

# Bourgeois and Citoyens: Challenges for the University and its Graduates

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## Context of short presentation

- work in progress: considerations of HE(-institutions)
  - understanding leading principles
- access
  - research on HE graduates; on ‚governance‘ of HE institutions
  - literature on economisation, New Public Management, entrepreneurship
- perspectives
  - analyzing (political) documents
  - using graduate surveys

## University „today“

“Today, very few dare to call to mind or even demand the realization of the potentially emancipatory duties of the university. The catastrophic current state of the universities - about which there is broad agreement - simultaneously disavows the normative guiding principle following Humboldt, that is frequently put forward, and in the name of which the reform process was tackled [...]. Instead, today, we have a model, in which the university is basically expected to function ‘like a business’ and to demonstrate a ‘certain efficiency’ [...].”

University Reform: Of the Usefulness of its Failure or A Beginning  
Without an End - A Panorama from a Social Theory Perspective  
(Melchior 1991: 20)

## University today

„Austria [...] spends more public money than the OECD-means and has higher expenses than countries with considerably higher education rates. Therefore, higher education is not publicly underfinanced, but rather structurally outdated“

(The Bologna-Process as a Chance for Higher Education Reform in Austria; Schneeberger 2012: 154)

„[...] HE systems in all of the studied countries are becoming increasingly framed by expectations from the world of work and society at large to improve students‘ professional career paths.“

(Employability of Graduates and Higher Education Management Systems - Summary of DEHEMS Project Results 2012: 1)

## Definitions

### Bourgeois - common definitions

- a member of the middle class; DE *der Bürgerliche*
- a person whose political, economic, and social opinions are believed to be determined mainly by concern for property values and conventional respectability
- a shopkeeper or merchant

### Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Le contrat social

- „*Le citoyen est un être éminemment politique (la cité) qui exprime non pas son intérêt individuel mais l'intérêt général. Cet intérêt général ne se résume pas à la somme des volontés particulières mais la dépasse.*“
- ‚The citizen is a highly political being that expresses not its own, individual interest, but rather the common interest. This common interest is not restricted to the sum of individual volitions, but goes beyond these.‘
- DE *der Staatsbürger*

## Prospectives

- Questions listed, could be explored in two ways:
  - analysing documents pertaining to the reformation or development of Higher Education in Austria - with regard to establishing how the guiding principles of *bourgeois* and *citoyen* can be recognised implicitly (or even explicitly); in addition, further guiding principles could be identified (such as the ‘entrepreneurial university’).
  - giving due consideration in graduate surveys (‘tracer studies’) the topic of ‘entrepreneurship’. - This can be done in terms of preparation for self-employment, and in terms of entrepreneurial behaviour and the teaching of these skills at universities and universities of applied sciences.
- A critical view will be appropriate, especially with regard to transferring principles that are probably sensible in one area (enterprises) to another area (university), where the same probability cannot be assumed.

## Main references

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Thank you for your attention!

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