WHAT IS THE EMERGING HIGH PARTICIPATION SOCIETY?

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High participation is not universal participation

- Even if a half or more will participate in higher education, another large part of the population still will not have higher education.

- The demographic trends in HPS countries – ageing in most of Europe, Russia, Japan and low/medium growth in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia - set some limits on the share of higher educated populations.

- Not everyone of those enrolled will graduate.

BUT the majority of the working population will probably have higher education in future decades

- e.g. in Russia, already 40% of 25-34 age cohort have higher education credential (ISCED 6 level).

How can we approach the question?

As there is no clear pathway to the answer, we will approach the task from different disciplinary perspectives:

1. **What do we know about the role of higher education in society?**
Let us consider the insights from social theories.

2. **What do we know about the nature of higher education?**
Let us consider the insights from philosophy of education and social sciences.

3. **Having considered the above, what can we say about the emerging society where the majority would have higher education?**

1. What do we know about the role of higher education in society?

1. Major social theories:

- Functionalism: allocates to positions in social and occupational structure, provides socialization, reproduces society;

- Human capital theory: teaching skills, generates capacity for innovations;

- Neo-institutionalism: directly shapes and constructs society rather than reproduces it; links role structure with universalized cultural knowledge; legitimizes knowledge and expert workers;

- Conflict theories, cultural reproduction theories: reinforces power of certain groups through merit-based selection or creation of social barriers;

2. Conceptualizations trying to embrace the nature of higher education and knowledge:

- Higher education as a hub connecting multiple institutional domains (Stevens et al 2008)

- Higher education as a node in a networked knowledge society (Hoffman and Välimaa 2016);

- Social pact between higher education and society (Gornitzka et al 2007)

- Public or common good (Marginson, 2016)

Philosophy of education:

- Bildung and growth;

- Discussion on the applicability of knowledge and skills: humanistic and utilitarian nature of education

- Self-developing individuals to their highest potential as a purpose of education

What about **an individual in social sciences**? Social theories and concepts emphasizing individual's roles and agency:

- Self as a social force and as a social product (Rosenberg 1981)

- Structuration theory (Giddens 1984)

- Social resilience (Lamont 2014)

- Life-course studies

Research on individual agency, structure and higher education:

- Little research on structure and agency in relation to teaching and learning (Ashwin 2008)

- Self-formation through immersion in knowledge in higher education (Marginson 2014, 2016)

The above analysis shows that there are two most important areas in the relationship between higher education and society:

- Social structure: social and occupational structure;

- Individual agency: socialization as human/personal development, higher education as self-formation, derived from concept of Bildung.

We can think of high participation society along these two lines:

- how does high participation in higher education affect the social structure?

- how does high participation in higher education affect socialization/ personal development?

3.2. What can we say about the emerging society where the majority would have higher education?

1. How high participation in higher education might affect social structure

- The culture and values transmitted through HE are shared by a larger proportion of population, thus as some social theories suggest, diminishing social disparities. But HE might be a divisive factor.

- The gap between the positional value of elite and non-elite higher education increases and thus social disparities within the higher educated group increases.

- As the majority will be locked into a non-elite segment, that might create social tensions.

- The role of higher education as a class and status descriptor is changing.

2. How high participation in higher education might affect socialization/ personal development

- Higher education might help develop more agency, but social structure might offer less opportunity.

- Higher education as self-formation might become a way out of the trap of the individual's social position shaped by the social order.

- As higher education becomes a social norm, the socialization period while in HE might be more important.

- Will higher education be able to address its personal development mission under declining resources regime, especially in non-elite sector? What will be the balance of formal and informal education?

What can HPS offer to students and society? And how this can be achieved?

The humanistic Bildung idea originates from the long-standing attempts of scholars to understand the respective positions of the (self)-reflective and self-transforming individual and the changing world, and the relations between the two.

Here there is a permanent tension between the person's perception of her/himself as a free self-determining subject, and that same person's awareness of being determined by the natural and social world. This creates an ongoing duality in modernity (Kivelä, 2012).

This duality opens for analysis an encounter between two different disciplinary traditions that are both directly relevant to HPS of higher education
- the philosophical-pedagogical tradition that inquires into the self-formation of individuals, and
- the sociological tradition that focuses on how individuals are shaped by the social order.

In this intellectual space scholars can develop insights for further areas of research:

What can the purposes of higher education be in HPS society?

- Self-formation (Marginson 2014) as one of the humanistically-oriented approaches.