



CHAPTER 4

Boosting Employability Through Fostering an Entrepreneurial Mindset: Critical Analysis of Employability and Entrepreneurship in EU Policy Documents

*Hanna Laalo, Heikki Kinnari, Heikki Silvennoinen,
and Nina Haltia*

INTRODUCTION

Critical analyses on graduate employability have indicated that the relationship between higher education institutions and the surrounding society has changed and that higher education institutions (HEIs) are under growing pressure to effectively produce a skilled labour force for the needs of the economy (Tomlinson, 2019; Hartmann & Komljenovic, 2021). Moreover, critical scholars have shown how individuals have been socialised

This work was supported by the Academy of Finland (grant number 333025)

H. Laalo (✉) • H. Kinnari • H. Silvennoinen • N. Haltia
Department of Education, University of Turku, Turku, Finland
e-mail: hanna.laalo@utu.fi; heikki.kinnari@utu.fi; heikki.silvennoinen@utu.fi;
nina.haltia@utu.fi

© The Author(s) 2023
P. Siivonen et al. (eds.), *Rethinking Graduate Employability in
Context*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20653-5_4

to the idea that they need to develop skills and qualities to maximise their chances of success in the labour market and become employable subjects (Laalo & Heinonen, 2016; Korhonen et al., [under review](#)). Further, it has been noted that these trends have created inequalities in the positionings of HEIs and individuals within the field (Merrill et al., 2020; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

Macro-level analyses on policies and policy discourses at the national and transnational levels, as well as how they are affecting, intertwining and connecting to the phenomena on meso- and micro-levels, have so far been relatively rare (Fejes, 2010; Campbell et al., 2019).

In most countries, educational policy has increasingly been shaped in line with the guidelines, recommendations and ideas formulated by supra-national actors, such as the European Union (EU). Furthermore, in a world of shared political rationality, similar ideas are being developed simultaneously at both the global and national levels. The educational policy reasoning of governments and decision-makers in different countries has converged, and it is now quite in line with one another. The reasoning relies on a much similar rationality: market liberalism. For example, the notion of the necessity of lifelong learning, which is embodied in the EU's employment and education policies, has been widely accepted as a truth in Europe (e.g. Lee et al., 2008). The education policies and truths these policies shape have consequences for the practices of educational institutions as well as for citizens' actions and self-understanding.

Prior research on higher education policies has shown that employability discourse is conjoined with the idea of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (e.g. Tomlinson et al., 2021; Laalo et al., 2019). These themes are also visible in the multiple policy documents published by the EU during the past decade, in the context of building Europe 2020 (see Appendix A). The goal of promoting entrepreneurship in education does not only refer to developing business skills for business purposes but also aims to shape citizens' mindsets and behaviours to make them entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial¹ (i.e. proactive and self-responsible) in various aspects of life (Laalo et al., 2019).

¹The term 'intrapreneurial' refers to entrepreneurial attitude and conduct within an organisation without being an entrepreneur. Baruah and Ward (2014, p. 1) defined intrapreneurship as 'the innovative initiatives undertaken inside an organization (...) Successful ideas within an organization occur due to the tireless persistence and practical imagination of intrapreneurs who are the smart innovators actively involved in the design and creation of new products, ventures and business models. Today there is an increasing global demand for such intrapreneurs and different universities are therefore adopting various entrepreneurship education and training programmes to cater to this'.

This study sheds light on the unintentional and unpredictable consequences of the current employability policy. In this chapter, we analyse the EU's policy language on employability and entrepreneurship; more precisely, we analyse the language on the production of employable graduates. The focus of this analysis is placed on the problems represented in the policy (Bacchi, 2012). From a governmentality perspective, we understand EU communication as a form of exercising power over member states and citizens. Instead of mandatory legislation, the Union's power in education policy is 'soft', persuasive and based on normative pressures created by the open method of coordination, monitoring, assessments and recommendations (Alexiadou, 2014; Corbett, 2005; Lange & Alexiadou, 2010).

This chapter unfolds as follows. First, we present the theoretical background for the analysis and examine how employability and entrepreneurship education are discussed in critical research literature. Next, we describe the research material and the use of critical policy analysis. Thereafter, we present the analysis and argue that, in the EU policy, entrepreneurship education is represented as an empowering solution to boost graduates' employment and economic potential. We illustrate how this endeavour embodies governing by risk or even 'through neurosis' (Isin, 2004) in controlling the hopes and fears of graduates.

GOVERNMENTALITY PERSPECTIVE ON EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

Our theoretical perspective on pursuing graduate employability draws on the conceptualisations of governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Miller & Rose, 2008; Dean, 2010). In general, governmentality is connected to three factors: knowledge, power and truth. Every society has its 'regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth' (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). The mechanisms and instances in discourses establish true and false statements. Techniques and procedures legitimise the acquisition of truth, and those who have power are obligated to state what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, pp. 131–132). Knowledge and truth are dependent on one another, and their bond is needed for establishing power relations. Knowledge is an essential condition for the formation and further growth of an industrial, technological society; however, for Foucault, knowledge and power are not identical—they have a correlative connection that is determined in its historical specificity (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). There is 'a battle around

truth' and an ensemble of rules that separate truth from fiction (Foucault, 1980).

According to the neoliberal 'truth game', all individuals in liberal democracies are responsible for their own employment—and unemployment as well. Individual responsibility is included in the concept of employability; it depicts unemployment as an individual than a structural problem. A shift from speaking about employment to speaking about employability has been going on since 1980s. In the discourses on employability, the individual is constructed as responsible for their own employability, while the state and employers are construed as enablers who make it possible for individuals to develop their qualities and characteristics that make them more employable. Although the responsibility for employability is shared in this way according to the transnational policy texts, it is ultimately the individual who is responsible (Fejes, 2010). This form of governmentality is referred as the 'responsibilisation of the self', wherein the employable self becomes an entrepreneur who has to be conducted according to the truth game of market logic (Rose, 1999). This is how neoliberal governing in an enabling state is based on citizens' seemingly free choices (Rose, 1999).

Like employability, entrepreneurship, in its emphasis on individual responsibility, is related to neoliberalism and educating neoliberal subjects (Berglund, 2013; Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019; Mertanen et al., 2020). Critical studies have paid attention to the neoliberal values in entrepreneurship education and how students are encouraged to become creative, proactive, flexible, responsible and autonomous (e.g. Komulainen, 2006; Berglund, 2013; Laalo et al., 2019). Through entrepreneurial pedagogy, higher education graduates are expected to understand themselves as intrapreneurs who develop their entrepreneurial skills and attitudes and are entrepreneurially devoted to work.

Leaning on previous critical remarks, we argue that while for citizens, entrepreneurship education is presented as a means to gain important life skills and employability, for public authorities, it is a tool to control the population's actions as well as the competence of the workforce. We examine the creation of employable subjects as 'conduct of conduct' seeking to shape graduates' desires, interests and actions according to the expectations and demands of the labour market (Dean, 2010; Miller & Rose, 2008). Beyond the creation of new businesses, the entrepreneurial mindset is an important goal in entrepreneurship education (Lackéus, 2015; Laalo & Heinonen, 2016) and an attribute of employable citizens

(Berglund, 2013), which makes the governmentality perspective relevant. In the following analysis, we perceive entrepreneurship education as a technology of governing, a practice that aims at shaping the employable subject.

Overall, critical analysis of the policy discourse on employability has so far been marginal. In addition, the significance of risk in justifying the promotion of entrepreneurship in education and obliging individuals has not been sufficiently discussed. From the governmentality perspective, we view risk as a technique for governing education and graduates' working lives. This means that risk and uncertainty are not perceived as natural states of things but rather as powerful tools of control related to neoliberalism (O'Malley, 2004; Walklate & Mythen, 2010).

In our interpretation of risk, we draw on Engin Isin (2004), who problematises the neoliberal idea of a purely rational subject. He argues that, instead of calculating rationalities, the subject's, who he labels as a 'neurotic citizen', conduct is increasingly conducted by appealing to fears, anxieties and insecurities. Becoming an employable citizen in precarious societies requires emotional reflectiveness of the self. Isin calls this new form of governmentality as 'governing through neurosis'. Neurotic citizens govern their 'neurotic self' by calculating the risks both rationally and emotionally. As we will later point out, this form of therapeutic governing is also visible in the endeavour to develop graduates' employability.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EU'S EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENTS

The education policy themes of employability and entrepreneurship have both been part of the EU's development of higher education during the past decade. These themes and their intertwinement are discussed in documents focusing on employment and employability (EU, 2011; Humburg et al., 2013) as well as on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (EC, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2015). They have also been addressed in the EU's development strategies and modernisation strategies for higher education (EC, 2011, 2012c, 2013c, 2014b, 2012a, 2019). Our research material comprises texts from these 15 documents (Appendix A). The documents were searched from the Commission's website using the keywords 'employability', 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneurship education'. On the website, we also systematically went

through the sections focusing on higher education. Furthermore, references to previous policy alignments in the documents helped us find the relevant material. We included in the analysis those texts that, either specifically or as part of the big picture, dealt with employability and entrepreneurship in higher education. The chosen documents have been published in 2010–2020 in the context of constructing Europe 2020 by seeking growth and jobs.

The analysed documents have been produced by European Commission officials and experts in education and entrepreneurship (e.g. from ministries, businesses, education institutions and consulting companies). However, it should be noted that while not all of the analysed documents represent the European Commission's official alignments, all documents have been guided by the European Commission's officials; therefore, they indicate the European Commission's policy interests.

The documents may be seen as negotiated products of debate between various actors and interests (Lange & Alexiadou, 2010, p. 447). It should be recalled that while the EU is a powerful authority affecting national education policies, member states and stakeholders simultaneously seek reinforcement of their own interests by pursuing the transnational agendas they consider important (Moisio, 2014). Educational discourses are thus the result of the interaction and negotiation between several actors, and the emergence of new ideas on a global or local political agenda is not a result of one-way imposition. Rather, there exists a network of interaction and influence rather than a top-down exercise of power (Beech, 2009; Lange & Alexiadou, 2010; Moisio, 2014).

We approach the policy documents as governing artefacts, setting guidelines not only for European nations and higher education institutions but also for individuals by defining the necessary skills, competences and personal attributes expected from citizens. On the one hand, EU documents communicate with member states and address training recommendations, expectations and requirements. On the other hand, the documents also speak directly to European citizens, thus seeking to engage all citizens in the common goal of building a successful knowledge-based economy. Hence, in the context of the European knowledge economy and the construction of the European higher education area, the target audience of the documents is not only those who fund, steer and organize higher education, but also the entire European population. The documents bring together the societal and the personal by subjectifying the individual as an active, responsible and employable European. They aim

both to modernise Europe and its citizens and to promote European competitiveness, integration and the inclusion of citizens (See Palola, 2010, p. 189).

The critical policy analysis of our study is based on a post-structural understanding of the intertwinement of knowledge and power (see e.g. Diem et al., 2014), and we thus perceive policy as discourse (Bacchi, 2000). We understand discourse as a system of organising truth and reality (Powers, 2007). It defines right and wrong and shapes subjects' understanding of themselves and their relations to others (Jäger & Maier, 2016). In our study, communicating was recognised as an exercise of power upon subjects (Deacon & Parker, 1995).

Carol Bacchi's ideas on investigating problematisations are useful here; looking at 'what the problem is represented to be' in the policy texts reveals how policy recommendations define social 'problems' and offer solutions to them, thus legitimising certain actions and serving certain interests (Bacchi, 2012; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Problematisations are at the core of the analytics of government since they can be used to regulate subjects' behaviour and actions according to a predefined moral standard (Rose, 1999).

In our reading of the research material, we focused on the control and demands articulated in the policy texts to develop the employability of graduates. Moreover, we paid attention to the position of risk in the texts to see whether and how subjects are being governed by risk (O'Malley, 2004) or, as Isin (2004) puts it, through neurosis. Based on our critical reading and categorisations of the material, we identified three interrelated 'problems' or hindrances of employability that justify the promotion of entrepreneurship in education. In this reasoning, risk is articulated simultaneously as a threat and as an empowering opportunity.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A SOLUTION TO EMPLOYABILITY PROBLEMS

By paying attention to the persuasive language of the policy texts, we identified three problems, all of which represent entrepreneurship education as a source of graduate employability. First, the lack of skills and desired attributes of graduates in the context of Europe 2020 is represented as a key problem. Second, more issues are found in the quality and efficiency of higher education. It is reasoned that higher education, due to its

inadequate contents and methods, fails to offer students what they need to become employable. Third, a risk society and risky labour markets are represented as problematic. To all these three interrelated problems, entrepreneurship education is represented as a solution as it develops entrepreneurial skills, creates connections to businesses and employers and encourages students to tolerate risks.

Problem 1: Lack of Entrepreneurial Skills

In the analysed documents, accounts on employability and entrepreneurship are in line with and strengthened by the EU's endeavours to increase growth and employment. Thus, in the context of Europe 2020, it is reasoned that promoting entrepreneurship in education in order to develop employability is important when fostering economic prosperity. Typically, this is the starting point of the documents:

The Europe 2020 strategy recognises that if Europe is to meet the economic and social challenges it faces, there is a critical requirement for its citizens to become more entrepreneurial across all walks of life—for example, in economic and social innovation, new business creation, employability and active citizenship (especially amongst young people). (EC, 2014a, iii)

In creating Europe 2020, citizens are thus encouraged to become entrepreneurial in all spheres of life. In this reasoning, non-entrepreneurial behaviour appears abnormal and problematic.

In the centre of the endeavours to promote entrepreneurship and employability in education is thus the fostering of citizens who are equipped with skills and competences necessary in the challenging economic circumstances and citizens who not only take care of themselves but also benefit the success of the whole continent. This rhetoric calls for a strong commitment to shared objectives and governs the attributes of individuals in the name of competitiveness:

education, and in particular higher education and its links with research and innovation, plays a crucial role in individual and societal advancement, and in providing the highly skilled human capital and the articulate citizens that Europe needs to create jobs, economic growth and prosperity. (EC, 2011, p. 2)

In the recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning (EU, 2019), the European Union identifies eight key competences that are said to be essential to citizens' employability and overall well-being. One of the identified key competences is entrepreneurship and initiative, which refers to not only citizens' enthusiasm to start businesses but also to a proactive, innovative and self-responsible mindset. The worry over citizens' competences, skills and mentality is visible in the EU's education policy and also concerns higher education, wherein educating employable entrepreneurial subjects seems to have become a central goal.

Maximising graduates' potential in labour markets has become one of the core concerns of higher education, and entrepreneurship education has been presented as a solution. Indeed, employability is a central justification for entrepreneurship education, which is presented as a necessary tool for improving the employability of graduates. Employability and entrepreneurship are intertwined in their shared efforts to govern the ideal labour market citizen, and their relation seems bilateral: one cannot be employable without being entrepreneurial (and vice versa). Entrepreneurship education 'helps to boost career ambitions' and 'leads to higher employability' (EC, 2015, p. 7–8). Similarly, it is emphasised that:

Attention should be particularly focused on the development of entrepreneurial skills because they not only contribute to new business creation but also to the employability of young people. (EC, 2012c, p. 4)

Various positive consequences of entrepreneurship education in terms of employability have been identified. For example, a study report focusing on the effects and impacts of entrepreneurship education explained that:

entrepreneurship education seems to have a positive effect on employability in terms of job experience, creativity in the current job and annual income earned by alumni presently in paid employment. It seems to be easier for entrepreneurship alumni to find employment immediately after their graduation and the chance of being unemployed in the first years after graduation is lower. (EC, 2012a, p. 12)

These conclusions are presented as strong facts, although a closer reading reveals that the reported study is based on self-evaluations of entrepreneurship alumni. On the contrary, in research, the evidence on the impacts

of entrepreneurship education has been challenging to verify (e.g. Lackéus, 2015). In policy language, employability and entrepreneurship are broad and vague concepts; therefore, it is not always easy to perceive causations between them. While entrepreneurship refers to both business behaviour and mindset, employability is related to finding and maintaining a job, wage level and individual skills and attitudes that are desirable in a candidate from an employer's perspective. One such example of a broad definition of employability is to consider it a 'combination of knowledge, competences and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and progress during their career' (EC, 2014b, p. 15).

In entrepreneurship education, employability is parallel to intrapreneurial behaviour, which refers to an individual's ability to entrepreneurially devote to work and be innovative as an employee. Again, this is acknowledged as important for economic reasons:

Entrepreneurship education will make young people more employable and more 'intrapreneurial' in their work within existing organisations, across the social, public and private sectors. Therefore, investing in entrepreneurship education is one of the highest-return investments that Europe can make. (EC, 2013a, p. 4)

Altogether, the core problem shaped in the policy language is the lack of adequate skills and attributes needed for becoming an entrepreneurial labour market citizen. In other words, European graduates are seen as not being well-equipped to meet the demands and needs of the European knowledge economy. For example, reasons for youth unemployment are found to originate from a lack of skills and competences; thus, skills development in entrepreneurship education is a solution to the Europe's economic challenges and unemployment. Overall, describing problems in individual characteristics and responsibilities is emphasised over structural problems; thus, the current perspective on education in the policy is highly individualistic.

Problem 2: Obsolete Higher Education

The role of higher education in this reasoning is to offer opportunities and to make personal development towards employability possible. Higher education is set in a key position in the knowledge economy, which has increased expectations towards higher education institutions. However,

endeavours to modernise European higher education (e.g. EC, 2012c, 2013c, 2014b) reveal the presumptions of outdated contents and methods of present-day higher education. The need to improve the contents of higher education to make it more relevant to the labour market, as well as expectations to increase connections to labour market actors, points out how higher education is currently accused of failing to prepare young people for the labour market. In this reasoning, higher education currently appears to be too academic and theoretical. There seems to be an assumption that by modernising higher education, it is possible to produce employable graduates who are skilled and updated and able to help both themselves and Europe succeed. The attributes of entrepreneurial employability pursued in entrepreneurship education emphasise productivity, adaptability and innovativeness. From the governmentality perspective, the policy texts construct a higher education system that produces able-minded citizens who can guarantee the competitiveness of Europe.

Education and training systems have to be modernised to reinforce their efficiency and quality and to equip people with the skills and competences they need to succeed in the labour market. (EU, 2012a, p. 1)

European education and training systems continue to fall short in providing the right skills for employability and are not working adequately with business or employers to bring the learning experience closer to the reality of the working environment. These skills mismatches are a growing concern for European industry's competitiveness. (EC, 2012c, p. 2)

The graduate who has received high-quality teaching is more likely to be adaptable, assured, innovative, entrepreneurial and employable in the broadest sense of the term. (EC, 2013c, p. 13)

In sum, the problem in higher education that was defined in the documents is the lack of quality and efficiency of teaching and learning, which does not meet the needs of the labour market. The discourse on employability underlines these problems, placing a strong emphasis on practical learning and connections to business and labour market actors. From the governmentality perspective, the objective seems to be the transformation of higher education institutions into more labour market and business-relevant organisations. This emerging transformation of higher education institutions to 'business institutions' will alter the roles of students, teachers and researchers in universities (see also Laalo et al., 2019).

Involving employers and labour market institutions in the design and delivery of programmes, supporting staff exchanges and including practical experience in courses can help attune curricula to current and emerging labour market needs and foster employability and entrepreneurship. (EC, 2011, p. 5)

These wishes are taken to practice and answered in the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education that leans on learning by doing, practical experiences and connections to working life and business (e.g. EC, 2013a, 2013b). For example, in higher education, it is seen as useful to

bring entrepreneurs into the classroom and involve students directly in enterprise projects. Using active learning methods is more complex than traditional teaching methods. It requires engaging students' feelings and emotions in the learning process. (EC, 2012b, p. 70)

This citation is an example of how becoming an employable graduate also requires emotional reflectiveness. This reasoning is a sign of therapeutic governmentality, which emphasises motivation and positive attitudes (see e.g. Brunila et al., 2020). To understand oneself as an employable labour market citizen, one needs to have the capability to control their emotions and affects in unsecure and unpredictable labour markets.

Problem 3: Risk Society and Risky Labour Markets

In committing European graduates to pursue success in their personal lives and in global competition, risk has an important role to play. One presumption that overlaps the texts is that the uncertain nature of society and labour markets demands graduates who can deal with risks. The ability to manage risks is hence part of the desired skills and attributes of the employable subject pursued. The frequent mentioning of crises, change and uncertain circumstances in the documents creates an impression of a fully unpredictable future to which, slightly paradoxically, citizens must be well prepared. Entrepreneurship education, in its attempt to shape the entrepreneurial mindset of students, is thus an apt solution. The use of the term 'we' in the policy language indicates committing and speaking directly to Europeans. It is articulated how challenging times require the responsibility of all citizens:

We need change in Europe. We are facing considerable challenges—challenges too big to be dealt with by any one country acting alone: the economic crisis; unemployment, especially for young people; changing demographics; the emergence of new competitors; new technologies and modes of working. Europe can no longer rest on its laurels. We need to become more outward-looking, more innovative, and to put our societies on a sustainable footing for the future. (EC, 2013c, p. 4)

The analysis revealed three perspectives on risk: the risk society and risky labour markets as a neutral fact, the risk of social exclusion as a deterrence and risk-taking as an empowering skill. First, the uncertainty of the economy and the labour markets is described as a natural phenomenon that individuals cannot escape. In describing the challenges of the knowledge economy, the documents create and maintain an understanding of unavoidable risks and uncertainties that students must simply learn to tolerate. The economic crisis and the uncertainty in the labour market are taken for granted, and the risky nature of society is thus a fact that citizens must accept and adapt towards. The challenging social circumstances are thus used as a justification for shaping the mindsets of individuals.

Indeed, solutions to the challenging social circumstances are found from shaping citizens' mindset and characteristics, which reveals how citizens' attributes, rather than social structures, are constructed problematic: citizens should better fit the surrounding circumstances. Employability in itself is an example of converting structural problems of unemployment to individual problems. This reasoning is typical for neoliberal governing, where gains and losses are individualised.

Second, although risk is depicted as inevitable and acceptable, it is also used as deterrence. For example, in highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship education in order to ensure employability, the lack of entrepreneurial skills and neglecting the demand to develop employability appear as risks of unemployment and social exclusion. For instance, it is explained how 'entrepreneurship education can help to protect an individual against social exclusion' (EC, 2015, p. 12)—implying that a failure to obtain entrepreneurship education involves a social risk.

Although entrepreneurship education is seen as a tool to boost students to pursue success, it is the individual who is responsible for their own success and failure in their risky working life; students are taught to take the future in their own hands, thus bringing about the individual risk of unemployment. Demands for constant personal development and

updating of skills, which the policy documents call for, are preparations for an uncertain tomorrow.

Third, in the goals of entrepreneurial pedagogy, the ability to manage risks holds a strong empowering ethos. For example, a report showing evidence on the impact of entrepreneurship education (EC, 2015) defines the term ‘sense of empowerment’ to be part of entrepreneurial attitude. Entrepreneurial skills, such as taking and managing risk, are acknowledged as important (e.g. EC, 2013a, 2015). Furthermore, taking risks, failing and coping with uncertainty are acknowledged as part of entrepreneurial behaviour and are therefore encouraged. Furthermore, failure, as ‘an integral part of the entrepreneurial process’ (EC, 2013a, p. 53), is positively recognised as a learning experience. Bold risk-takers empowered by entrepreneurship education are to be celebrated. Accordingly, educators and facilitators ‘must be able to create an open environment in which students develop the necessary confidence to take risks’ (EC, 2012b, p. 69).

To conclude, by appealing to risk and uncertain labour markets, students are guided to internalise the importance of constant self-development for demanded knowledge, skills, attitudes and emotions, while higher education institutions are expected to adopt practices to foster such self-reflective subjects. In entrepreneurship education, tolerating uncertainty and learning from failures are important principles (Rae et al., 2012; Komulainen et al., 2020), which reflect the interpretation of risks as something that individuals must accept and adapt to and, in the most successful cases, take advantage of. In sum, risk is inherent in competitive life.

The individualisation of risks is visible in policy discourse. It constitutes the character of a neoliberal or even neurotic citizen who is constantly assessing and developing oneself to manage risks in uncertain environments. In this discourse, it is the individual who must accommodate oneself to risks and uncertainty by becoming proactive and self-responsible.

DISCUSSION: EMPOWERED OR NEUROTIC CITIZENS?

In this chapter, we have analysed the policy documents and language of the European Union to understand how the employable higher education graduate is constructed in EU policy. Our study indicates how European graduates are governed to develop their employability and thus to benefit the European economic area. In light of our analysis, during the past decade, there has been a strong emphasis on EU policy to foster empowered citizens who actively take care of themselves and their employability,

and by doing so also benefit the economic success of the whole of Europe. It appears that entrepreneurship education in creating partnerships with labour market actors and in developing the entrepreneurial mindset and skills of graduates is suggested as an apt solution to problems represented in the policy. This empowerment of citizens is articulated as important in the context of various uncertainties. By appealing to risks and uncertainties, the documents participate in constructing the 'risk society' as a structural fact that individuals must adapt to.

Seemingly, the policy is about 'taking care' of the employability of graduates. However, our analysis also points out how uncertain and risky labour markets are used as deterrence that places pressure on individuals. This is where the image of a neurotic citizen might become materialised: in light of the policy texts, it is the individual who is responsible for constant personal development and updating of skills. This same rhetoric is also familiar with the politics of lifelong learning (Kinnari, 2020). Neglecting these demands may, according to the discourse, lead individuals to drop out of society, thus weakening the position of Europe in global competition. The role of educational institutions and entrepreneurship education as a governing technology is to offer opportunities and tools for the development of personal potential. The perspective on higher education in the policy is thus highly individualistic.

Some scholars have suggested that there is an ongoing turn from neoliberalism to neuroliberalism (e.g. Isin, 2004; Whitehead et al., 2017). In neuroliberalism, individuals are acknowledged as irrational and emotional in their economic behaviour and choices rather than rational decision-makers. This interpretation is legitimated by behavioural economics, psychology and neurological science (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2014). These points also make it interesting to consider the role of emotions in the governing practices appealing to risk. In entrepreneurship education, passion and excitement are emphasised (Berglund, 2013), and in studies addressing the topic, affects and emotions are increasingly investigated and acknowledged as important (Keller & Kozlinska, 2019). When it comes to the production of the neurotic citizen, it seems that both empowering and intimidation play an important role. Governing through neurosis in the context of entrepreneurship education seems to be about balancing threats and opportunities.

In this study, our focus has been on how the subject is objectivised in policy texts (see Deacon & Parker, 1995; Leask, 2012). By studying the policies, we have not been able to reach the level of actual subjectification;

it has been outside the scope of our research to determine how far individuals actually comply with the policies and how far these policies are materialised in practices such as national policies, developmental projects, educational institutions, and so on. The subject always has the power to resist or comply with supranational policy recommendations. This is an important point to be taken into account in future research. Our study has shed light on the unintentional and unpredictable consequences of employability policy, and we believe that investigating this more deeply in the future would be fruitful.

Funding This work was supported by the Academy of Finland (grant number 333025).

APPENDIX A: ANALYSED DOCUMENTS

- European Commission. (2011). *Supporting growth and jobs. An agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems.*
- European Union. (2011). *An agenda for new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment.*
- European Commission. (2012a). *Effects and impact of entrepreneurship programmes in higher education.*
- European Commission. (2012b). *Building entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in the EU.*
- European Commission. (2012c). *Rethinking education. Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes.* Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
- European Union. (2012a). *Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe.* Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET, 2020).
- European Union. (2012b). *Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on the employability of graduates from education and training.*
- Humburg, M., van der Velden, R. & Verhagen, A. (2013). *Final report. The employability of higher education graduates: The employers' perspective. European commission.*
- European Commission. (2013a). *Entrepreneurship education: A guide for educators.*

- European Commission. (2013b). *Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan: Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe*. Communication from the Commission. Brussels: COM (2012) 795 final.
- European Commission. (2013c). *High level group on the modernisation of higher education*. Report to the European Commission on improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions.
- European Commission. (2014a). *Expert group on indicators on entrepreneurial learning and competence: Final report*.
- European Commission. (2014b). *Eurydice Brief. Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability*.
- European Commission. (2015). *Entrepreneurship education: A road to success. A compilation of evidence on the impact of entrepreneurship education strategies and measures*.
- European Union. (2019). *Key competences for lifelong learning*.

REFERENCES

- Alexiadou, N. (2014). Policy learning and Europeanisation in education: The governance of a field and the transfer of knowledge. In A. Nordin & D. Sundberg (Eds.), *Transnational policy flows in European education: The making and governing of knowledge in the education policy field* (pp. 123–140). Symposium Books.
- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300050005493>
- Bacchi, C. (2012). Why study problematizations? Making politics visible. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 2(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2012.21001>
- Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baruah, B. J., & Ward, T. (2014, September 11–13). Enhancing intrapreneurial skills of students through entrepreneurship education : a case study of an interdisciplinary Engineering Management Programme. In *13th International conference on information technology based higher education and training (ITHET)* (pp. 1–6). IEEE, GBR. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ITHET.2014.7155682>.
- Beech, J. (2009). Policy spaces, mobile discourses, and the definition of educated identities. *Comparative Education*, 40(3), 347–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060903184932>
- Berglund, K. (2013). Fighting against all odds: Entrepreneurship education as employability training. *Ephemera*, 13(4), 717–735.

- Brunila, K., Mertanen, K., & Mononen Batista-Costa, S. (2020). Economic worries—Therapeutic solutions? Entrepreneurial and therapeutic governing of transitions of Young people. In K. Brunila & L. Lundahl (Eds.), *Youth on the move: Tendencies and tensions in youth policies and practices* (pp. 149–165). Helsinki University Press. <https://doi.org/10.33134/HUP-3-8>
- Campbell, M., Cooper, B., Rueckert, C., & Smith, J. (2019). Reimagining student employability: A case study of policy and practice transformation. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 41(5), 500–517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2019.1646379>
- Corbett, A. (2005). *Universities and the Europe of knowledge: Ideas, institutions and policy entrepreneurship in European Community higher education policy, 1955–2005*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dahlstedt, M., & Fejes, A. (2019). Shaping entrepreneurial citizens: A genealogy of entrepreneurship education in Sweden. *Critical Studies in Education*, 60(4), 462–476.
- Deacon, R., & Parker, B. (1995). Education as subjection and refusal: An elaboration on Foucault. *Curriculum Studies*, 3(2), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965975950030201>
- Dean, M. (2010). *Governmentality. Power and rule in modern society* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Diem, S., Young, M. D., Welton, A. D., Mansfield, K. C., & Lee, P.-L. (2014). The intellectual landscape of critical policy analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27(9), 1068–1090.
- Dreyfus, H., & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. The Harvester Press.
- Fejes, A. (2010). Discourses on employability: Constituting the responsible citizen. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 32(2), 89–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2010.488353>
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge. Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.). Harvester.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect* (pp. 87–104). Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Hartmann, E., & Komljenovic, J. (2021). The employability dispositif, or the rearticulation of the relationship between universities and their environment. *Journal of Education Policy*, 36(5), 708–733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2020.1725983>
- Isin, E. (2004). Neurotic Citizen. *Citizenship Studies*, 8(3), 217–235.
- Jäger, S., & Maier, F. (2016). Analysing discourses and dispositives: A Foucauldian approach to theory and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (pp. 109–136). Sage.
- Keller, P. G., & Kozlinska, I. (2019). Entrepreneurial affect and emotions in entrepreneurship education impact research: A systematic review and research

- agenda. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 2(4), 281–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2515127419860303>
- Kinnari, H. (2020). Elinikäinen oppiminen ihmistä määrittämässä. Genealoginen analyysi EU:n, OECD:n ja UNESCO:n politiikasta. Jyväskylä: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura. Akateeminen väitöskirja. Monografia. [Lifelong learning constructing the conception of human. Genealogical analysis of EU, OECD and UNESCO policies. Jyväskylä: Finnish Education Research Association. Academic dissertation. Monograph.]
- Komulainen, K. (2006). Neoliberal educational policy. A case study of Finnish textbooks of entrepreneurial education. *Nordisk Pedagogik*, 26(3), 212–228. <https://doi.org/10.18261/ISSN1891-5949-2006-03-02>
- Komulainen, K., Siivonen, P., Kasanen, K., & Rätty, H. (2020). “How to give a killer pitch?” performances of entrepreneurial narratives as identity models in higher education. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy, Special Issue: ‘Unsettling Entrepreneurship Education’*, 3(3), 214–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2515127420908039>
- Korhonen, M. (under review). Young and successful: Business graduates performing themselves as valuable labouring subjects.
- Laalo, H., & Heinonen, J. (2016). Governing the entrepreneurial mindset: Business students’ constructions of entrepreneurial subjectivity. *European Educational Research Journal*, 15(6), 696–713. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116662288>
- Laalo, H., Kinnari, H., & Silvennoinen, H. (2019). Setting new standards for homo academicus: Entrepreneurial university graduates on the EU agenda. *European Education*, 51(2), 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2018.1489729>
- Lackéus, M. (2015). *Entrepreneurship in education: What, why, when, how*. OECD Background Paper.
- Lange, B., & Alexiadou, N. (2010). Policy learning and governance of education policy in the EU. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(4), 443–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680931003782819>
- Leask, I. (2012). Beyond subjection: Notes on the later Foucault and education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(1), 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2011.00774.x>
- Lee, M., Tryggvi, T., & Madyun, N. (2008). The evolution of the European Union’s lifelong learning policies: An institutional learning perspective. *Comparative Education*, 44(4), 445–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060802481496>
- Merrill, B., Finnegan, F., O’Neill, J., & Revers, S. (2020). ‘When it comes to what employers are looking for, I don’t think I’m it for a lot of them’: Class and capitals in, and after, higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(1), 163–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1570492>

- Mertanen, K., Pashby, K., & Brunila, K. (2020). Governing of young people ‘at risk’ with the alliance of employability and precariousness in the EU youth policy steering. *Policy Futures in Education*, 18(2), 240–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319838666>
- Miller, P., & Rose, N. (2008). *Governing the present. Administering economic, Social and personal life*. Polity Press.
- Moisio, J. (2014). *Understanding the significance of EU higher education policy cooperation in Finnish higher education policy*. University of Tampere.
- Moreau, M.-P., & Leathwood, C. (2006). Graduates’ employment and the discourse of employability: A critical analysis. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(4), 305–324. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080600867083>
- O’Malley, P. (2004). *Risk, uncertainty and governance*. Glasshouse.
- Palola, E. (2010). Kuilua sulkemassa: Kommunikaatio Euroopan ja eurooppalais-ten välillä. In J. Kaisto & M. Pyykkönen (Eds.), *Hallintavalta. Sosiaalisen, politiikan ja talouden kysymyksiä* (pp. 166–189). Gaudeamus.
- Powers, P. (2007). The philosophical foundations of Foucauldian discourse analysis. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 1(2), 18–34.
- Rae, D., Lynn, M., Antcliff, V., & Hannon, P. (2012). Enterprise and entrepreneurship in English higher education: 2010 and beyond. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 19(3), 380–401. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14626001211250090>
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, N., & Abi-Rached, M. (2014). Governing through the brain: Neuropolitics, neuroscience and subjectivity. *Cambridge Anthropology*, 32(1), 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ca.2014.320102>
- Tomlinson, M. (2019). Employers and universities: Conceptual dimensions, research evidence and implications. *Higher Education Policy*, 34, 132–154. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-018-0121-9>
- Tomlinson, M., Siivonen, P., & Laalo, H. (2021). Higher education marketization in England: Employable or entrepreneurial graduates (or both)? In P. Eriksson, U. Hytti, K. Komulainen, T. Montonen, & P. Siivonen (Eds.), *New movements in academic entrepreneurship* (pp. 31–47). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Walklate, S., & Mythen, G. (2010). Agency, reflexivity and risk: Cosmopolitan, neurotic or prudential citizen? *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01301.x>
- Whitehead, M., Jones, R., Lilley, R., Pykett, J., & Howell, R. (2017). *Neoliberalism: Behavioural government in the twenty-first century*. Routledge.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

