



Utopias and Realities of Learning in an emerging Network Society

Hans F. van Aalst

International Colloquy
Knowledge Age? Utopias and Realities
Mexico City, November 17-18, 2003

Realities and Utopia

- ▶ Realities
 - Realities of learning are increasingly different for students
 - Schooling is for them increasingly full of ambiguity
- ▶ Utopia
 - New learning – differences will still increase
 - New learning arrangements - ambiguity will disappear.

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The robust model of schooling

- ▶ Industrial mode of development
- ▶ Enlightenment
- ▶ Emergence of nation states
- ▶ Meritocracy

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The robust beliefs about learning

- ▶ Learning is something you do with your head,
- ▶ It is an individual process,
- ▶ Knowledge is basically expressed in language; it is written in books and has to be acquired from books
- ▶ Knowledge is objective truth – developed in academic freedom – away from practise,
- ▶ Schools are there for screening on the basis of personal merit (meritocracy), the supply is standardised, the results (on examinations) are along one dimension: educational level.
- ▶ And: for social discipline in the context of a nation state
- ▶ Labour markets are stable; educational level is a good indicator and initial screening is an effective means for allocation of young people to jobs.

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Limits on growth

- ▶ Upper limit of hidden talent
- ▶ limited type of possible achievements sets limits to effectiveness
- ▶ Self-generating growth leads to lack of external relevance

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The succes of the past



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The succes of the past

- ▶ The robust model of schooling has been highly effective:
 - Labour markets were stable and educational level was a good indicator for allocation of young people to jobs in the growing bureaucracy and hierarchical industrial production processes;
 - The system developed hidden talent
 - The system allowed increase of participation (mass production)

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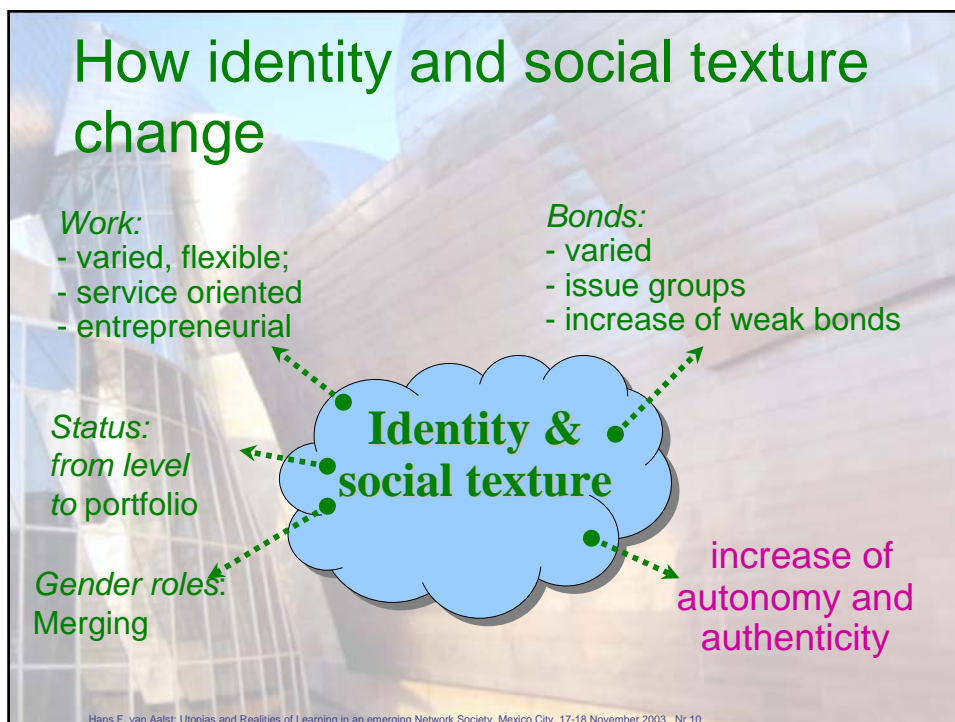
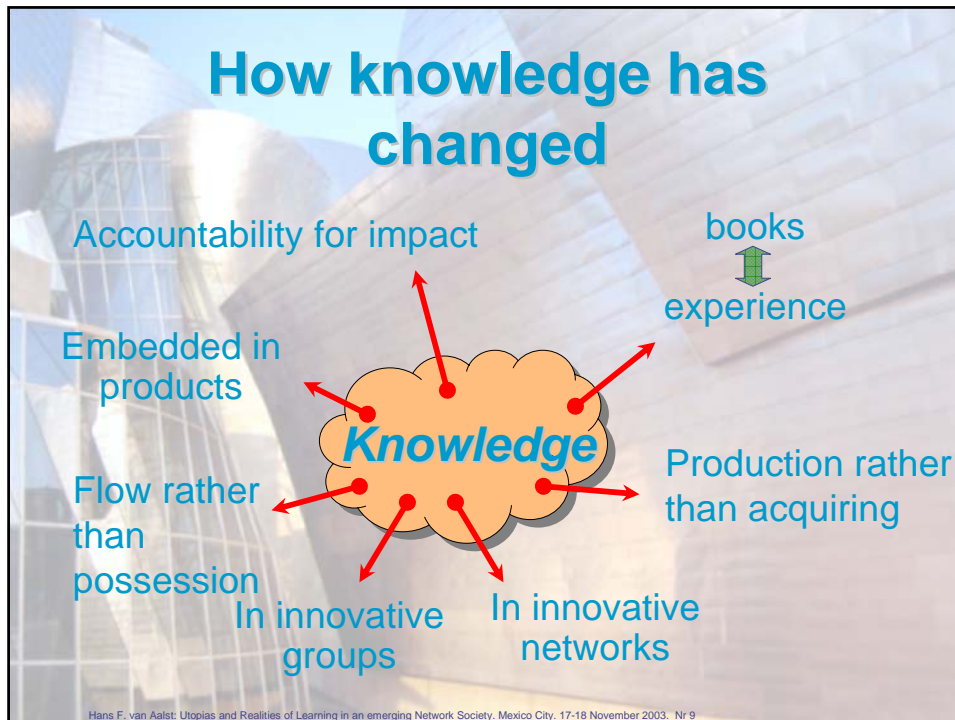
Changes in the values of the societies

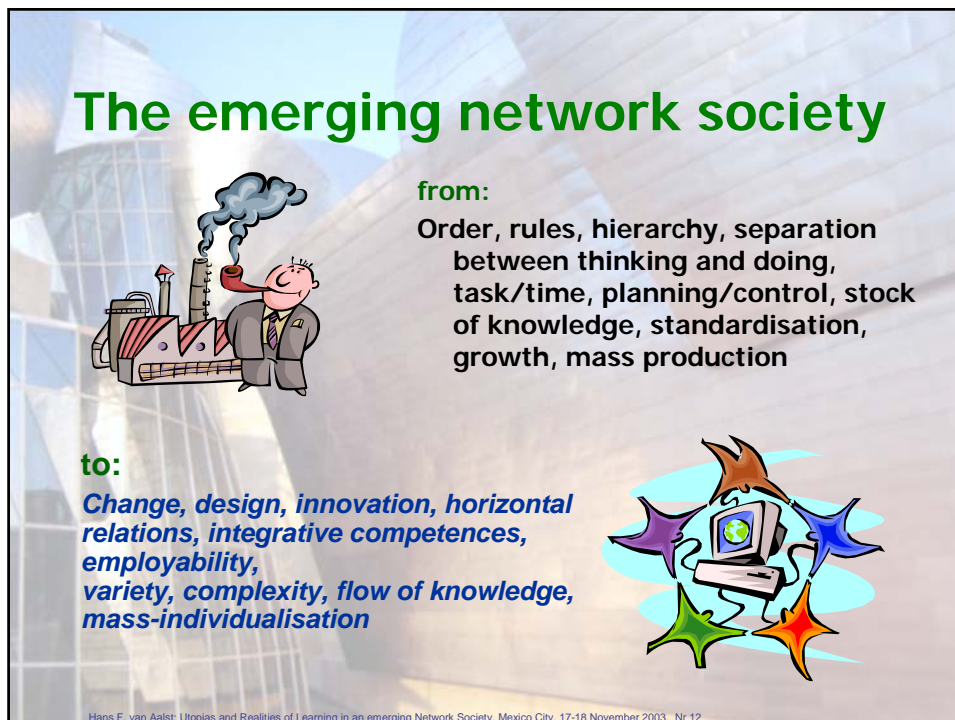
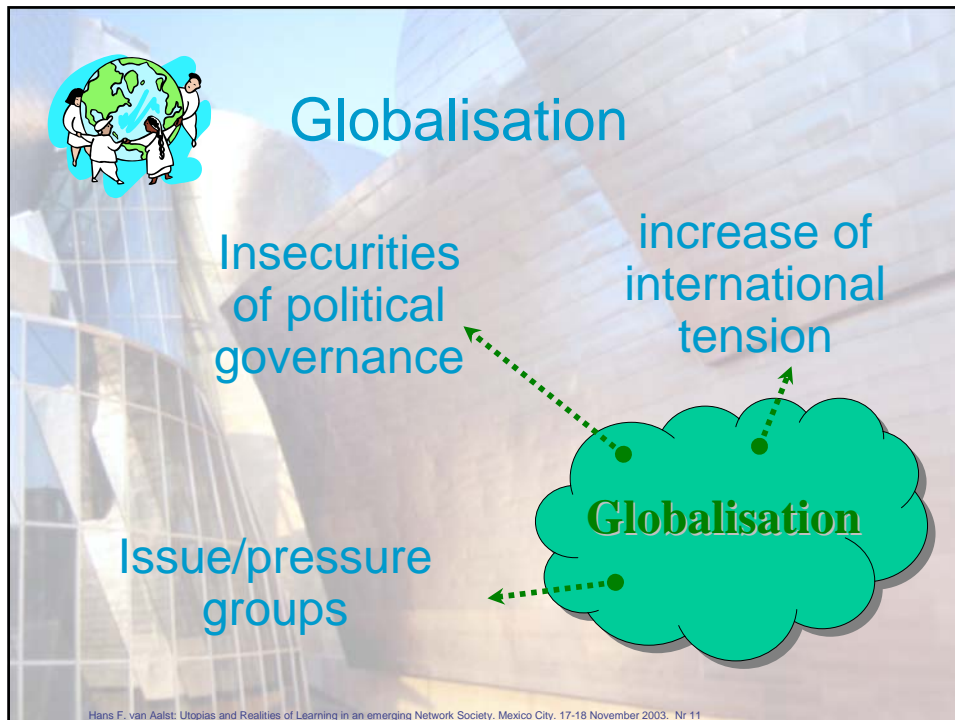
Knowledge

**Identity &
social texture**

Globalisation

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Learning in network society

- ▶ Learning is something you do while acting, making something or delivering a service,
- ▶ Learning includes working together in groups, locally as well as in world contexts;
- ▶ Learning involves pride, ownership, meaning;
- ▶ Learning involves the use of a variety of resources, such as products, processes, manuals, inspiring adults, peers and also books,
- ▶ Learning is pro-active and future oriented; guided in the light of career and life perspectives,
- ▶ Learning is assessed in real life, on the basis of a broad set of personal and general competencies (Human Capital), and codified in portfolios.

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Two cases

- ▶ Trendsetters learning
- ▶ European Union: Life long Learning

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Case I: Trendsetters

- ▶ Mixture of formal, informal and non-formal learning
- ▶ Productive
- ▶ Pleasure and intrinsic motivation
- ▶ Lots of peer-peer interaction
- ▶ Real-life assessment, self assessment, dynamic assessment, peer-peer assessment.
- ▶ Steady increase of social and cultural capital

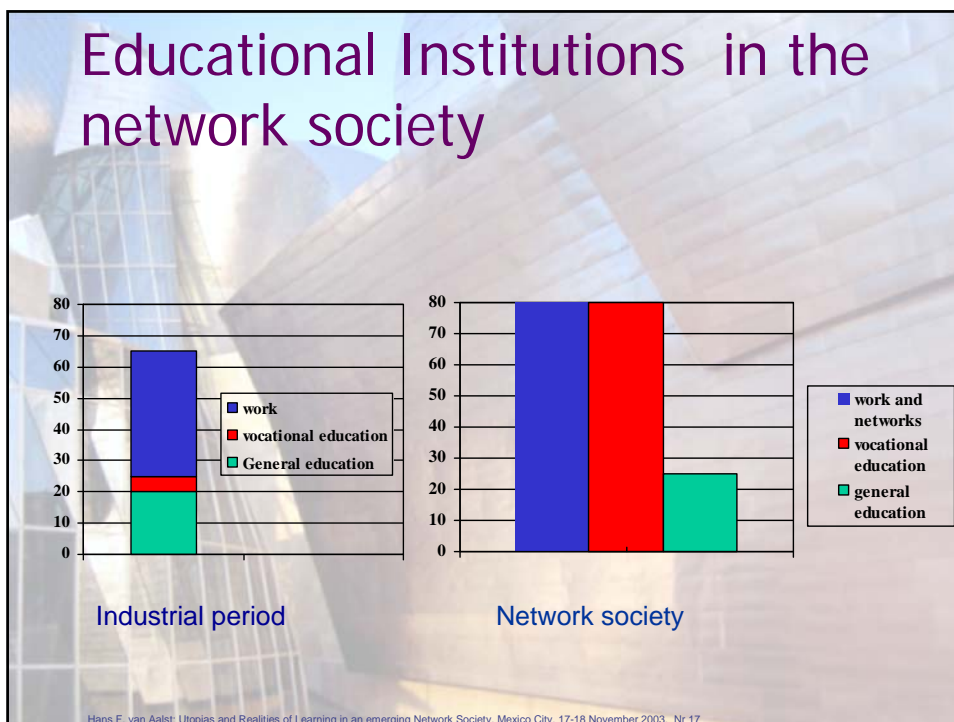
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Case II: Lifelong learning: Key issues EU memorandum

- ▶ Valuing learning (including nonformal and informal learning)*
- ▶ Information, guidance and counselling
- ▶ Investing time and money in learning
- ▶ Bringing together learners and learning opportunities
- ▶ Basic skills
- ▶ Innovative pedagogy



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Transformation of institutions

From:
industrially organised production of courses



To:
Service to learning for people, business and communities in a networked organisation



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Services for individuals

- ▶ Service for individuals to manage their personal development through lifelong learning:
 - matching PDP with high quality learning resources, people and learning communities
 - Assessment of earlier experience
 - Assessment of learning, validation of Portfolio's
 - guiding and coaching
 - ICT services at home, in the workplace and in the local community

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Services for business, SME's and public services

- ▶ Contractor to business and public institutions to ensure Human Capital
- ▶ Tri-angulation (students, consultants, sme's) for innovation - especially with networks of SME's

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Back office

- ▶ High quality learning resources (including ICT and Multi Media resources)
 - Specialisation of production
 - Internationalisation and localisation
- ▶ In- and outsourcing in networked organisations (including ICT and multi-media firms)

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Network organisation



'Big style'



'network'

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Teachers in the network society

- ▶ Diversification of teachers, specialisation in educational competencies
- ▶ Partnerships of educational entrepreneurs deliver high quality educational services to a variety of clients, including schools
- ▶ Professional Knowledge Space
- ▶ Challenging tasks for faculties of education

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Teachers in the network society



**Diversification
and
specialisation**

Knowledge

- ★ 20% learning time
- ★ Communities of professional practice

**Educational
entrepreneurs**

Deliver services to a
variety of clients,
including schools

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Assimilation or transformation?

- ▶ European educational policy makers prefer re-schooling scenarios
- ▶ Transformation is probably not to be expected from large innovation-projects
- ▶ Rather: emerging practices – often outside education.

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The End

Thank you for your attention

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