioned first of all, along with complaints about imperfect and scarce funding systems, lack of interest/ understanding on behalf of politicians and – at least in two cases – disorientation and moral problems arising either from 'the lack of common state ideology' or from 'the new ideologies' of the free market. While they deplored the presence of the Soviet ideology, many lecturers in the Humanities are the ones who express explicit or implicit desire to participate in the construction of a new state ideology, as both the interviews and the texts analysed in the current study reveal:

'Moral problems are left on the margins, at the moment we lack a common state ideology. I sometimes say – we have minister for this and minister for that, but there is no minister for ideology... Some new state ideology has to be created, and that needs a scientific basis' (Lecturer, Department of Baltic Philology).

A quotation from Robert Bosch Lecturer Anuschka Tischer, speaking of the History Departments, illustrates a situation which is common, with some exceptions, also in other Humanities departments:

'Historical research in Latvia is extremely nationally oriented. At the moment, there is a general consensus between society and historians, that identity should be constructed of national categories. 'On the territory of today's Latvia' is a typical extension to the titles of research papers, even if the research is about burial culture in the 14th century, as if the political transformation processes, ethnic migrations and everything that usually makes up history, have left no traces, as if borders themselves are not first of all a product of historical development... This national self-limitation, however, is an obstacle to the integration into international academic community, which would have improved the academic level (Tischer, 2005).'

Putting this statement in context, it is important to add that while historians stressing their adherence to the 'international' or 'European' paradigm are also represented at the History departments, their impact is less visible in public debate, since they are compartmentalised within the (scarcely funded) areas of Medieval or Early Modern History, not in the prioritised (in terms of policy debate and research funding) area of twentieth-century history.

Interviews with some lecturers and researchers confirm the existence of the belief that peculiarities of Latvian culture, language, literature and history cannot be easily 'translated' into the language of international scholarship:

'We have to consider access to literature. I assume that for political scientists or economists there is no great difference, if you read a good book which is published in England or America, but in our faculty, where many things are connected with *Lettonica* studies, there are no such textbooks, and we still have to practice the oral genre and to work proceeding from the real situation.' (lecturer, Department of History of Philosophy)

The existence of a similar attitude to the uniqueness and 'untranslatability' of Latvian experience also among the younger generation of future researchers is critically noted in an interview by a lecturer of a Social Science department:

'In a seminar in Denmark, students from different countries were given a task – to solve an imaginary problem in an editorial office. Students from other countries came back, each group with their solution. The Latvian group came back without a solution, saying that the situation described in the task was untypical for Latvia and therefore not relevant to them.' (Lecturer, Department of Communication).

Those representatives of Humanities departments who view these developments more critically and

who analytically distance themselves from the aspects of stagnation in their disciplines, tend to speak of 'insufficient openness', 'the lack of interaction between Humanities and Social sciences', pointing out that 'each discipline is in its own shell'.

A very different picture emerges from the interviews at the Social Sciences departments. There, the emphasis is on the internationalisation of academic content and research and teaching processes, and on the growth of professional standards (viewed also, essentially, in connection with internationalisation – e.g. 'now we gradually reach western criteria'). The word 'internationalisation' itself was mentioned by some interviewees. Creation of study programmes and new curricula, sometimes from scratch, is described as a process that involved the influence of external donors and international academic associations, while also involving participatory approach (e.g., consulting with students in the process of curriculum development).

Two conclusions concerning the attitude of academic staff towards changes in academic life in the 1990s are particularly relevant for this study:

1. There is a difference in attitude towards the changes that took place in academic life during the 1990s between the lecturers of Humanities and Social Sciences departments. While the lecturers of Social Sciences departments for the most part evaluate the impact of internationalisation of academic life as positive, lecturers in the Humanities express concerns about the commercialisation of academic life which, in their opinion, undermines academic standards.

2. Lecturers at the departments of Humanities frequently view external forces, such as international influences and free market, as a source of threats for the social and cultural mission of their disciplines, and occasionally express regrets that 'the state' or politicians do not support them sufficiently in order to create new ideological framework for the preservation of 'national identity' or 'traditional values' from these perceived threats.

2.3 Research funding infrastructure: university-based researchers in Humanities and Social Sciences in Latvia vis-à-vis government and international donors

As a locus of academic teaching and research, the development of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University has to be viewed from this dual functional perspective. The lecturers interviewed in the course of this project are also active researchers – it is important, therefore, to see what kind of policy and funding infrastructure defines the priorities of their research activities.

As in most countries of CEE, towards the end of the 1990s international donors that came to Latvia with funding specifically earmarked with the message of (re)constructing democracy – such as OSI-related agencies – have decreased in their relative importance in the spectre of available sources of funding.

Today, EU funding sources and, in some cases, government sources of funding are at the top of priority list. These, however, are more readily available to researchers in Natural and sometimes Social Sciences, and only in specific areas are accessible to the researchers in Humanities. The Latvian Council of Science – the body responsible for distributing government research funding in Latvia – offers grants across a number of disciplines, including Humanities and Social Sciences.

Research priorities in Latvia, according to policy documents, include the so-called *Letonica* – what could be described as 'Latvian Studies', covering areas of linguistics, literature, cultural anthropology, history, ethnography, and philosophy. As can be seen from the policy document describing this programme, the social, political and educational function of *Letonica* is at least partly ideological and viewed as such by the authors of this programme. Funding made available to Humanities through the Latvian Council of Science is also selective and does not cover topics of research going beyond Latvian subject-matter (e.g. European literature).[1]

Modest, but symbolically significant Latvian government funds are available to historians studying the events of the Second World War (including the Holocaust) and the ensuing Soviet repressions during the 1950s.

Within the modest limits of available government support, the creation of funding guidelines for research is at least partly in the hands of the administrative and academic elite of Humanities departments of the University of Latvia, which often coincides with the administrative elite of Humanities research institutes. The institutes (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvian Language Institute, Latvian History Institute and others) are separate administrative entities of the University, which formerly functioned under the auspices of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, and embodied the Soviet principle of administrative separation of research and teaching. After the recommendations developed by the Danish Research Council in 1992, the process of integration of research institutes into universities was started. The reform of the administrative system of research in Latvia was also influenced by the report of National Science Foundation European bureau (1996), by a report prepared by Coopers and Lybrand in 1997 (commissioned by the EC) and by the European Commission 'Agenda 2000' conclusions.[2]

The extent of integration of humanities research institutes into University of Latvia differs on individual basis. Some lecturers at University departments have spent most of their academic career at the institutes, and some are not connected with the institutes at all. For researchers in the Humanities employed both by University departments and the institutes, funding opportunities through government grant schemes such as *Letonica* are a significant source of support for their research. Their inclusion in these grant schemes, on the other hand, depends on the same administrative elite which leads Humanities departments and research institutes. Coordinators of departmental sections of grant projects awarded by the Council of Science can often be heads of University departments or research institutes, and the same administrators sometimes act or acted as Latvian coordinators for EU-funded projects under the 5th and 6th Frameworks. What is more, the chairperson and several members of the United Expert Commission on Humanities and Social Sciences, responsible for approval of project applications for Council of Science grants are also heads of Humanities departments or institutes. The transparency of this system is limited, because one researcher can be involved in many projects funded through different channels, even though most of the government funding would be coming from the same source. The concentration of decision-making powers in the hands of a limited circle of leading researchers, on the other hand, is very high.

The infrastructure of government funding for research in Social Sciences and Humanities

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[1] Data about project topics and grants awarded by the Latvian Council of Science is available in Latvian and partly in English at http://www.lzp.lv/latv/centr.htm

[2] National Concept on the Development of Research in Latvia, 1998, http://www.lzp.lv/latv/centr.htm

inevitably circumscribes the choice of legitimate research topics to areas that are viewed as significant to the Latvian state identity. It would be a mistake to state that government funding in the Humanities is equally available for research on all 'Latvian' topics – the likelihood of a serious grant being awarded for the study of the political culture of aristocratic landowners in Courland during the Enlightenment is not high. A cursory analysis of the topics of research selected for funding in the 2004 project of *Letonica* programme and of the grants awarded by the Latvian Council of Science confirms this conclusion.[3] Some Humanities researchers at the University of Latvia research institutes (e.g. the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology) take part in applied research projects – for example, those funded by Society Integration Foundation (EC (Phare)/ Latvian government), however, their participation in such projects is proportionately lower than that of social scientists.

In the Social Sciences, on the other hand, priority is given to research on the political, social and cultural phenomena in today's Latvia from the perspective of development, European integration or internationalisation. The titles of research projects are influenced by EU institutional discourse and the discourse of other international organisations, such as UNDP. Government funding may be limited, but owing to the international political context and membership in the EU and NATO it is available for studies of topics such as European integration, cooperation for development, gender equality, or even for the study of the influence of elite discourses on interethnic relations. It may come in different shapes: through government institutions commissioning policy research, or through the University itself.[4] And it is still supplemented by EU, UNDP and other international funding sources for applied research, available through tenders and open competitions. These sources are mutually independent and only seldom the channels through which they are available coincide with the triadic hierarchy of Department - Research Institute - Council of Science. **The ideological limitations effectively imposed through the configuration of available funding on researchers in the Humanities are thus virtually non-existent in the Social Sciences.**

As a result, the chances of a researcher in the Humanities to acquire funding for research on a topic not previously circumscribed for him or her by an ideological programme, embodied in government funding guidelines, are much lower than the chances of a social scientist who chooses to adapt a more international and possibly more critical approach to the Latvian social and political reality.

On the other hand, many of the funding opportunities for applied research that offer themselves to scholars in the Social Sciences, come from international organisations that promote international policy discourses – e.g. human development discourse (UN, UNDP), European integration discourse (European Commission, other EU agencies), social and ethnic integration discourse (Phare via Society Integration Foundation – co-funded by Latvian government), human rights discourse (OSI, Council of Europe, UN, EU agencies, other organisations), gender equality discourse (EU, UN, OSI) and others.

2.4 Involvement in policy debate

It was observed above that researchers in Social Sciences are under greater pressure to engage in applied research through their practical involvement in applied projects funded by Phare, UNDP and

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[3] http://www.lzp.lv/latv/centr.htm
[4] E.g. Larger-scale interdisciplinary research projects in Social Sciences at the University of Latvia in 2003 and 2004 included topics such as Conceptual framework of Europeanisation, Innovation policies in the EU, Social processes in Latvia and the influence of European integration.

other international funding sources, with no equivalent exposure in the Humanities. This implies that representatives of Social Sciences are pragmatically involved in policy debate involving diverse communities and social groups, and the debate has been until now stimulated by UNDP and other international agencies. The involvement of Humanities scholars in the Latvian policy debate has been predominantly of a different character – through conferences and publications in the media, as well as through applied projects in more limited areas (compared to, e.g., public administration reform) – such as improving the methods of Latvian language teaching. The two types of involvement imply different models of interaction.

While presenting research results at conferences or publishing articles in the media is unquestionably important, the impact of direct involvement in applied research, such as preparation of UNDP Human Development Reports, on the transformation of academic discourse may have been greater because it implied direct engagement and dialogue with diverse groups within the policy community, as well as a more direct engagement with discourses represented by international agencies.

The exposure of researchers from selected Social Science departments, for example, to human development discourse, can be traced from a brief analysis of their involvement in the preparation of Human Development Reports for Latvia. The Report for 2000/2001 was prepared by a team headed by the head of Sociology Department, with representatives of Sociology Department and Political Science Department. Sociologists and political scientists from other universities in Latvia also took part in the project. The Human Development Report 2002/2003 was prepared by a team including head and several representatives of Psychology Department, as well as two lecturers from Political Science department. Interviews with participants of these research teams in the press support the conclusion that they were aware of the critical role their research will play in the public sphere: thus, head of Sociology Department called the Report which he edited 'a weapon for the defence of public interests'.

Whether the discourses promoted by OSI were as effectively absorbed by departments, is a more complicated issue, since this support, as a rule, came through individual channels such as CEP and Robert Bosch lecturers, trips to CEU events, or book and conference projects supported through Soros Foundation Latvia. Interviewed representatives of departments had difficulty identifying the impact specifically of OSI-supported activities, even though at all selected departments some activates were implemented. Some of the texts included in analysis sample and demonstrating unequivocal presence of statist and nationalist discourses in fact come from former grantees of OSI-funded education development projects, whose political or institutional embeddedness (at the centre of government funding system for Humanities) makes them unlikely promoters of open society ideas.

We can thus conclude that:
   1. The configuration of research funding infrastructure available to Latvian scholars in Humanities and Social Sciences differs significantly, with funding for Humanities coming from the most part through the Council of Science with distinct ideological guidelines attached to it. The sources of available research funding in Social Sciences are more diversified.

   2. The exposure of researchers in Social Sciences to international policy discourses (such as human development discourse, human rights discourse, gender equality discourse) was and is much greater owing to their involvement in applied research projects funded by UNDP and other UN agencies, EU agencies and programmes, and other international organisations

promoting those discourses. No equivalent exposure is evident in Humanities.

Unique or comparable? Putting the Latvian case in perspective by comparison with Romania

3.1 The impact of international funding on departments

The conditions under which academic and political change happened in Romania in the early 1990s can be compared to those in Latvia, though the aspect of ethnic mobilisation was not so prominent. Interviews with department representatives from the University of Bucharest illustrate for the most part the same importance attached to the removal of ideological barriers after 1989 and the same or even greater importance attached to the processes of transformation of academic life – establishing the link between teaching and research, introduction or 'restoration' of Social Science disciplines and the impact of openness and internationalisation. References to shortages of government funding during the 1990s (and even today) are also common in interviews with lecturers, especially in Humanities, both in the Latvian and in the Romanian case.

The establishment of Social Science departments in the early 1990s in Romania can be compared to the establishment of similar departments in Latvia, and it can be seen from the table below that at least in the limited number of cases analysed here (all from the University of Bucharest), the extent of structural transformation and the involvement of external donors in the development of Social Science departments was at least as significant (and perhaps more significant) than in the case of Latvia. Of the two Humanities faculties analysed here, the Faculty of Philosophy at least shows a much higher extent of involvement of international donors in the funding of 'transforming' activities such as programme development than the two Philosophy departments analysed in Latvia.

Table 3. Involvement of external (international) donors in the activities of departments and individual lecturers/researchers at the departments. University of Bucharest, 1990s.

Department(s)	Department created anew in the 1990s	Types of activities sponsored by international donors (according to interviews)	OSI-related agencies, US, Canada and EU government agencies, UN agencies up to 2000
Political Science	Y	Creation of French, English and Romanian modules of study, establishment of Master-level study programmes, curriculum development, visiting lecturers, summer schools, research projects involving several lecturers from the department, individual mobility, journal publishing	OSI-Romania, HESP, CEP TEMPUS, Socrates, Fulbright, Agence Universitaire (French government), World Bank
Communication	Y	Establishment of Master-level study	OSI-Romania, HESP,

Department(s)	Department created anew in the 1990s	Types of activities sponsored by international donors (according to interviews)	OSI-related agencies, US, Canada and EU government agencies, UN agencies up to 2000
		programmes, curriculum development, establishment of Research Centre for Canadian Studies, visiting lecturers, library development, individual mobility	CEP TEMPUS, Socrates Fulbright, USAID, French government, Canadian government funding, Nordic Council of Ministers
History (several departments)		Establishment of research centres at the Faculty of History, development of research base, visting lecturers, applied projects (textbooks, seminars for teachers), individual mobility	OSI-Romania, HESP, CEP Phare, TEMPUS, Socrates, EuroClio, Körber Stiftung (Germany) Fulbright World Bank
Philosophy (several departments)	Some departments	Establishment of Department of Moral political Philosophy, establishment of Master-level study programmes, curriculum development, individual research grants to professors, individual mobility 'In 1997, all projects funded by international donors at the Faculty of Philosophy amounted together to approximately 1 million USD' (from interview with former Dean)	OSI-Romania, HESP, Phare, TEMPUS, Fulbright, Netherlands government, British Council World Bank

The establishment of a large number of research centres or seminars at the History Department (working independently from the institutes of Romanian Academy) and the establishment of new departments and programmes with significant involvement of international funding (including OSI funding) at the Faculty of Philosophy seem to indicate **a greater impact of international donors on the transformation of research and teaching in Philosophy and History in Romania than was the case in Latvia.**

16

3.2 Research funding structures for Humanities and Social Sciences in Romania today

A major difference between the Romanian and the Latvian system of funding for research in Humanities and Social Sciences at the moment seems to be the existence of several alternative channels of government funding in Romania, while in Latvia the government system of research funding is streamlined through the Latvian Council of Science. Romanian university-based researchers can apply for the funds made available through the council established by the National Ministry of Education with the support from World Bank and Phare programme (CNCSU), which distributes grants for research. On the other hand, the Romanian Academy still maintains a system of research institutes separate from universities with its own funding system and an open grant competition for all recongised researchers. While from the point of view of priority-setting and accountability in research funding on the national level the benefits of a dual system are questionable, for individual researchers it may mean more flexibility and less centralised control over preferred topics and agenda for research.

The establishment of CNCSU and research funding channeled through it with support of World Bank and Phare programme was a response to the failure to establish a close link between university-based research and society (and the market) in the process of higher education reform and search of the universities for autonomy in the 1990s. As pointed out in the recommendations on which the Phare project was based in 1998,

> 'The changes in our universities have focused on the (macrosystemic) framework, breeding an institutional autonomy that has severed the institutions of higher education from the world around them, the economy and the community. Once isolated, universities have come to be dominated by a category of professors, most of them accomplished, who share among themselves cognitive territories and privileges, forsaking the constant and responsible concern for new developments steered toward research and accessible to economy.[5]'

This description to a large extent fits also the situation of many academic departments in Latvia in the 1990s, and even of some departments today. In Latvia, however, no major involvement of international donors such as World Bank in the establishment of an alternative system for university research funding has happened. The only comparable programme that existed in the 1990s was the programme of funding for fundamental research (not in Humanities and Social Sciences) ran by Soros Foundation Latvia in cooperation with MOES in the 1990s (since 1995 – with matching government funds).

Since the late 1990s, reform of academic research and university teaching in Romania was facilitated by two specially created departments at the National Ministry of Education – The World Bank Higher Education Reform Project Department and The Phare Reforms Projects Department. As a result, channels for funding of research (grants to research teams and universities) were created with the direct involvement of major international donors, and the conditionality implied by the donors led to the creation of research funding guidelines that were output-oriented and universal, not creating enclaves of ideologically conditioned research funding for Humanities and Social Sciences. Based on the project prepared in the framework of the PHARE Programme for the Reform of Higher Education and with the assistance of CEPES/UNESCO (1998), complimentary funds earmarked for research were provided to selected teams of researchers, based on a set of criteria elaborated by the CNCSU.

The extent of cooperation between departments of Humanities and Social Sciences in Romania was difficult to establish from the interviews, since there are contradictory opinions on this issue. At the

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[5] Higher Education in a Learning Society: Argument for a new national policy on the sustainable development of higher education. http://www.edu.ro/highereducation.htm#G

same time, it is important to note that at least one type of institutional framework for such cooperation exists in the body of the New Europe College – Romania, an independent Romanian institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences founded in 1994 by Professor Andrei Plesu within the framework of the 1994 established New Europe Foundation (a private foundation subject to Romanian law).

In 1998, the New Europe College was awarded the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize* for its achievements in setting new standards in higher education and research. In 1999, the Romanian Ministry of Education officially recognized the New Europe College as an institutional structure of continuous education in the humanities and social sciences, at the level of advanced studies. It awards scholarships and grants to scholars both in Social Sciences and Humanities – 320 such grants were awarded between 1994 and 2004. The international conferences and seminars regularly organised by New Europe College gather high-profile researchers from different countries and thus facilitate the involvement of Romanian scholars in the international academic milieu while keeping them focused on the social, political and economic challenges faced by their country and by Europe at large. The independence of New Europe College from direct government control and its international funding sources guarantee that this involvement and debate is not subject to priorities imposed by policy makers, but rather responds to the needs in society and the sensitivities of the academic community.

Transformed, but how influential?

As some of the interviews with former CEP lecturers and department heads demonstrate, the way in which academics influence the policy process in Romania differs from that in Latvia:

'Policy-makers are willing to work with experts from Social Sciences – for example, a number of professors worked as advisers to previous government. Our dean was adviser to the President in 1998-2000, and now he holds a government position again. There is a lot of 'co-optation' into government. Experts co-operate by being employed in the government structures – they are not invited to work on documents as members of civil society.' (Lecturer in Political Science, former CEP Fellow).

While in Latvia in the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s such cases are increasingly rare, it is the government embeddedness of prominent academics in Romania that poses the question about the limits to their capacity to act as constructive critics/ independent evaluators of government policies, or, indeed, as independent voices influencing the policy process. One of the reasons why this may be so is the current stage of development of Romanian public administration, less open to consultations in the policy-making processes than the public administration in Latvia (progress of reform of public administration was one of the criteria in which Romania lagged behind Latvia in European Commission country progress reports).

The following conclusions can be made from the above:
1. The impact of international funding on the creation of Social Science departments and new study programmes in the 1990s seems to have been at least the same as in Latvia (and   was greater in the case of Humanities departments analysed here).

2. The scope of opportunities to influence the policy process for academics outside the civil service and political parties seems at the moment to be more limited in Romania. This may be connected with the extent to which respective public administration systems are   ready   to absorb recommendations coming from civil society and to envisage the   involvement   of

independent academic experts in public policy.

Conclusions

In the first part of this paper, it was argued that two factors:
- lesser exposure of researchers in Humanities to international academic discourses and public policy discourses (through externally funded activities) and
- the ideological and discursive frameworks set for government-funded research in Humanities

influenced the limited spreading of internationalisation/ professionalisation discourses and the relative proliferation of nationalist and statist discourses in the Humanities milieu.

A comparison with the case of some departments in Romania shows that the extent of restructuring implemented with direct impact of international funding at Humanities departments could be greater – this, however, did not happen in Latvia.

At this stage, it is not to be expected that a large amount of international funding will descend on Humanities departments in Latvia with the aim of promoting liberal discourses. Nevertheless, there are several ways in which the discursive separation between Humanities and Social Sciences milieus could be overcome and the sense of 'external threat' from the forces of free market and internationalisation among Humanities academic community can be diminished.

One such way is greater interaction and cross-fertilisation among Humanities and Social Sciences milieus. Most lecturers and researchers in Social Sciences interviewed for this study (those who began their career in Latvia before 1990) came from Humanities departments – however, most of them have also 'cut the bond' connecting them to those departments.

Another way is providing a greater incentive for Humanities scholars to get involved in projects touching on issues of public policy in areas other than just funding for Humanities research and ethnic politics (the two areas where their involvement was most in evidence so far) – dealing with topics of development and knowledge-based society, from education policies to adjust to future challenges of the labour market, to Latvia's contribution to EU policy debate and to the development and democratisation in other countries. This is not to say that immediate excellence of input from Humanities departments in projects in these policy areas can be achieved. However, the same problem was faced when lecturers from fledgling Social Sciences departments were first involved in public policy projects in the mid-1990s. Many of them have learned by doing – hence their comparative advantage today.

Recommendations

I. Recommendations for international donor organisations :

A. Involving Humanities departments in interdisciplinary projects on issues related to development and knowledge-based society, the future of education and the challenges of labour market, the future of the EU, cooperation for development, and other issues with high exposure

to international discourses.

Any organisation funding research projects and seminars on these issues in the region can contribute by involving Humanities scholars and departments in these activities in a more systematic way than it has happened so far. This option depends on the willingness of the organisations which fund such projects – from UNDP (no longer active in Latvia as of 31 December 2005 but still active in the region) and World Bank and European Commission to OSI programmes such as HESP (including AFP) and country representatives of OSI programmes.

The main disadvantage of this option is that most probably in many cases the quality of input from Humanities departments and scholars in such projects may be uneven, because their involvement in similar projects before may have been limited. Social Sciences have a comparative advantage here. Nevertheless, some examples show that such involvement is possible – thus, UNDP has chosen the Institute of Political Studies of the University of Latvia as the future base for Human Development Reports in the country and some Humanities scholars were involved in the production of the reports.

Besides, opening up of Humanities academic community, which would bring about improvement of academic standards and international relevance of the work they produce, is a valid policy goal in itself. International organisations working for the promotion of such values as human development, open society or even competitive knowledge-based economy in the EU should be interested in the support of local academic communities for these values. Without providing the incentive of funding and the challenge of working in cross-disciplinary projects together with social scientists, this support may remain questionable.

This brings us to a second, wider policy option, which also presents the greater challenge:

B. Diversification of research funding for the Humanities

It is difficult to hope that government-funded bodies such as the Council of Science in Latvia could be persuaded to support the creation of alternative channels of government funding that would undermine their own administrative and ideological monopoly. The target audience for this recommendation, therefore, is the same as for the previous group of recommendations, and consist of international donor organisations and major private donors.

> **Policy Option B1**: **the creation of an alternative source of funding for quality research in Humanities and Social Sciences in Latvia**.
> Bodies like this have been created in a number of CEE countries, sometimes combining government and independent funding, sometimes relying on independent funding entirely (Darvas, 2000).
>
> A potentially promising form for the Latvian case would be an analogue of the New Europe College in Romania - an independent research funding institution with strong executive and academic boards, which would award fellowships to a number of scholars in Humanities and Social Sciences on annual basis.
>
> The advantages of this option are the possibility to open up new perspectives for the development of Humanities disciplines in the country, their greater openness to issues with which intellectual communities across Europe and the world are grappling at the moment (such as the future of Europe, global inequalities and poverty, international migration and others), rather than reinforcing the focus on narrowly conceptualised threats to cultural identity (as is often the case with

Humanities in Latvia at the moment).

The disadvantages are the lack of an easily identifiable source for providing initial funding for such project (though the challenge is not insurmountable) and, more importantly, the lack of an easily identifiable nucleus of scholars that have shown interest to assume leadership in such a project. As pointed out in some studies, the issue of leadership is crucial, and not only at the initial stage (Darvas, 2000). This, however, does not go to say that the option is altogether not feasible.

Policy Option B2 would be **to 'resuscitate' some of the earlier forms of academic programmes coordinated by international donor organisations**, which were active in Latvia in the 1990s but have left it (e.g. CEP), providing more focused support to younger scholars in the Humanities and involving them in international projects and outreach activities.

The advantage of this option is that virtually no new administrative structures would have to be created and departments could benefit, for example, from AFP's Department Development Programme. This would provide a new impetus for change and greater openness. As can be seen from this study, few departments in Humanities have had exposure to such programmes in the 1990s.

The disadvantage, at least at the symbolic level, would be putting Latvia back on the list of countries which were less successful in their transition and which probably need resources for academic reform more than Latvia does at the moment.

II. Recommendation for higher education policy planners at university level

C. Increasing the accessibility of courses taught by representatives of Social Science departments to students from Humanities departments.

Some interaction between Humanities and Social Sciences departments is happening already, but the provision of 'general' courses such as Introduction to Philosophy to students of other disciplines is viewed as a lower priority by departments. Social Science courses should be made more accessible to Humanities students, and vice versa. This need not undermine academic specialisation, but will rather impose greater coherence of academic standards and greater openness to 'external' ideas and normative influences. The implementation of this recommendation depends entirely on local stakeholders at the University. A survey could be conducted to find out how many Humanities and Social Sciences students so far are benefiting from the 'B' (specialised) and 'C '(free choice) part courses at other departments. If managed properly by the university (which should be feasible with the current credit point system), this policy option has no major drawbacks.

The policy options proposed here are not mutually exclusive. Keeping in mind the impact of other processes influencing the academic communities in CEE – such as the Bologna Process and the aspirations of national governments, including Latvian government, to develop knowledge-based economies with emphasis on research and development, the pressure on all academic disciplines to 'open up' to the needs of economic development and 'marketisation' of universities will grow. It is important, however, that Humanities disciplines should not become the marginalised, self-isolated outsiders and 'victims' of these pressures.

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Appendix 1

The texts selected for analysis had to meet the following criteria:
1. For each department, two academic and/ or policy articles and one policy study or policy document text were selected. In one case, when no policy study or policy document produced with the visible participation of department's lecturers between 2002 and 2005 could be identified, two conference papers dealing with policy issues were substituted for it.
2. The articles had to be published between 2002 and 2005 in one of the academic journals for humanities and social sciences in Latvia – *Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas vēstnesis, Latvijas vēsture* or *Letonica*, and/or in a national newspaper or on the Internet website of the Latvian policy community – politika.lv
3. The policy texts could have collective authorship and in some cases the authors could come from more than one department. In such cases, the CDA results for this text were entered under each of the dapartments where academic personnel contributed to the policy document.

Since some of the lecturers published several texts in the eligible sources between 2002 and 2005, and others did not publish any, the samples for some departments contain 2 texts by the same author. Texts that had as their topic the issues of citizenship, nationalism, or nation-state were systematically excluded from the selection.

Appendix 2
List of Interviews

I. University of Latvia
1. Dean, Social Sciences
2. Department Head, Political Science
3. Former Deapartment Head, Political Science
4. Former Deapartment Head, Sociology
5. Lecturer, Sociology
6. Lecturer, Communication Studies
7. Lecturer, Communication Studies
8. Department Head, Teacher Training
9. Lecturer, Teacher Training
10. Department Head, Psychology
11. Lecturer, Psychology
12. Department Head, Baltic Philology
13. Lecturer, Baltic Philology
14. Dean, History
15. Deapartment Head, History
16. Lecturer, History
17. Department Head, Practical Philosophy
18. Lecturer, Practical Philosophy
19. Department Head, History of Philosophy
20. Lecturer, History of Philosophy

II. University of Bucharest
1. Lecturer, Political Science (former CEP fellow)
2. Department Head, Political Science
3. Former Dean, Philosophy
4. Dean, History
5. Lecturer, History (former CEP fellow)
6. Department Head, Communication Studies