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## Chapter 1

### Frame-work paper: The Issues

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1. In this conference, we have invited four experts to consider some of the issues surrounding two themes now recurrent in discussion of higher education policy, namely, managerialism and evaluation. Whilst I will attempt to preview some of the key points to be made later, I will also try to place on record the issues that should be borne in mind as we consider research planning and, indeed, policy-making.
2. Currently, associations are frequently made between these two conceptual and operational bundles. It is true that particular forms of evaluation might sit comfortably with managerialism. However, in our field, simple contingent associations can be treacherous and in need of wide empirical testing before they are assumed to be valid. Therefore, I will be reminding the conference of the extremely variable forms that evaluation might take, and of the importance of not confusing management with managerialism. The first is an essential function within organizations, whereas the second is its pathological emanation.

#### **Managerialism**

3. Let us begin with the managerialism/management dichotomy. Management is an element of any complex organization, and involves the definition of objectives and the linking of appropriate resources and work structures to their pursuit. This set of tasks is essential to any organization – whether the objectives being pursued are virtuous or vicious. The definition applies whether the management is in the hands of an executive hierarchy or in a flat organization such as a partnership or a *collegium*.
4. Managerialism, however, is the condition in which management becomes an end in itself and displaces the values and primary objectives.

An example can be drawn from quoting one leading British minister, 'Efficient management is the key to our national revival . . . the management ethos must run through our national life' (Henkel, 2000, p. 41). Is that all there is to life? Managerialism can be visible in the unnecessary assertion of power by hierarchs and the creation of doctrines that emphasize modes of evaluation associated with mechanistic forms of outcome assessment or unreflexive forms of work process – without regard to the wishes and the abilities of individual or group members of the organization. The kind of efficiency scrutiny imposed in some systems (e.g. the United Kingdom), the attempt to convert universities into corporate enterprises, with rectors or vice-chancellors acting as chief executives rather than as *primi inter pares* were all in considerable contrast to the collegial formats evident in at least some of the leading universities in previous generations.

5. Managerialism thus denotes a values shift in both the purpose and the governance of universities. At the same time, where it exists it must be reconciled with the shift to market behaviour and the decentralizing features of New Public Management (Henkel, 2000), neither of which is intrinsically implicit in managerialism.
6. Some oversimplified associations with managerialism have been made. For example, it is true that the commodification of higher education – the parcelling of its products for marketing – can be associated with the assertion of managerialist power (Deem, 2001), when for example it runs counter to the academic essences of a field of study. However, managerialism existed in higher education, certainly in some of the former British polytechnics, and in some hard science and technology departments (definitely in military education), before the present surge towards market behaviour became evident. There may be connections, but they are not essential or necessary.

### **Evaluation**

7. Evaluation is not more nor less than the passing of value judgements on a system – as in the OECD country reports, or an institution, or part of it or an individual. There has always been evaluation in higher education and, indeed, one of its primary functions is to certify to the validity of knowledge and the competence of those who create it. Examining students, assessing faculty for appointments and promotions, assessing

works for publication, or proposals for grants, are all ancient features of higher education evaluation.

8. However, these processes, though remaining intact, must be placed within a sea change of policies and professional power. Evaluation does not take place in a vacuum. Its importance and nature reflect assumptions about modes of governance of higher education. It has become important because of: (a) massification, increasing governmental desire to 'manage' higher education; (b) increased competition for limited resources; and (c) political suspicion of the power of the professions.

A recent example that borders on managerialism is the work of the committee established by the Higher Education Funding Council (England) on Leadership, Governance and Management. It proposes to spend £10 million on projects that will (para. 10) 'encourage the development and embedding of recognized good practice in the areas of leadership, governance and management; . . . provide measurable change in . . . the quality of leadership, governance and management and organizational performance; seek and sustain value for money; provide esteem and recognition for leadership, governance and management' (Higher Education Funding Council (England), 2004).

In discussing the work of this group at a meeting, its chair made no reference to the role played by the professoriate in exercising academic leadership or contributing to institutional leadership and governance. They might well have existed on a different planet from management and university government.

9. Guy Neave (1988, 1998) has famously noted the *Rise of the Evaluative State*. He has characterized it as follows (Neave, 1988, pp. 10–12):

. . . the rise of the Evaluative State is accompanied by two major shifts in the timing, purpose and location of evaluation in the process not only of policy-making, but also 'policy adhesion'. . . . The second is a clear shift towards *a posteriori* evaluation. . . . *a posteriori* evaluation seeks to elicit how far goals have been met, not by setting the prior conditions but by ascertaining the extent to which overall targets have been met through the evaluation of 'product'. . . [it] works through the control of product, not through the control of process'. And Neave goes on to spell out the consequences of this shift. It is a way of 'steering' higher education more closely towards national priorities. . . .

There is a shift in focus from questions of provision and access, social equality and equity. It redefines the purpose of higher education not in relation to individual demand, but in keeping with the perceived needs of the market . . . it provides a powerful instrument by which public policy may regulate individual institutional response.

Neave's analysis could be read the other way. When objectives are set *ex ante* and evaluation based on them, as in benchmarking exercises, there is equally a growth of power of management over academic professionals.

10. These characteristics of the Evaluative State perhaps thus represent a powerful challenge to presumptions of professional control over higher education and a clear advance in managerial controls over the individual academic.
11. Professor Neave will provide a sequel by noting further developments of these themes in the context of the Bologna agreement.
12. In many countries, the requirement to evaluate has to some extent replaced more closely imposed regulatory systems, in which universities were tied up by regulation, were not free to appoint their own staff and had to submit detailed expenditures to prior state approval. In the anglophone countries, it has become the driving force of governmentally led change. Its familiar features are:
  - Techniques of evaluation have become more summative (as opposed to formative). Formative evaluation would be concerned with using judgements so as to enhance development and improvement. Summative evaluation would make judgements in order to decide on the rewards and sanctions to be applied.
  - Performance indicators, outcome measurement and benchmarking have been used. These are mainly instruments of summative evaluation.
  - There is some use of self-evaluation. This is not inconsistent with management but may not sit easily with managerialism.
  - User-evaluation, as through consumer associations, or publicly created surveillance bodies, is likely to have an uncertain relationship with management or its managerialist descants. It is not clear that it has made much headway in higher education.

13. How can these features be reconciled with traditional academic practice? Evaluation is intended to cause change or confirm good practice. However, the technology of higher education demands that individuals within quite small groups will be the main production units setting their own objectives and quality standards; they would refer to the 'invisible colleges' rather than, or as much as to, management on issues of quality. At present, two visions of quality are being visited on academics. The first comes from the management system and concerns measurable outcomes. The second is grounded in specific assumptions about what knowledge is the most important, and how best to testify to its quality.
14. Somewhere here there has to be a balance between the right of society to be assured of the quality of work in its knowledge creating and disseminating institutions, and the need of academics to set their own agendas and criteria of quality. This is all the more important as we now have a vigorous cacophony of concepts of knowledge. The traditional belief was in rigorous, scientific forms of knowledge in which, in research, academics were concerned with the disinterested search for truth, in which the criteria were evidence, logic and demonstrability. This applies equally to the treatment of hard science and the humanities (e.g. history). Recently, however, there are more diffuse concepts of knowledge. Relevance to community action, or securing various social or moral objectives (such as equality), have begun to be criterial. The reference groups are wider.
15. There are now several ways in which higher education is judged. 'Invisible colleges' continue to pass judgements on individuals and centres that affect the research and other grants they receive, and the status awarded individuals in, for example, the appointment to professorships. However, we have already noted that there are important shifts towards governmental control of evaluation, at least in some countries (e.g. Neave, 1988, 1998; Henkel, 1991, 2000).
16. The United Kingdom and some other anglophone countries have introduced highly elaborate systems with sector-wide funding methodologies for allocating resources for teaching and for research. These judgements radically affect resources and status, and are applied to re-stratify the higher education system.

## Forms of evaluation

17. At the same time there is a wide range of forms of evaluation (Kogan, 1989), which I will briefly mention here:
- a. *Peer review*. In spite of attempts to apply highly mechanistic forms of evaluation (such as performance indicators or benchmarking) peer review continues to underpin most mechanisms of allocation in higher education. It assumes that at higher education's base there are specialists within the same general zone of specialization. It essentially consists of aggregates of individual expert judgements on quality of work.
  - b. *Performance indicators* (Cave et al., 1996). These were for a long time questioned as a mode of evaluation. From the mid-1980s, many governments have insisted that universities use them, although some systems have turned away from them. They are now largely used in association with peer reviews.
  - c. Many problems arise: (a) research is easier to evaluate than teaching – input measures are difficult to differentiate from output measures. (e.g. What is a research student – an input or an output? Does gaining a grant mean that one has done a good thing (output) or that one is getting an input?); (b) citation indices – the problem of the primordial or the seminal work; poor work; length of articles, etc.; (c) teaching is even more difficult – some input measures (e.g. numbers of students recruited), can also be criterial of good teaching. How is output measured? – first destinations are unreliable. The issue of value-added. Now attempts to measure output by judgemental studies as well (the views of students, of employers).
  - d. *Self-evaluation*. This is quite different from peer review. Peer review is usually (but not necessarily) used for making external judgements that will lead to a decision. Self-evaluation may be used for the same purpose, but is more usually used for purposes of development.
  - e. *Student evaluation*. This is increasingly used.



18. A general problem of using outcome measures is that it contains a behavioural model at odds with the nature of higher education. It assumes that a measured output should be used for rewards and sanctions. Hence, there can be neglect of the nature of higher education processes, or the inputs needed to secure good outputs. It also assumes that the system will get better if the weaker are punished through reduced allocations and adverse publicity. It depends upon whether the intention is purgative or developmental.

### **Some contrasts**

19. In many other countries, evaluation is an important feature; but its purpose and functioning are different from the extreme British position. In France, a Committee for National Evaluation visits and publishes its judgements – but these are not linked to funding allocations. In the Netherlands and Sweden, the emphasis is more towards customizing evaluation for each institution, and setting out fewer frames, and it is claimed that it is not linked to allocations. In Finland there is self-evaluation in place of detailed central controls, but there is also outcome targeting. The targets are agreed with each university, and allocations are marginally affected by performance. ‘Poor’ outcomes may not lead to reduction, but to increases.
20. Public accountability may demand formal evaluation. In itself, it can lead to self-critique. Alternatively, it can lead to public humiliation and doubtful effects on performance. Even more problematic is its links to funding – if the underlying assumptions are that the best need more and the worst need (or deserve) less. Appropriate funding can only follow good modelling of processes.

### **The papers**

21. I will now briefly draw attention to the papers, which will constitute the main content of this conference.
22. As already noted, Professor Guy Neave will be drawing on his two classic accounts of the rise of the evaluative state (Neave, 1988, 1998) to take us forward to consider the likely impacts of the Bologna proposals for the future, on both management and evaluation.

Professor Ivar Bleiklie will give us some direction on the political and public administration dimensions of evaluation and managerialism. His work includes a formative essay (Bleiklie, 1998) on how New Public Management contributed to the justification of the Evaluative State.

23. From these macro aspects, we turn to their impacts on academic identity and values, a subject in which Professor Mary Henkel has established expertise (Henkel, '1991,1991a, 2000) She will link different forms of evaluation to managerialism. Finally, we shall get to the institutional realities when Professor Francisco Michavila speaks on a university strategy on accreditation and quality assessment. We look forward to these papers and to the critiques to be provided by our four discussants.
24. I shall be offering brief conclusions in which I will try to pick salient points made by our discussants and participants, and suggest possible lines for further inquiry. From here, before we have heard the contributions, some obvious lines of further work can be noted. For example:
  - a. The impacts, in different political and academic settings, of managerialism and evaluation on academic values and working. A lot of writing already exists, e.g. Henkel, 2000) but this is a moving frontier worth continued monitoring.
  - b. How far these movements are compatible with the development of the market in higher education. On the face of it, they might be in conflict with the concept of 'the hidden hand' of market forces.
  - c. The extent to which the European Community and the Bologna initiatives are likely to reinforce managerialism and particular forms of evaluation.

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## Chapter 2

### **The Bologna Process and the Evaluative State: a Viticultural Parable**

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#### **Introduction**

The cultivation of the grape and the bottling of wine are noble arts. Therefore, it is not surprising that their attendant vocabulary is full of delicate distinctions and nuances. One thing of which wine-growing peasants, squires or businessmen know full well, though they do not advertise it, is the indispensable practice of *coupage*. That is, the eking out of a relatively reputable growth by adding to it wine of a lesser – or thoroughly nondescript – provenance. There are limits, of course. Occasionally, these limits are surpassed by individuals whose palm itches and whose wine, if honourable, is sometimes less than ‘full-bodied’. Such a combination of the frailty of human character, and its oenological equivalent in the grape, is highly volatile and risky. Very often, it erupts in the usual scandal – on average once a decade. Naturally, scandal is quickly hushed up or occasionally attributed to the rascally and barbarous behaviour of those who have recently bought into the business of the vine, but who do not have its immemorial ethic in their bones – usually foreign speculators.

#### **Obscurity justified**

I have a purpose in bringing such a situation, passably baroque to your attention. You are already familiar with the biblical adage of putting old wine in new bottles – which today is downright stupid – just as you are familiar with the reverse practice of putting new wine in old bottles – which today is called niche marketing and brand differentiation, profitable and therefore highly commended, though not by divine scripture. What I want to do in this presentation is to examine both Bologna and the so-called Bologna Process – the first being the agreement signed between twenty-nine ministers responsible for higher education in Europe on 29 June 1999; the second, its aftermath which is assuming a momentum of its own. However, I want to do so within a very particular perspective. This perspective is that of the Evaluative State.

There are several good reasons for this. In the first place, there is a tendency amongst those researchers whose interest it is to dissect Bologna, to see it as ushering in a new era. It does that, of course. Moreover, none but a fool would deny it. However, against this, Bologna did not suddenly create a vacuum, evacuate or immediately put into a new context, those theories and perspectives that applied to the Europe before Bologna. Nor, to make a point exaggeratedly, did the fact that twenty-nine ministerial pens scrawled twenty-nine signatures on choicest vellum in June 1999 impact on the validity of such concepts by so much as one jot or one title. Still, students of the Evaluative State have been equally remiss. For their part, they have been a little reticent in seeing whether their construct has been thrown on the scrap-heap, modified or strengthened by the unrolling of events that are now – like the offering of a new concubine to the Sultan – inextricably wrapped up in the Bologna carpet, if not the Bologna carpet bag. In short, how is Bologna to be interpreted within the framework of the Evaluative State?

To answer this question, I have perforce to do two things. First, to give a succinct rendition of how the Evaluative State is conceived and how it has evolved these two decades past. Second, to do a little stripping aside of hagiography and speculation, in short to bring a little rectification to the more routine interpretation that surrounds Bologna. My basic argument will be that there is more than a little continuity between the Europe prior to Bologna and the world after Bologna. To put no further emphasis upon matters, my thesis is that Bologna, viewed from the setting of the Evaluative State, is far from being a rupture – a break point with the Evaluative State. On the contrary, recent developments from one perspective appear to have strengthened it. The other thesis, which naturally follows from this, is that Bologna itself will have to be re-interpreted to account for this unsuspected continuity – and this I shall do too.

### **Evaluation: two classic modes of system control and change**

Evaluation has long been a central feature of higher education. Universities evaluate students, and governments have, evaluated in various ways, universities as part of that usual oversight they exercise on behalf of the general interest or the collectivity. In what was, until very recently, a widespread practice across mainland Europe, government formally guaranteed the quality of the teaching body, sometimes by direct nomination to senior academic posts and very certainly by their distribution across the national territory. It also exercised oversight in the curricular domain, either through the use of ‘templates’ – *maquettes* to use a French term

(Guin, 1989) by broadly laying out guidelines for the curricular content aligned on particular career tracks in public service – a practice, known in Spain and the Latin American world as ‘career tracks’ (*carreras*) – (Coombes & Perkins, 1989; McNair, 1984; Garcia Garrido, 1992), otherwise by underwriting nationally certain types of degrees that conferred eligibility to seek posts in the public service – *diplômes nationaux* in France, *grades légaux* in Belgium or the *Staatsexamen* in Germany. Such a mode of evaluation fulfilled two purposes. It ensured that institutional behaviour remained broadly in keeping with legislation, was ongoing and thus part of what may be seen as good ‘husbandry’ of the nation’s resources and the use to which higher education put them.

There was, however, a second form of evaluation. It went under various labels – such as ‘strategic’ evaluation or ‘exploratory’ evaluation (Neave, 1988, 1998). The distinction that set aside ‘strategic evaluation’ from its routine counterpart lay in its purpose. Essentially, strategic evaluation turned around the assessment of national policy with a view to reform at system level in the light of what strategic evaluation revealed. It was exceptional. Strategic evaluation tended to focus on broad issues, as an exercise in redefining priorities at system or at sector level – access to higher education in general, the spatial distribution of higher education’s infrastructure across the national territory, the re-alignment between qualifications and the needs of the labour market. To give some concrete examples of strategic evaluation, one may refer to the Swedish 1968 Commission, which focused on conditions of access and the restructuring of undergraduate study around seven occupational sectors. Another illustration of strategic evaluation – this time from the United Kingdom – would be the Robbins Report of 1963, which set the path towards mass higher education, a condition attained a quarter of a century later.

In their ‘classic form’, both routine and exploratory modes of evaluation rested upon two fundamental features. In Continental Europe, though not in the United Kingdom, both routine and exploratory evaluation rested on what *faute de mieux* may be termed a ‘legal instrumentality’ – that is, the use of law, ministerial decree and circular as the established procedure for verification and, more particularly, for ascertaining that the use of resources was in keeping with legislation. The second feature turned around *a priori* funding, that is funding on the basis of inputs, determined largely by student numbers and by that model known to budgeting specialists as ‘historic instrumentalism’.

### **The rise of the Evaluative State**

The rise of the Evaluative State ushered in two radical shifts in the timing, process and location of evaluation, both in policy-making and in the notion of ‘policy adhesion’. This it did first by blurring the distinction between routine and exploratory evaluation, a blurring evident in the notion of ‘remote steering’ or governing at a distance. In effect, both modes of evaluation were brought together as part of an inter-active and reiterative process. This process was already visible in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom by the late 1980s. Strategic evaluation thus ceased being an exceptional undertaking. It became an integral and regular part of system steering at the national level. At the same time, largely as part of the enthusiasm for ‘strategic planning’ at institutional level, strategic ‘self-evaluation’ was also assigned, though with varying degrees of success, as part of the new responsibilities that the Evaluative State thrust on the individual institution. Effectively, the handing down of certain elements of strategic planning to individual institutions – sometimes described in terms of the ‘Offloading State’ – was also accompanied by a shift in the location of routine evaluation. This, too, was increasingly laid upon the individual establishment, a transferral of functions carried out under the general rubric of increased public accountability and answerability. These were not the only relocation of functions. A second shift of the Evaluative State entailed moving towards *ex ante* or a posteriori financing that accompanied a posteriori evaluation.

### **A posteriori evaluation**

The advent of a posteriori evaluation neatly summarized the essential purpose and the modus operandi of the Evaluative State. It displaced the focus in co-ordinating ascertaining system functioning from input to output by focusing on the control over product, end result or outcome – rather than control over process which earlier patterns of oversight exercised, as we have noted, through such leverage as control over academic senior appointments, and the criteria laid down for state-validated diplomas. In short, purpose (and thus the goals by which both system and institutional performance are weighed in the balance), moves on from input – from issues of provision and access, social equality and equity. Likewise, criteria of institutional evaluation moved on from meeting individual demand – the input focus – and instead dwelt upon meeting the perceived needs of the market (Neave, 1988, p.11–12).

### **Continuity and change in the Evaluative State**

To see the Evaluative State simply in the light of the transfer of functions away from central national oversight is, of course, one perspective on the matter. What we tend to play down, if we pay too much attention to those aspects that represent a certain continuity from what went before, is the effect of the change itself. If we concentrate on what the rise of the Evaluative State brought in its train, we cannot but be aware that the thrust of partial ‘offloading’ to the institutional level was also accompanied by another process not greatly dissimilar to ‘outsourcing’ in present-day corporate planning.

This second process, whilst obviously part and parcel of the phenomenon of ‘offloading’ to the institutional level, remains nevertheless distinct from it. It is distinct because – formally at least – it involves the setting up of what the American policy-analyst, Martin Trow, has termed ‘agencies of special purpose’, which are neither fully part of central administration nor, in some instances, wholly part of the university world. In this respect, they are the Auvergnats – or the otters (neither fish nor flesh) – of the Evaluative State. They are the result of the splitting-off of particular specialist activities to other agencies, which, by so doing alters both the remit of that agency and largely its purpose. Some, like the French National Evaluation Committee, were new creations, specific to the drive towards the Evaluative State (Staropoli, 1987; Neave, 1996). To this, there is an alternative approach. It involved adding responsibility for the execution of the ‘new’ reiterative and an a posteriori evaluation system to those functions already exercised by a central agency already in place. Placing the responsibility of evaluation for ‘quality assessment’ in the hands of the main organization of the university interest was adopted by the Netherlands, which entrusted the VSNU (*Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten*) the Dutch universities’ association – with this task. A similar function was assigned to its Flemish counterpart, the *Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad* in Belgium. In Sweden, a further variation may be seen. Here evaluation of disciplines and establishments was vested in an official government agency, transforming its title at the same time from the Office of the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities into the Swedish National Higher Education Agency in 1995.



### **The multiplication of policy instruments**

Seen from this point of view, the Evaluative State stands at the centre of two other processes. The first of these is the re-designation – and very often the inversion of what may be called the direction of penetration of intermediary bodies, which under an earlier regime, acted as ‘privileged interlocutors’ with the Prince and acted on behalf of academia. Indeed, it is precisely this shift in the direction of penetration that may be seen as one of the major accompaniments to the rise of managerialism as also one of its prime expressions. The second, and we tend to pay less attention to this than we ought, is the creation – over and above, and additional to the legally based instrumentality that once constituted the classic instrument of control and co-ordination – of a second instrumentality which, by its sophistication, range of criteria and ostensible precision, far outstripped any of the previous procedures for assessing institutional performance that relied on a legal instrumentality alone for steering the course of the nation’s higher education system. This second instrumentality does not replace the earlier mode of legal verification. It stands as an add-on to it (Neave, 2004a). This, in turn, raises the uncomfortable question of whether the policy ostensibly introduced to make higher education more competitive, efficient and market oriented has not fulfilled precisely the opposite – namely to thicken the rind of the ‘evaluative stratum’. I will return to this later.

### **The many roads to the Evaluative State**

So far, I have sketched the rise of the Evaluative State in terms passably schematic. However, this general picture fails to take full account of one equally marked development, namely that if most roads that policy-makers marched down in the 1990s took them towards the Evaluative State, they certainly did not begin their journey from the same spot, nor did they proceed at the same pace. Still less did they share that ideology – ultra-liberalism – that ultimately came to be seen as driving the quest for efficiency and quality of higher education policy forward in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

### **... in East and Central Europe**

There are at the very minimum three broad paths that lead to the Evaluative State. If we extend our vision beyond Western Europe for a moment, to include the systems of East and Central Europe, the first path was, if anything, more enthusiastically committed to ‘bringing in the market’ as a symbol of personal liberty. As for ‘rolling back the frontiers of the State’, there was no need. They had already collapsed in ruin and confusion (Neave, 2003).

Reconstruction around the outward trappings of the Evaluative State as a symbol both of modernity and as a wish to demonstrate commitment to what was conceived as a ‘European’ model of higher education is an important element in the spread eastwards of the Evaluative State, and very particularly so during the run-up and aftermath of Bologna. To this, we will return.

### **... and in Western Europe**

As for Western Europe, I want to draw a distinction between what may be presented as two different ‘approach roads’ to the Evaluative State. Agreed, their difference can, if one is so disposed, be dismissed as rhetorical wrapping, dross and tinsel, these differences are, I would suggest, crucial to the way we understand ‘managerialism’ *à l’anglo-saxonne* and its counterpart in those areas of Europe to the south of the Maas and the Waal. From one perspective, it is arguable that the advent of the Evaluative State coincides with another parallel development, which has no less contextual significance. This is the transition of higher education from being considered as a sub-set of the political system – the selection, formation and enculturation of elites – to its redefinition as a sub set of the economic system - the training of the mass for the private sector labour market (Neave, 2004b). In Western Europe, there were two ‘approach roads’ towards the Evaluative State: one lay through higher education as part of a broader ranging political reform. There is also a second. Here, implementing the policy that led towards the Evaluative State from the outset was conceived with economic goals in mind and as a way to re-direct and also to ascertain how far the institution of higher education responded to ‘market forces’.

If we look closely at the first steps towards the Evaluative State, above all in such countries as Belgium, France, Spain and more recently, Italy (Varia, 2003), we find that the original impulse was grounded less in an economic rationale than in the political reconstruction of the state – a drive that drew heavily on the principles of decentralization, devolution and, in the case of Belgium and Spain, recognition of regional cultural identity. The federalization of Belgium in 1988, the creation in Spain of the autonomous communities in 1984 and, in France, the various proposals contained in the Higher Education Guideline Laws of 1984 and 1989 made much of the principle of ‘participant democracy’, of central national administration sharing responsibility with new ‘partners’. This, the political pathway towards the Evaluative State, very certainly entailed ‘offloading’ elements of administrative responsibility for higher education to the regional level.

Significantly, the process of offloading was not presented in terms of the pure milk of ultra-liberalism. Rather, it was presented as higher education serving a linguistic or historical community – a policy long debated along very different lines and more often than not in obedience to a rationale very different from supply-side economic theory, or the canons of ‘new public management’, which accompanied the emergence of the Evaluative State in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – two systems which, within this setting, may be seen as archetypical of the Evaluative State that took the economic road from the very beginning.

### **Varieties of context, variations in the Evaluative State**

Several points arise from the different approach paths individual countries took in establishing their evaluative systems. The first of these is that those nations where the reforming impulse took the form of federalization – Spain and Belgium, for example – also extended this principle to evaluation itself. Thus, the two linguistic communities in Belgium have each their separate evaluatory system for the Flemish community and the French-speaking community. A similar pattern pertains in the Spanish autonomous communities, all of which individually exercise both responsibility for higher education and each of which has its own evaluatory system though the degree of activity varies, Catalonia being particularly active in this regard (de Miguel Diaz, 1999).

This trend casts an interesting light on something taken for granted surrounding the Evaluative State in Northern Europe, namely that it is part and parcel of a shift towards ‘remote steering’. What it suggests, however, is that there are two versions of the Evaluative State that involve (from the perspective of where the evaluative nexus is located) a certain duality between a federal and a unitary model in the evaluation system itself. Whether the ‘federal model’ in Belgium and Spain truly endorses the notion of ‘steering at a distance’ is a matter of some debate. Nevertheless, by the same token, it also casts an interesting reflection on what remained in essence a unitary model in the northern parts of Western Europe, unitary in the sense that responsibility for the execution of Evaluation was vested in a single body or agency with a national remit. Yet, even within the unitary version of the Evaluative State, it does not follow that the concept of ‘remote steering’ is an inevitable consequence. Indeed, in its British version, the introduction of Quality Assurance moved in precisely the opposite direction. There, the rise of the Evaluative State served to tighten the span of control and co-ordination between formal national purpose and the individual institution, a trend which not only set the United Kingdom apart from its mainland partners, but which also involved the

transferral of the functions of both evaluation and audit from the purview of a university-based agency – the one time Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals – to a para-statal body in the form of the Quality Assurance Agency in 1996 – as good an illustration of reversing the direction of penetration as one might possibly wish.

Other differences were also present, often described in terms of the ‘intended effects’ that evaluation was intended to bring about. In North-Western Europe, the intended effect centred on improving teaching within the individual faculties. By contrast, in France, Spain and more recently in Italy (Varia, 2003) the prime focus of Evaluation lay at the institutional level and laid particular stress on reform in the organizational aspects (Van Bruggen, Scheele and Westerheijden, 1998, p.95).

Such differences in context and intent were not minor. For whilst it is arguable that establishing both the mechanisms and agencies of evaluation had as its generic goal to re-define the purpose of higher education in terms of efficiency in resource usage, to raise the level of student output, to introduce the value of externally driven competition and to re-orient the historic mission of Europe’s universities away from state service and to link them firmly into the private-sector labour market – the European version of marketization<sup>1</sup> – the legitimacy for so doing had a very different rationale, just as, in those systems where the first steps towards the Evaluative State were primarily justified as an exercise in political reconstruction, the discourse rested on a very different vocabulary and focus. The accompanying rhetoric showed marked differences too (Neave, 2004c).

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to define what we mean by this term for, as Winston Churchill once remarked, Britons and Americans are divided by the same language. So, for that matter are French and Québécois. It is my experience that, as used in the United States, ‘marketization’ corresponds to what is termed ‘commodification’ or ‘*marchandisation*’ in Europe - that is, higher education, learning and teaching construed as saleable goods. In contrast, the European notion of ‘marketization’ bears greater kinship with higher education driven by market forces, by reliance in varying degrees upon private sector funding and less upon tax-derived financing. The distinction is an important one if only for the fact that marketization – European style – represents a prior stage to commodification. In the United States, however, marketization (European style) is held to be one of the particular and historic dimensions and specificities that has long identified higher education in the United States. (For an historical discussion of the implications of the market upon United States and European higher education see Martin Trow (2003) ‘In Praise of Weakness: chartering, the University of the United States and Dartmouth College’, *Higher Education Policy*, Vol. 16, No.1, March.) The current debate in the United States centres on ‘marketization’ qua commodification (European style). All of which goes to show that in higher education’s very own Theatre of the Grotesque, Europe has still some way to go. Still, there are not a few comedians who pant ardently for the gap to be closed.

### **Broader constructs in the Evaluative State**

In France, for instance, the rhetoric surrounding the introduction of the Evaluative State showed a remarkable continuity with the political vision of higher education as a public service, of handling social demand for higher education more effectively – which might be seen as efficiency by other terms – but without the emphasis on competition between institutions. Rather, evaluation was justified as a way of avoiding resource wastage on the one hand, and as upholding higher education's abiding commitment to equality of opportunity, on the other (Neave, 2004c, pp. 220–221). If the French edition of the Evaluative State did not exclude the notion of competition, it located it in a different sphere, external to the national system. In such a context, raising the quality of higher education as a public service – the main priority of the Evaluative State *à la française* – had as its strategic purpose to raise the country's competitive stance in Europe, rather than pitting one establishment against another for the largesse of the Prince. The French version of the Evaluative State turned around the dual rhetoric of competition abroad and national co-operation and solidarity at home.

In Spain, too, marked contextual differences attended the rise of the Evaluative State in the early 1990s. Here the emphasis lay upon the Evaluative State as a vehicle for reasserting the ties and increasing the efficiency of the links, between higher education and the regional community. Whilst competition as a driving force was certainly present, it did not carry with it the Hobbesian overtones that it appeared to have in the United Kingdom. Rather competition and efficiency at the institutional level dovetailed into that other enduring value – particularly strong in certain of Spain's regions – namely, the modernization, reassertion and strengthening of regional identity through the overhaul of its prime institution of expression – the university.

Similar overtones also accompanied the setting in place of the Evaluative State in Flanders, though interestingly, it also carried with it an additional dimension of solidarity, so far rarely emulated elsewhere in Europe. This additional dimension to the Flemish version of the Evaluative State is interesting from several points of view. Indeed, a good case can probably be made for seeing the development of the Evaluative State in Flanders as the shape of things to come and, from another standpoint, as a particularly interesting case of a reform that began with the Evaluative State conceived as a product of political modernization in the first instance and which subsequently moved rapidly on to endorse the economic interpretation of the same.

The most remarkable feature of the Flemish version of the Evaluative State is not just its commitment to both cultural identity and to economic liberalism as an instrument to reassert it. It is also a notion of linguistic identity that has led it, not simply to adapt many of the procedures pioneered by their neighbours to the north. It has also led in the area of accreditation to setting up a joint system of accreditation. This initiative, taken in 2003, stands as a more than interesting example not simply of certain dimensions in the Evaluative State transcending frontiers – which might, if pursued further, demand that we re-think the concept of the Evaluative State qua State. It is also an example of extending the Evaluative State to serve a linguistic community, which transcends frontiers.

### **Context, purpose and the assigned role of management**

If I have spent a little more time than I ought in following through some of the broader contextual elements that have shaped the Evaluative State, it is to bring home one central point – namely that if the rise of the Evaluative State has also gone hand in fist with varying degrees of ‘managerialism’ that is, the rationalization of tasks, responsibilities, and answerability arrayed in formal lines of command and reporting, derived less from public service than from corporate practice, it is less the emergence of reinforced hierarchy that is important as the legitimacy and acceptability of the purpose to which it is assigned. Equally important are the changes in the nature of academic work that ensue (for Sweden, see for instance Kogan, Bauer, Bleiklie, & Henkel 2000). Central though this latter undoubtedly was, is and ever shall be, it plays a very different role depending on whether the general policy that accompanies setting up the Evaluative State is perceived by academia as adding latitude to institutional initiative, is viewed as constraining it or as an exercise in confiscation. With managerialism as with both evaluation and, for the matter, the law itself, circumstances – or in this case, context – alter cases.

That the issue of managerialism should be a particularly vexatious aspect in the rise of the Evaluative State in the United Kingdom reflects, of course, that other outstanding feature, which regulated the relationship between government and university since 1919 when the University Grants Committee (UGC) was established – namely the very high degree of institutional and collegial self-government British universities enjoyed. Yet, if we care to view the British equivalent of the Via Dolorosa towards the Evaluative State, and to do so from an imagined European standpoint, some rather interesting observations result.

## **The Evaluative State and established patterns in the government – university relationship**

The process alluded to earlier in terms of ‘offloading’, and the rise of single-purpose bodies of surveillance and evaluation in such systems as France, the Netherlands and Flanders may, from a British perspective, be seen in terms of moving towards an arrangement not dissimilar to the original UGC in their quality as ‘intermediary bodies’ (Neave, 1992). In their quality as intermediary bodies, agencies of evaluation represent major modifications to that equally long-established dual hierarchy – the so-called bi-cephalous pattern of administrative control that had long existed in Western Europe between individual university and ministry (Lane, 1982), which linked the two together prior to the advent of the Evaluative State. Such an arrangement revolved around a descending administrative hierarchy emanating from ministry to university ending in the person of the Secretary General in French universities, the *Regiringscommissaris* in their Flemish counterparts, with the *Kanzler* in Germany and the Administrative Director in Sweden, civil servant administrators who exercised legal oversight on behalf of the ministry. In parallel, ran an ascending academic hierarchy culminating in the person of the *Président d’Université*, or the Rector in varying degrees of magnificence, who represented the academic estate.

Viewed from the perspective of this dual hierarchy, one of the consequences of the Evaluative State, by extending the bounds of institutional self-management has been formally, at least, to dilute the strength of the *descending* administrative hierarchy, whilst at the same time strengthening the administrative responsibility vested in the head of the *ascending* academic hierarchy. Typical of this was the Dutch Law for Modernizing University Governance (*Modernisering Universitaire Bestuursorganisatie*) of March 1996 (de Boer, 2003). Effectively, it strengthened institutional self-management.

### **On quids and pro quos**

One can interpret such developments in terms of trade-offs between government and university. The nature of that trade-off, I would suggest, goes far in determining the acceptability of the principles involved – prime amongst which, managerialism itself – if it does not always determine the acceptability of the ways the principle is subsequently worked out.

The institution gains greater powers of self-management, though not necessarily self-governance on a collegial basis, traded against greater public scrutiny (Neave, 2004c). Other types of trade-off are also visible – in Spain for instance, the repatriation<sup>2</sup> to the community of charge over its institutions of cultural identity and knowledge were set against enhanced scrutiny of that same community. Arguably, in such circumstances, the issue of contention is less one of managerialism as a matter of principle, and still less the broader strategic purpose, which generates heat and friction. It is rather the consequences that *implementing* managerialism brings in its train.

This is not to say that managerialism is immune to criticism about its appropriateness as a principle for the running of universities. Nevertheless, there too, we need to attend to the broader context that surrounds it. Thus, if the British case revealed grave and continual misgivings on the part of scholars and others who remained beneath the harrow,<sup>3</sup> these misgivings cannot be separated from the very particular path down which British universities were driven towards the Evaluative State itself. For whilst the Evaluative State in mainland Europe recognized in varying degrees the benefits of shortening the administrative hierarchy, its British edition brought into being a species of dual hierarchy, the very principle of which was in process of attenuation on the mainland. Indeed, the British construction of a descending hierarchy was, if anything, more redoubtable by far than its erstwhile continental counterparts. It was redoubtable because it coalesced around the agencies of evaluation *stricto sensu* and, at the same time brought into its ambit and into its dwelling place others that also possessed an evaluative function – research councils, for instance. Indeed, a good case can be made for arguing that the latter as part of Britain’s construction of the Evaluative State, migrated from being part of an extended version of the academic hierarchy to form instead the cutting edge – and literally so – of a descending administrative hierarchy.

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<sup>2</sup> For the concept of ‘repatriation’ applied to institutions of higher education as one theme of contemporary policy in the higher education systems of Western Europe see Guy Neave, (2001), ‘On the Use of Historical Analogues’, in Huisman, Jeroen Maassen, Peter and Neave, Guy (eds.) *Higher Education and the Nation State*, Oxford, Pergamon, for IAU Press, pp. 6–73.

<sup>3</sup> ‘The Toad beneath the harrow knows  
Every row that harrow sows.  
The butterfly above the road,  
Sings consolation to the Toad.’



Here was a descending hierarchy, all the more powerful for the fact that it now had at its disposal not merely the sophisticated instrumentality to assess institutional (and individual) performance. It was all the more powerful for the fact that, unlike its continental counterparts, the British edition of the descending hierarchy was less an administrative hierarchy so much as a descending evaluatory hierarchy and, in addition, was one in which institutional funding was directly linked to institutional performance.

### **The groans of the British**

In circumstances such as these, it is difficult to see precisely what trade-off the Evaluative State could hold out to Britain's universities. Closer public scrutiny, conditional and performance-related funding, concentration of executive power, national assessments of research output and surveillance of costs were all, in different degrees and combinations, visible and at work, and in different combinations in the systems to the east of Harwich and to the south of Dover. However, the British model of the Evaluative State could offer no *douceur* to counterbalance the rigours of the descending hierarchy of evaluation. For in truth, the universities had long been *de jure* and *de facto* self-governing, with the result that managerialism as a principle could not be compensated by an enhancement of institutional latitude as was largely the case on the mainland. Indeed, institutional latitude itself became conditioned by performance.

If a trade-off existed, it was not made available to the university. With a stretch of the imagination, one could see it accorded to the non-university sector by the Parliamentary Act of 1992, which elevated the polytechnic sector to university status, and in so doing, abolished the dual mode of funding and evaluation that had grown up around them from the late 1980s onward. It was a situation ironic in the extreme. In effect, the so-called 'public sector' polytechnics, from their foundation in the mid-1960s, had been subject to external accreditation, in part drawing on university staff for programme evaluation and organized around the Council for National Academic Awards. The Evaluative State, thirty years later extended this pattern of oversight to the universities. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the rise of the Evaluative State in the United Kingdom was regarded by many in the older universities in terms of a reduction in real institutional latitude – if not its confiscation. Nor is it greatly to be wondered at that the principle of managerialism was hotly

challenged not simply in its operation and that to the point of revolt,<sup>4</sup> but above all in the underlying values the principle itself contained.

### **The Evaluative State as an element in the European higher education area**

Still, doubts as to the principle of managerialism, or objections as to its working, could not disguise the fact that the rise of the Evaluative State, seen as coterminous with the installation of new agencies, procedures and criteria for judging quality in higher education, was both rapid and extensive, even before the signing of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999. The pace of change was impressive too. In the early 1990s less than half the European Member States possessed evaluatory procedures at ‘supra institutional level’ (Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004). By 2003, virtually all European countries – with the exception of Greece – had endowed themselves with varying forms of accreditation schemes. In addition, the ranks of those systems of higher education, which had shifted institutional accreditation, the second element that effectively consolidated the Evaluative State, from state approval over to some mechanism that allied accreditation with evaluation activities, was similarly impressive. By 2003, Finland, Flanders, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden had made the transition.

Before tackling the issue of the relationship between the Evaluative State and the Bologna Process, two preliminary comments are in order. First, a very good case can be made for arguing that the construction of the Evaluative State, seen in the light of Bologna, was perhaps the last example of policy-making in higher education conceived exclusively as a national adventure. In addition, as we have seen, despite largely common elements – conditional financing, the injection of a new instrumentality to judge institutional output based on performance indicators, the outsourcing of the function of evaluation to intermediary agencies – the relative weighting assigned to such items were decisions wholly taken with reference to national priorities and priorities conceived nationally. To be sure, there were nations that saw the particular model they had developed for domestic purposes as having an ‘export potential’. The Netherlands was one, influencing patterns of development in Denmark, Flanders and Portugal (Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004, p. 37).

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<sup>4</sup> The protests of some amongst Britain’s oldest and most respected universities against the exigencies of the Quality Assurance Agency in 2001 is an interesting comment on the more perverse effects of the heavy handedness shown by the British evaluatory para-statal bodies. Bureaucratic insensitivity is not banned simply by justifying one’s actions in the name of the market and of the private sector. In the same logic, *Lourdeur bureaucratique* is demonstrably not a state monopoly either.

France, amongst the first to create a ‘new model’ evaluation system, also influenced thinking elsewhere – in Spain and Italy for example. That merely underlines the argument. Constructing the Evaluative State was a national enterprise.

Once we shift our sights from the Evaluative State as it evolved within the Nation State to its broader setting as a dimension within the emerging European Higher Education Area, clearly the Evaluative State represents a ‘double transition’. The first consisted in those changes it brought about on the home front. The second transition centred on those further adjustments that were subsequently made to take account of the Bologna Process and the emergence of a European Higher Education Area.

### **The Evaluative State and Europe: incompatibilities and tensions**

Nevertheless, the Evaluative State was far from being compatible with some of the central concerns Bologna set out to deal with – prime amongst them the new ‘architecture’ which proposed a Europe-wide homogeneous study duration based on a 3- or 4-year Bachelor’s degree, a 2-year Master’s and a further 3-year doctoral degree, often known as the 3+5+8 model. Still less was the proliferation of different modes of quality assessment and the different procedures of accreditation seen as underwriting the principle of transparency that the Bachelor/Master model was supposed to give students, employers and parents. Rather the contrary, the rationale of a Europe-wide uniformity in study duration served only to reveal that licentious variety that the Evaluative State had brought about in its technical aspects – namely, the area of quality assessment and validation procedures that governed both academic awards and their renewal.

Hence, no sooner had Bologna begun hacking away to impose order through similarity and transparency through order upon the jungle of Europe’s degree structures and variations in study duration than a new and luxurious undergrowth in the area of validation and accreditation stood suddenly revealed (Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004). Furthermore, the same process demonstrated that what appeared as ‘transparent’ to the agencies responsible for these functions at national level, took on all the trappings of an impenetrable opacity when placed alongside one another within the overall setting of the European Higher Education Area.

Thus, the ambition of the Bologna Declaration to tame the jungle of degree structures merely opened up the unpleasing vista of jungles new – in the form of high variation in the different national evaluatory models that individual European nations had so recently put in place at no small expense in energy, negotiation and sometimes recrimination.

### **. . . and services rendered**

Whilst the Evaluative State presented difficulties to advancing the Bologna Process, it also rendered certain services – not least by appearing to give some substance to the notion of ‘convergence’, namely, that higher education in Europe was in process of coalescing around certain common features, and very particularly in the shape of those agencies and techniques of verification that sought to align higher education upon the demands of a private sector labour market. Because elements of the Evaluative State were widely present across different systems of higher education in Western Europe, in certain quarters the move towards the Evaluative State was interpreted as incontrovertible proof that a ‘European’ higher education system was now in a stage of becoming. Furthermore, that new model evaluatory procedures emerged very swiftly during the period prior to Bologna seemed to point towards a de facto and widespread agreement on the matter, on a cross-national basis.

Thus, the reforms put in train by individual nations as part of their own specific drive towards the Evaluative State were reinterpreted and, if not outrightly expropriated by the European cause, then at very least were injected into a new rhetoric as proof that the ‘European Dimension’ had finally gone beyond that realm of wishful thinking, inhabited by politicians, bureaucrats and Europhiliacs.<sup>5</sup> Such perceptions were especially marked in the higher education systems of East and Central Europe for which emulating certain features of the Evaluative State – mainly in the area of quality assurance mechanisms – had a dual significance – symbolically, to declare themselves part of the emerging common higher education identity by adopting what they regarded as the most up-to-date common ‘European’ practices in the matter.

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<sup>5</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the debate over ‘European Higher Education’, as over the future of Europe itself, is erroneously interpreted when simply presented in terms of Europhiles vs. Eurosceptics. There are, in point of fact, three groups: committed militants – the Europhiliacs; those for whom Europe is the Great Satan – the Europhobes; and last but very far from least, those whose opinion is not founded either on faith or on fear, so much as on hard practical evidence – the Eurosceptics who suspend belief until proof is provided; the insinuation being that professional students of higher education fall into the third group. For a more elaborate treatment of this see ‘Europhiliacs, Eurosceptics and Europhobics: Higher Education Policy, Values and Institutional Research’, Presidential Address to the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Association for Institutional Research, Barcelona, September 2004, 13 pp.

In reality, to reassert an ostensibly new form of control at home – often to protect the interests of established universities against the incursions, ravages and bizarre practices of proprietorial or private establishments, which had sprung up in the vacuum left by the collapse of the *Ancien Régime* (Dima, 2003; Tomusk, 2003, 2004).

### **The impact of Bologna on the Evaluative State**

As with any relationship, it is often as pleasing to receive as it is to give. The spread of the Evaluative State served to provide evidence to the wavering that, once translated beyond the Nation State, the practices and structures that accumulated around the Evaluative State were the shape of things to come in a ‘European’ higher education system. However, it should not be thought that this flow of generosity was one way. For just as the march towards the Evaluative State strengthened a certain image of higher education in Europe, so the process of ‘Europeanization’ or European integration also urged the Evaluative State forward as well. Such reciprocity lay in the fact that if the Evaluative State posed knotty problems for the Bologna Declaration, so the Bologna Declaration returned the complement. This it did through the issue of student mobility and very particularly through the issue of having to make explicit the criteria by which programmes, degree courses and qualifications were judged and officially recognized for purposes of employment or for professional practice.

Hitherto, the relatively small-scale operation of recognizing foreign qualifications fell to specialized but marginal bureaux, networked within each Member State – the National Accreditation Recognition Information Centres (NARICS). Increasing student mobility, the prospect of massive increases of cross-frontier trading in ‘educational services’ coupled with the explicit commitment of the Bologna Declaration to have Europe rival the United States in the world competition to attract foreign students, all added a new dimension not merely to the recognition of foreign diplomas. The Declaration also applied the principle of transparency to the procedures and criteria that conferred validity to one’s own. Cross-national mobility brought the issue of Accreditation firmly to the fore (Hämäläinen et al., 2001).

Within the rationale of the Evaluative State, accreditation marks a second stage in its development, which hitherto focused on ascertaining the efficiency and performance of institutions based on programmes already in place. By bringing the issue of accreditation to the fore, Bologna put in train a series of initiatives that ushered in a further elaboration of the

Evaluative State – a situation that some had predicted earlier, though not necessarily in the domain of Accreditation (Neave, 1998, p. 282). If we consider accreditation less from its detailed technicity but rather as an instrument of ‘institutional direction’, and do so from its point of focus, bringing accreditation into the ambit of the Evaluative State and associating accreditation directly with evaluation, rather than holding it apart as a separate activity, had consequences in two areas.

### **Accreditation as an instrument of policy**

First, there is accreditation functioning as an instrument of policy. This bears down on the input side of institutional activity. In other words, the Evaluative State, by embracing accreditation, extends forward its span of control. Accreditation added to its instrumentality of oversight. It also extends the range of its points of intervention, by adding a further point of intervention at the input stage over and above its habitual focus on output. It must remain a moot point whether by so doing, the Evaluative State has not in truth completed a species of Hegelian spiral which brings it back to the point from which it started – but as a more sophisticated form of remote ‘para-statal’ control based on the dual instrumentality of legal enactment and assessment of performance replacing the more classic, but now outdated mode of ‘state control’ (for the latter see Van Vught, 1989).

The second area of significance, just as it was with the agencies of evaluation, turned around where the new element of oversight was located in the organizational chart of ministries, boards and agencies of public purpose. Again, as with their counterparts responsible for review and evaluation, variety reigns, both in respect of organizational siting and as regards the particular sectors in the higher education system, which come under its purview. Thus, for instance, in Germany and Austria, external accreditation with responsibility vested in a special agency, the *Akkreditierungsrat* extends only to the Bologna type degree structures grounded in the Bachelor Master model. More ancient awards remain outside its ambit. In Austria, formal accreditation procedures are reserved for the non-university sector, private sector establishments, leaving the university *stricto sensu* exempt as is the case with Ireland (Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004, p. 18).

### **Agency intelligence and institutional artfulness**

The creation of new model accreditation agencies added further to the apparatus of verification. It also fulfilled another purpose. In certain instances, and the Netherlands Accreditation Organization, set up in 2003 to discharge this function was one, the harnessing of accreditation to evaluation activities served to prolong the active life of the latter. In the feline phase, adding accreditation as an instrument of approval and guidance ‘re-established trust in quality’ that stakeholders – namely government – thought had become less transparent than it ought to be (Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004, p. 20). Expressed slightly differently, accreditation procedures provided the Evaluative State with an additional leverage to improve institutional performance over and above the leverage exercised by evaluation alone. That some governments saw the need for such additional leverage, and saw accreditation in these terms was a matter of neither chance nor hazard. It was, on the contrary, symptomatic of a more fundamental issue that lay at the heart of the Evaluative State, namely that to be effective, evaluation procedures should be regular but not routine.

Institutions learn, and if improvement in ‘quality’ results from evaluation, institutions also learn how to ‘put a good face on things’ (Jeliaskova, 2001). Knowing how to ‘play the rules’ may work to institutional advantage in the short term. By the same token, and seen from the standpoint of the evaluator rather than the evaluated, ‘playing the rules’ implies a dynamic very similar to a ‘law of diminishing returns’ or ‘decreasing sensitivity’ in the institutional response that assessments show up after their second and third times of asking (van Bruggen et al., 1998). The cutting edge of agency intelligence becomes blunted by the progress in institutional artfulness.

### **Blunting the sensitivities**

Blunting the sensitivity of the criteria and procedures wielded by the Evaluative State is neither a theoretical still less a minor, matter. Erosion in the confidence that agencies of evaluation have in their instrumentality has two consequences, both of which have direct bearing on the relationship between agency and university. It replaces a circle of trust and confidence with a cycle of suspicion (Jeliaskova, 2001; van Bruggen et al., 1998). Very often, it leads to the Agency of Evaluation redoubling its efforts, to devise new criteria, more elaborate and, hopefully, of supreme sensitivity. Such a compensatory tactic – the agency’s countermove to the cunning of institutions – is today in place. It takes the form of the increasing attention agencies pay ‘bench-marking’ on the one hand and, on the other, in the

considerable weight evaluative agencies now set upon ‘good practice’ – or even the much-vaunted ‘best practice’ - an adjectival inflation which illustrates as nothing else, the ravages that the cycle of suspicion can wreak.

This self-same quest for further normative clarity and for the operational criteria to ensure it, places the Evaluative State in great peril. It does so by bringing about a shift in operational focus not dissimilar to relocating the point of focus from output to input, which, as we suggested earlier, was one of the concomitants that followed upon introducing accreditation into the instrumentality of evaluation. The quest for normative clarity and for procedures grounded in more sensitive criteria however, works in a different dimension, and its results can often be devastating. Benchmarking and practice – good or best, depending on one’s ambitions and optimism – are not exclusively to be found in the domain of product. Rather, they derive in the main from activities, which essentially reside in the domain of process – precisely the domain from which the Evaluative State in its earlier stage of development – had resolutely withdrawn.

By moving into the domain of process, evaluative agencies run the not inconsiderable risk of damaging further the trust between the evaluating and the evaluated, trust on which the Evaluative State rests (de Boer, 2002). They appear to be rescinding the ‘covenant’ that lies at the base of the Evaluative State, which was analysed earlier in terms of a ‘trade-off’ between enhanced self-management for the university as the price for acceding to enhanced public scrutiny and accountability. Whether, as a result, universities perceive the Evaluative State today as reverting to that interventionary ponderousness, which many had anticipated it would do away with, is a question well worth the asking.

### **A viticultural conclusion**

In this presentation, I have set out to develop the saga of the Evaluative State along three main dimensions. To do so, I have examined the variations in national setting and in the priorities resulting from them that shaped its rise. Second, I have sought to explain why, in some systems of higher education, the issue of managerialism, like the unhappy Uriah the Hittite, stood ‘in the forefront of the battle’; whereas, in others, its place was less prominent. Finally, I have examined some of the consequences that the Bologna Declaration has had upon the evolution of the Evaluative State and *a contrario*.



That Bologna has had a marked impact upon the Evaluative State is, I would suggest, a thesis to be admitted. That quality assessment and accountability of higher education to the public, the heart of the Evaluative State, have combined with new forms of Accreditation is largely the response of individual national systems to the initial points the Bologna Declaration highlighted. From this viewpoint, Bologna has not simply added a new complexity and a supplementary tool to the Evaluative State. By the same process, it has reinforced the depth of evaluation's infrastructure and the weight of its procedures. As a general tendency, this is unlikely to change, if only for the fact that the Bologna Declaration has now become an ongoing adventure with its own rapidly accumulating agenda, a change in dynamic now presented as the 'Bologna Process'.

I began this presentation with a viticultural metaphor. Therefore, it is only appropriate to close with an observation in the same unrefined spirit. Much remains to be done in the construction of the European Higher Education Area and, viewed from the institutional level, our moves in this direction have, so far been greatly cautious. This is only right, given that the Bologna Process represents the most complex and geographically extensive reform to involve Europe's universities since their foundation more than eight centuries ago. What remains to be seen is whether the Evaluative State will be able to resist the temptation to surround it with further reglementary controls operating not at a supra-institutional level, but rather at an intergovernmental level. In short, it remains to be seen whether the new vintage of the Evaluative State will be sufficiently robust to hold out against the temptation to 'cut' it with the old and feeble beverage of bureaucracy rampant.

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### *Chapter 3*

#### **Commentary on Guy Neave: The Bologna Process and the Evaluative State: a Viticultural Parable**

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A few years ago, Guy Neave made a seminal contribution to the understanding of the transformation of higher education systems when he developed the idea that the role of the national states in this sector was changing, and that they were becoming 'evaluative states'. In this paper, he starts by arguing that this is definitively the main evolution to be taken into account and that the changes introduced by the Bologna Process, that some presented as a turning point for European higher education systems are, in fact, a supplementary indicator of the rise of the evaluative state. Therefore, the Bologna Process is much more in the stream of continuity of an already existing trend rather than a breaking point.

In fact, Guy Neave's paper appears to me to be much more of an opportunity for him to strengthen his arguments about the development of the evaluative state than a strict and narrow discussion on the interpretation of the true significance of the Bologna Process. Therefore, my three comments will deal initially with the evaluative state.

The first comment is related to the definition of the evaluative state and the polymorphic characterization that progressively emerges in Guy Neave's paper. The paper begins with a rather simple definition stressing two main shifts: a blurred distinction between routine and exploratory evaluation, with routine evaluation being more and more located within higher education institutions; and a shift from input to output evaluation, this being accompanied by the creation of agencies having special goals or missions. Then, various nuances are introduced and blur this clear definition.

First, Guy Neave distinguishes two main roads or models that can lead to the evaluative state: the first, on the one hand, can be part of a broader range political reform, while on the other,

the aims are at redirecting higher education institutions towards market forces. In both cases evaluation plays a central role, but for radically different purposes.

Second, he opposes two possible versions, one consists in remote steering while the other promotes tightened span of control.

Third, he concedes that various degrees of managerialism may be attached to the evaluative state, from no managerialism at all, to a high degree of managerialism.

Fourth, he further opposes the evaluative state as developed in the United Kingdom to other forms of evaluative states in other countries.

As a result, I wonder whether this does not lead to a kind of dissolution of the notion and whether so many distinctions and nuances do not in fact weaken the robustness of the concept. If it can qualify any situation, whatever the differences revealed, what strength does it finally have? How far does it help in understanding what is going on?

The second remark deals with the assessment of the diffusion of the evaluative state. What evidence should be taken into account in order to document its success. In his paper, Guy Neave tends to use an a posteriori demonstration. He takes many examples in different countries and concludes that because this actually happened, or an agency was created, it is sufficient to say that the evaluative state developed. However, two counterarguments could be used to question such conclusions.

On the one hand, one can say that some measures or decisions may look like the evaluative state, but that it is a post-rationalization from the analyst because the actors involved in the policy-making process did not intend to behave in conformity with the evaluative state or did not aim at respecting the precepts of the evaluative state or even did not even know about it. An example could be the French Comité National d'Evaluation (CNE) it is indeed an agency with a special purpose, but it was not created in order to shift from input to output evaluation. Should we present it as a case of an evaluative state if its initiators were not aware or not concerned by this perspective?

On the other hand, one can argue that it is not sufficient to observe decisions that are related to the rhetoric of the evaluative state in order to come to conclusions about its success but that one has to look at the implementation of those decisions and to study whether or not they reach the aim for which they were intended. Here again, the creation of the CNE is a good example. The decision was made, this agency was created but until now, its real effects remain rather limited (cf. for instance Musselin, 2004).

Therefore, one can wonder whether the evaluative state is not, first of all, a powerful rhetoric or a narrative, whether it really had concrete and real effects, and if this is the case, how does one assess them?

My third and last comment concerns the recurrent question of change, and more specifically change in higher education. On this aspect, I see a shift in the paper. At the beginning of his paper, Guy Neave reproaches those qualifying the Bologna Process as a rupture, to have forgotten that the real important change in higher education for the last decades was the rise of the evaluative state. However, at the end of the paper, he more strongly describes the Bologna Process as a change that is combining and – has to combine – with the development of the evaluative state. As expressed by Guy Neave, ‘just as the march towards the Evaluative State strengthened a certain image of higher education in Europe, so the process of “Europeanization” or Europe integration also encouraged the Evaluative State forward as well’. Nevertheless, this reveals a conception of change that is different from the initial one. At the beginning of the paper, higher education appears to evolve through ruptures (revolutions in Kuhnian (Kuhn, 1962) terms): the question for the analyst is then to identify the ‘right’ or the ‘real’ breakdown, all other events being part of an overwhelming paradigm that can only be transformed by third-level change (Hall, 1993), i.e. change in instruments, instruments’ settings and objectives. But it seems that in the second part of the paper, another conception prevails in which many change dynamics are at hand and act simultaneously, combining themselves, reinforcing each other, but also posing contradictions. In this case, higher education appears to experience different changes, partly dialectical, partly convergent, emerging from various sources and resulting in continual movements and transformations. Then the evaluative state is one of the many streams acting on higher education and not the most structural. I think that Guy Neave, in fact, adheres much more to the first narrative and to the rupture introduced by the Evaluative State, but perhaps I am wrong, and I will be very

interested in Guy Neave's answer to this third comment, and to learn his position on the analysis of change.

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## Chapter 4

# Political Dimensions of Evaluation and Managerialism: University Organization and Changing Knowledge Regimes

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### Introduction

Beliefs among policy-makers and university administrators about how university institutions should be organized have gone through fundamental changes. These changes are connected with the ways in which values and ideas about knowledge have changed. In the current debate, beliefs about the extent to which recent and ongoing changes are beneficial to universities as knowledge-generating and knowledge-transmitting institutions differ sharply (Gibbons et al., 1994; Readings, 1996). Defenders of the traditional university stick to the account of decline, and they hold that previously good institutions are turning into bad ones (Nybom, 2001). Modernization optimists promote the notion that past tradition is an obsolete guide that we need to leave behind, that the problems of the present are different, that new solutions need to be devised in order to address them, that they urgently need to be addressed, and that a promising future awaits in which bad institutions may turn into good ones, once we embrace modernization. Yet both groups share the assumptions that ongoing or required changes are radical, drastic and fundamental. In this paper, I shall question the shared assumption about drastic change and focus on actual outcomes.

The focus of the paper is on institutional values that underpin higher education policies and organizational forms that are promoted in universities. Before I start the analysis of change in institutional values and organizational forms, I shall outline in the next part a theoretical framework for understanding change in institutional values and organizational forms. An important point of departure is a conception of leadership developed by Selznick (1984) in his path-breaking work, *Leadership in Administration*,) originally published in 1957. By exploring ideas from his work, I shall analyse the changes higher education institutions are currently undergoing, and some of the implications these changes might have for universities in the future.



In the third part, I discuss institutional ideals and values, and certain characteristics of organizational forms. The discussion focuses on values with an international reach, and how they relate to specific national experiences, of which universities are a part. What are the traditional values of universities and to what extent were they uniform across countries? What conditions did they offer for institutional leadership? To what extent are the traditional values being replaced by new values promoted by higher education policies associated with the rise of mass education and the emerging so-called 'knowledge economy'? Does the spread of new values in higher education policies across nations lead to convergence of the organization of higher education institutions? How does the emergence of these new values affect the conditions for institutional development?

One reason why it is important to highlight these values is that they nourish fundamentally different notions about the nature of academic work – about the academic production process, the way in which it needs to be organized, and to what extent academics can be trusted to organize their own affairs without outside interference.

The fourth part of the paper outlines some fundamental changes in the definition of roles, power distribution and criteria for evaluation of academic work.

The fifth part of the paper focuses on how processes of change play out empirically in different national settings. To what extent can we observe a global process of modernization? To what extent and how do the outcomes, the new organizational forms, vary across nations? To what extent do these forms promote institutional leadership in academic institutions.

Finally the paper discusses how different types of knowledge regimes condition different versions of academic leadership.

### **Institutional values under pressure**

In recent years, a number of authors have argued for and suggested ways in which new-institutionalist approaches may be reconciled with rational choice approaches in order to better understand or explain organizational change. The call for such integration, based on the empiricist argument that these approaches should be considered as supplementary rather than mutually exclusive, is not new (Becher and Kogan, 1992; Bleiklie and Kogan, 2000; Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Thelen and Steinmo, 1995).

In combining the perspectives, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) also suggest to bridge a second separation of inter- and intra-organizational analysis, which often has been criticized for being artificial and detrimental to a full understanding of change processes. Thus, they emphasize the interplay between outside pressures, generated by the market and institutional contexts on the one hand, and the intra-organizational dynamics on the other. This combination of perspectives echoes in many ways how an early ‘institutionalist’, Philip Selznick (1984), proposed to study leadership nearly fifty years ago. His analysis starts from the following premise: Although it is important to regard organizations as instruments in order to handle and understand many day-to-day administrative and routine concerns in modern organizations, it is not sufficient to understand leadership. The reason is that leadership is about something more than making the organization into an efficient tool. Leadership is a function that is based in organizations that have become institutionalized, which means that they are infused with value, have defined a mission and a role, and have become the embodiment of that role. Leadership is thus about the definition of institutional mission and role, the institutional embodiment of purpose, the defence of institutional integrity, and the ordering of internal conflict (Selznick, 1984, p. 62ff). Institutions are socially embedded ‘natural organizations’. Their leadership turns on the dynamic adaptation of the total organization to the internal strivings and external pressures to which they are exposed. One of the failures of leadership occurs when organizational achievement or survival is confounded with institutional success. Whilst an organization such as a university may grow and become more secure if it is efficiently managed, it may nevertheless ‘fail dismally’ if it is led by administrators without a clear sense of values to be achieved (Selznick, 1984, p. 27).

The need for leadership in the above sense is not constant, but is called for when aims are not well defined, when external support and direction falter, when the organization finds itself in a fluid environment that requires constant adaptation and when goals and values become contested, corrupted or otherwise undermined (Selznick, 1984, p. 119). Institutional leadership is necessary in order to maintain integrity – i.e. the persistence of an organization’s distinctive values, competence and role. Institutional integrity is particularly vulnerable when values are tenuous or insecure. The ability to sustain integrity is dependent on a number of factors.

Of particular significance is the relationship between elites, autonomy and social values.<sup>6</sup> Simply put, Selznick proposes that the maintenance of social values depends on the autonomy of elites. The reason is that modern social institutions – such as educational institutions, but also a number of other public and private agencies – are exposed to many demands to provide short-term benefits for large numbers. They tend to adapt themselves to a situation where they cater to large numbers by relaxing the standards for membership. This adaptation makes it increasingly difficult for elites to maintain their own standards, and consequently their particular identity and functions. In the process, they tend to lose their ‘exclusiveness’, which has provided insulation from day-to-day pressures of outside demands that permits new ideas and skills to mature. Of critical importance to the functioning of elites (in the above sense) is enough autonomy to allow the maturation and protection of values.

The essence of institutional autonomy is therefore not to be found in specific administrative or organizational arrangements, but in its actual functioning with regard to the protection of values. It is, therefore, a likely proposition that such specific arrangements may vary over time as well as across space, as has been observed in higher education. Within modern universities, we can also observe various forms of autonomy operating sometimes together, sometimes in conflict. The forms differ in that they have different collective bases, partly founded in the autonomy of the academic institution, partly in the autonomy of disciplinary and professional communities. In addition, autonomy has both a collective dimension as well as an individual one. Whereas the autonomy of social collectivities or social groups provides them with a jurisdiction within which they are free to govern themselves and make decisions without outside interference, individual autonomy provides the individual member of the group with the authority to make decisions concerning how they perform their profession, without interference from their peers or outsiders. Thus, individual and institutional autonomy were supposed to sustain one another, and the traditional organizational form through which the potential conflict between collective and individual autonomy has been handled was the collegiate body. Academic institutions – in particular research universities as they emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century – law firms and hospitals are examples of institutions that, in principle, have been operated as associations of autonomous individual professionals who govern, within a certain mandate, collectively through collegiate bodies.

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<sup>6</sup> The terminology may vary, and the term ‘elite’ may be substituted by ‘profession’ or ‘professional group’. The important thing is to keep the definition in mind so that whatever term one prefers refers to any social group that is responsible for the protection of a social value (Selznick, 1984, p. 120).

Such bodies have two main functions. They are vehicles for (a) collective decision-making and (b) control of professional standards exercised through decisions on admission of new members and sanctions against members who fail to meet the standards set by the collectivity.

Leaders of institutions that are made up and run by collegial peer groups may have a comparatively easy job in the particular sense that goals and values are internalized by the members and often taken for granted. Individual members tend not to distinguish between their personal mission as professionals and that of the institution. The promotion and protection of values is therefore a collective concern. The leader, as *primus inter pares*, can therefore count on the support of the members of the organization in promoting institutional values. In such a situation, leadership is not just easy, it is hardly needed. However, hospitals and universities also make examples of institutions where these structures are undergoing change and where collegiate bodies, to a varying extent, have been replaced by corporate structures, in which decision-making bodies are made representative of all categories of organizational members and subject to external control. Modern universities are no longer collegiate bodies of professors where other employee groups and students were excluded from decision-making bodies. Since the 1970s, they have undergone two important transformations. First, they became democratized, and decision-making bodies now include all major employee groups. Second, external interests have gained, in various ways, a stronger foothold in university governance, and are often represented on university boards.

Accordingly, two things have happened. On the one hand, institutions have been reformed from autonomous collectivities to stakeholder organizations (Neave, 2002). One of the major shifts in power relationships in and around universities that follows from this transformation is that universities and the individual academic are supposed to serve the expressed needs of stakeholders for research and educational services. This is a fundamental shift from a situation where their decisions about research and teaching were left to the professional judgement of academics. The current transformation implies, however, that the collective and individual autonomy of academics is circumscribed by the needs of others, rather than by their independent judgement as professionals. On the other hand, the values of academic institutions have been called into question, and they are often accused of not having clear aims, or not being interested in or able to communicate them clearly. Their aims tend to be perceived as not very well defined, and complaints are heard that universities have been poor at defining and clarifying them.

External support has faltered as universities are being criticized for being self-serving and not useful enough to society. since the late 1980s in particular, their environments have become more fluid than previously as student populations have risen sharply, as funding conditions and funding formulas, legislative conditions and steering mechanisms have changed, as outside demands and internal pressures for organizational reforms have mounted and as internationalization and globalization have created new real or perceived pressures. These developments have in turn prompted a series of reform attempts. Universities have tried to adapt themselves through a series of organizational reforms aiming at expanding the capacity for doing applied research, for providing education to a growing and increasingly diverse student body, and for expanding its sources of revenue, organizationally strengthen leadership functions and make their operations and performance transparent to the public. The organizational challenges raised by these circumstances are not necessarily met just by finding the best reform measures that can make universities more efficient or useful, although these are no doubt legitimate concerns. However strongly university reformers emphasize goals of improved efficiency or higher quality, all the changes within and around higher education institutions suggest that a deep value shift is taking place. The problem is that the new values that are supposed to replace the former ones are not clearly identified and specified. Therefore, universities are not only faced with challenges that raise the need for leadership. The conditions for leadership appear to have deteriorated as the elite autonomy that underpins institutional leadership appears to have been reduced.

This general sketch is intended as a starting-point for an empirical exploration that is based on the considerations that were raised above, and that will ask: What are the values that currently underpin university institutions and the way in which they are organized? How are the values promoted and protected? To what extent have values, and the organizational arrangements by which they are protected, changed over recent decades? To what extent do they vary across nations?

### **Institutional values and organizational ideals**

Institutional values are often packaged within more comprehensive organizational ideals. One way of thinking about such ideals and actual organizational forms is that the former serve as models for the latter; as archetypes or ‘templates for organizing’ (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991, p. 27).

The adoption of organizational forms is, according to new-institutionalist theory, the outcome of pressures in the institutional environment constituted by organizational fields. For this analysis, it is particularly interesting to look specifically at three phenomena that make important conditions for the organization of academic institutions: administrative ideologies, creation and protection of elites, and the emergence of contending interest groups, and the ways in which they shape higher education policies.

Before I move on, it may be useful to look at some of the organizational ‘templates’ constituted by the expectations with which modern universities are faced. They originate partly in the different tasks with which a modern university actually is charged, partly in the different ideological conceptions about those tasks and their relative importance that inform higher education policies. The four templates that are outlined below give different directions for how universities should be organized.<sup>7</sup> It follows, however, as I have argued elsewhere, that the templates are not mutually exclusive ideals, although the emphasis on specific ideals vary in time and space (Bleiklie, 1998).

### **Academic authority**

The first set of expectations is related to academic authority. These expectations are closely interwoven with an ideal of the university as a cultural institution, the primary task of which is to engage in academic activity based on autonomous research and teaching. This prototype of the research university took shape in Germany and spread to other European countries during the nineteenth century. The dominant organizational template was the university as a *collegium* of autonomous chairs with affiliated apprentice students (Neave and Rhoades, 1987, p. 283ff). The most important expectation of the university as a cultural institution was academic quality, in the sense that each one of the chair holders asserts his or her scholarly authority through outstanding research, by attracting talented students and by creating good research environments. The core value fostered by these expectations was one of academic freedom granted to the professors based on academic achievement. Only the professors themselves were entitled to evaluate their own performance as a group of peers. The authority thus rested primarily with ‘the visible and horizontal *collegium*’ of chair holders.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a slightly modified version of a typology of leadership ideals that I used in a previous discussion of New Public Management ideals in higher education (Bleiklie, 1998).

Today there are few formal mechanisms that emphasize this expectation of individual professors to represent and dominate entire academic fields. Academic authority has traditionally been sustained through representative arrangements that secured professorial power by granting professors exclusive access to positions in the university senate, faculty council and as department chairs (Bleiklie, 1994; Daalder and Shils, 1982). Although there still remain tasks that are under exclusive professorial authority, the expectation of academic authority is primarily emphasized through formal and sometimes informal ranking of individuals and their academic performance. Most departments are responsible for academic fields that are much too comprehensive to expect any single person to be able to represent the field as a whole. Nevertheless, the expectation is still that an academic leader should also be an outstanding academic, and the issue of to what extent decision-making power in university affairs should be based on disciplinary competence is still an important issue. Although the professors have lost their absolute power and even majority on university and faculty boards, positions such as department chair, dean, rector, vice chancellor or president are still usually only open to persons who are, or have been full professors.

The expectations that face the academic authority are based on the assumption that high disciplinary competence gives the best academic leadership. Beyond the academic status of the leaders, the expectations do not specify what the universities are expected to do. This is also an institutional ideal, formulated for a situation where little leadership is needed, since institutional values are internalized and protected collectively by its members.

### **Collegial co-ordination**

A second set of expectations is related to disciplinary collegial co-ordination and characterizes another version of the university as a cultural institution. Here, leaders primarily claim authority in their capacity as members of egalitarian and autonomous academic disciplinary communities. These role expectations are related to what we may call ‘the disciplinary university’ modelled on the modern American research university. The term refers to the fact that the disciplines constitute relatively egalitarian communities organized formally within disciplinary departments, and with a number of professors in each department. According to this ideal, a university is composed of disciplinary communities, run by their members, whether they are admitted on the basis of formal examinations or are defined more liberally as any student within the academic field in question.

The ideal is based on the premise that the academic community is granted academic freedom and responsibility for the quality of teaching and research within the discipline. In post-Second World War Western Europe, disciplinary communities gradually, and to a varying extent, replaced the chair holders as the main academic actors. An important aspect of the democratization process of West European universities during the 1970s has turned on the extension of access to larger segments of the academic community, such as academic personnel below full professor level and students to university decision-making bodies. The collegial leader is an elected representative of a discipline (whether it be a department chair, a dean or a rector) who is expected to co-ordinate the activities of the disciplinary community internally and fight for its interests externally. As a colleague and a co-ordinator, he or she is expected to be an accomplished interest representative and politician rather than a disciplinary entrepreneur.

The expectations directed towards the disciplinary co-ordination are focusing on the socio-political aspect of organizational arrangements, by concentrating on collegial relations designed to provide protective working arrangements for the academic community, and partly securing the flow of resources into that community.

### **Social responsibility**

A third set of expectations is related to the social and political responsibility of universities. This expectation may vary according to how university systems are organized and co-ordinated. The extremes may be illustrated by private institutions that define their social mission or 'community service' independently on the one hand, and institutions within publicly controlled systems that are formally part of the civil service and where the members are considered civil servants on the other. The expectations directed at leaders may thus range from that of an activist who mobilizes support from the environment, to the civil servant who loyally follows up whatever social obligation that is defined by public authorities. Two alternative values may thus be identified in connection with institutional social responsibilities. One value is loyalty, an expectation that is directed by public authorities at universities in public systems. In this case, the university demonstrates social responsibility to the extent that it loyally implements public policies. An alternative version of social responsibility, community service, may be illustrated by private institutions that autonomously define themselves as having specific social responsibilities for the local community in which they are located, or for the nation state.



The specific content of the social responsibilities of higher education institutions may vary from providing society with educated elites, via exploiting efficiently the human capital of a country, or actively using higher education in order to reduce social inequality by offering support to youngsters from disadvantaged groups, supporting the spread and development of democratic institutions, to providing the opportunity for the entire population to get higher education as a welfare right – regardless of academic qualifications. As public institutions, universities are supposed to somehow assume and interpret their social responsibilities within the framework of national political goals and programmes.

The socially responsible university is expected to be oriented towards actions and values that emphasize that it gives something back to society beyond its traditional ‘output’ of education and research responsibilities. The focus here is on the fulfilment of the expressed wishes of outside constituents, be they politicians, civil-service representatives or community members. However, how and to what extent actual universities emphasize social responsibility in the above sense depends on how social responsibilities interact with other expectations to which universities are exposed.

### **Business enterprise**

The last set of expectations is related to the business enterprise. This ideal is based on the notion that the university is a producer of educational and research services. It is embedded in the set of ideas that come under labels such as ‘The New Public Management’ or ‘Managerialism’. These ideas have served as ideological justification for public administrative reforms internationally lasting recent decades, and have characterized university policies particularly from the latter half of the 1980s (Bleiklie, 1998; Christensen, 1991; Keller, 1983; Læg Reid, 1991; Olsen, 1993; Pollitt, 1990; Røvik, 1992).

Seen as a business enterprise, a university consists of a leadership and different functional (academic, technical and administrative) staff groups servicing different user groups in need of the services the enterprise offers. Although quality and ‘quality assurance’ are emphasized as fundamental goals, the most important expectation confronting the business enterprise is the efficiency with which it produces useful services, in the form of research and candidates, to the benefit of the ‘users’ of its services. The concept of ‘user’ is a wide one, and it may comprise a wide array of groups from the university’s own students, faculty and administrators, to employers of university graduates or buyers of research services.

The ideology behind public university reforms during recent decades emphasizes the importance of higher education for national economic growth (Bleiklie, 1998). Therefore, it has been a major aim to increase the capacity to produce larger numbers of candidates more efficiently. Together with the idea that increased efficiency can be achieved by means of incentive policies and performance indicators, these notions tend to imply that the administrative element in university governance should be strengthened in order to ensure a standardized and controllable handling of the growing burden of teaching and research. The expectation of increased efficiency in the production of research and candidates means that the tasks of formulating production goals and of mobilizing resources and support by means of incentive systems become crucial concerns. The notion, well known from the American management tradition that comes with this ideal, is that leadership is a profession in itself. Academic achievement as a condition for influence and leadership positions may be problematic in this perspective since the assumption is that highly qualified academics tend to defend the special interests of their discipline rather than those of the entire institution. This has been one of the justifications for bringing in external representatives and reducing the influence of professors on university boards. Furthermore, since leaders need to be qualified as leaders, leader selection should be based on searches for candidates with leadership qualities rather than academic merits.

This institutional ideal, particularly as it has manifested itself in universities, directs attention towards instrumental aspects as it focuses on 'bottom line' outcomes and the efficiency with which they are produced.

From the institutional perspective outlined here, it may seem somewhat paradoxical that calls for stronger leadership have been justified in terms of a leadership ideal that emphasizes efficiency as a general organizational quality and the organization as an instrument rather than some set of institutional values. However, this fact should not be exaggerated without closer scrutiny of empirical evidence. Initially, it is important to be aware of the fact that institutional ideals come in packages where more than one set of values are bundled together. Second, one cannot necessarily deduce actual practices in specific instances from general trends or ideals in policy documents or organizational plans.

As already indicated, the institutional ideals or organizational templates presented here are not mutually exclusive but, as argued above, the degree to which they are emphasized and dominate as templates may vary over time and across institutions and educational systems. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s it shifted from academic authority towards disciplinary co-ordination, the emphasis since the late 1980s has (at least ostensibly) shifted towards the business enterprise ideal whilst disciplinary co-ordination has been under attack as a prime example of ‘weak’ leadership. However, in European public systems the extent to which rhetoric based on the business enterprise ideal have been followed up in practice – as managerialism and systems of evaluation have proliferated – varies and exists in a sometimes uneasy relationship with bureaucratic steering and the social responsibility of universities as civil service institutions. One may also ask to what extent one is likely to find additional variation in African, Asian and Latin American countries. These observations lead towards three kinds of empirical questions. First, what are the implications of the spread and deepening of the business enterprise ideal? Second, how have institutional values and organizational characteristics of universities varied over time? Third, how do the institutional values and organizational characteristics of universities vary across nations? Fourth, to what extent have national differences diminished over time as supporters of the globalization thesis argue, or conversely, to what extent do national differences persist in the face of global processes of economic and ideological change?<sup>8</sup> This paper concentrates on some selected European experiences with some reference to the United States.

### **Reform policy and managerialism**

In relation to the above-mentioned organizational ideals, the notion of a business enterprise implies that measures are implemented that pull both in the direction of centralization and decentralization. These conflicting tendencies are making themselves felt in the organization of the internal structure of governance as well as in relation to political authorities. On the one hand, there is an emphasis on delegation of decision-making authority.

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<sup>8</sup> The globalization thesis applied to our topic would argue that we are headed for a global model of higher education. It is often based on an underlying presumption that there are standardizing forces at work, whether they are based on a Weberian notion of the bureaucratization of the world (Weber, 1978), emergence of world systems of education (Meyer and Ramírez, 2000) or notions about globalization (Berger and Dore, 1996) and European integration. These theories make an argument that, at face value, seems convincing and important because they deal with some forceful processes that contribute to shaping our world. This may be seen in contrast to an alternative perspective that we find in historically oriented studies of state formation where the focus is on how specific national settings shape political processes (Evans et al., 1985).

In relation to state regulations and interference, the university as a business enterprise ought to be able to operate with as few limitations as possible. Internally, decisions ought to be made as closely as possible to the level at which the services in practice are rendered. On the other hand, a strong leadership is regarded as a necessity. Thus, leadership comes with incentive systems and a supposedly close control of performance at all levels, in order to guarantee that the organization functions as reliably and efficiently as the available resources make possible. This has three typical implications.

First, authority and power over university affairs are conceptually separated from disciplinary competence. All 'affected groups' are, in principle, regarded as participants with equally legitimate stakes in university affairs, and all functional groups, including the professoriate, are regarded as equal interest groups who ought to be represented by their unions rather than by their disciplinary peers. In accordance with these notions, the representative arrangements have been changed.<sup>9</sup>

Second, leadership functions and administrative structures are strengthened both with regard to their extension, the formal competence of administrators as well as their authority as decision-makers. Their role seems to be strengthened compared to representative bodies, as they assume more and more responsibilities, not only for day-to-day routine affairs, but also for strategic planning, budgeting and the growing apparatus dedicated to performance monitoring, measurement and reporting.

Finally, the notion of academic performance has been redefined from one in which its 'inherent' quality is emphasized to one in which measurable quantitative aspects are given prominence. In the latter case, qualitative considerations are presumed to be implied by the performance indicators that are used. This makes academic activity open to external scrutiny by superior administrative authorities. Disciplinary competence is thus no longer required in order to evaluate disciplinary performance, as performance indicators such as number of candidates produced, published books and articles in well-respected journals, all provide simple standard information that is fairly easy to understand.

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<sup>9</sup> Historically, this notion of representation originally arose out of the above-mentioned democratization process, in which disciplinary communities gradually replaced chair-holders as the main actors within the university during the 1970s (Clark, 1987; Daalder and Shils, 1982).

The use of the tools of managerialism in steering universities such as goal formulation, evaluation and performance control, do not only indicate an efficiency drive, but also a demystification or *entzauberung* of academic affairs in Weberian terms, which indicate that academic work can be administered as any work in any service providing agency. In other words, we are faced with an ideal that clearly indicates professionalization and differentiation of the leadership role. It emphasizes, on the one hand, the separation of previously diffusely interwoven social roles such as scholar, administrator and leader. On the other hand, it emphasizes a more comprehensive leadership role in which the role occupant is supposed to handle planning, resource management, personnel policy, productivity measures and public-relations work. These are functions that are performed by means of techniques that in a formal sense are similar in all major service producing enterprises. Simultaneously, it is attempted to incorporate the expectations of the university as a public agency and as an independent cultural institution within the general framework of the corporate enterprise ideal.

The changes brought about by such reform policies raise dilemmas and considerations that are currently shaping university leadership and organization. The changes characterize both the general 'design' of the role and the relationship between disciplinary leadership and administrative leadership in particular. Let me, therefore, sketch some dilemmas or tensions that I believe will be at the centre of the discussion about how higher education institutions ought to be led and organized in the years to come.

The first kind of tension is caused by the fact that the distinction between business-oriented leadership and public-agency leadership has been blurred. Because public-administration reform during later years so clearly has been based on the New Public Management ideology, business leadership and public-agency leadership are about to become regarded as two birds of a feather. This development has also had an impact on university reforms, and it contributes to accentuate two types of tensions that are latent in the leadership role. These tensions are related to the questions of the comprehensiveness of leadership responsibility and the levels at which leadership functions are executed. Two typical leadership roles are pitted against one another: a rule-oriented leadership role that favours concentration on the detailed control of a limited set of formal requirements, confronts an activist leadership role, which is identified with such tasks as efficiency and quality improvement. Universities are led from various organizational levels, from a government ministry, the institution, the faculties and the individual departments.

The expressed ideological message has been one of decentralization, to the effect that as many leadership responsibilities as possible are taken care of at the operative level. As already pointed out, there are many indications that this goal is far more conflict ridden and ambiguous than is apparent at the ideological level, because the delegation of authority that is implied is counteracted by two factors. First, an increasing number of tasks – in particular core functions such as teaching and research – have been made the object of superior political-administrative management. Second, another aspect of leadership than decision-making responsibility, namely the power to punish and reward, is still as centralized as ever. Because this power today spans a wider array of issues than previously, there are good reasons to hold that the process of decentralization has been paralleled by one of centralization.

The second kind of tension is caused by the fact that the relationship between disciplinary and administrative leadership is about to change. It is a commonplace in academic circles that university administrators have gained influence at the expense of disciplinary communities. The contention is often sustained by the allegation that the number of university administrators has increased more than the number of academics. However, the main problem is that it diverts attention from a far more important change in this connection, namely the transformation of the administrative activity from a concentration on support functions for the disciplinary communities to a concentration on planning and management functions (Bleiklie, 1998). This has changed the character of the administrative apparatus. The ratio of highly educated administrators has risen sharply. The number of positions with leadership responsibilities has increased at all organizational levels. Correspondingly, the number of tasks that serve as invitations to administrators with managerial ambitions in relation to disciplinary affairs has increased. A more assertive and active administrative apparatus may be regarded as evidence of the ongoing ‘bureaucratization’ of the university. At the same time, however, the administration also finds itself in a process of ‘academization’. An increasing status equality between academic and administrative staff who move within two different positional hierarchies, with partly overlapping responsibilities, and diffuse authority relationships, indicate that the ground is well prepared for conflicts within and between different categories of leadership roles.

Finally, disciplinary leadership is characterized by the fact that two kinds of responsibilities towards the institutions on the one hand, and to the disciplines on the other, is about to change. Traditionally, this relationship has had the typical form of a division of labour in which questions relating to teaching have been institutionally based. In this context, leadership has meant an obligation to see to it that certain politically defined educational needs are satisfied. Research, on the other hand, has been an activity that has been left to the individual as a member of an academic discipline. It has been tacitly assumed that research as defined by highly qualified university professors has been both of an excellent quality and (potentially at least) of use to society. Recent years have demonstrated that funders of research have been taking the quality or usefulness of research for granted for many years. Both at the national and European level we have seen the emergence of ‘centres of excellence’, research programmes and policies for internationalization – the stated goals of which are to secure quality, relevance and international competition.

### **International trends and national variation**

The rising influence of the business enterprise model as a template in most countries has constituted an increasing institutional contextual pressure for change over recent decades. Few doubt that the expectations that face universities are changing. A number of processes have been pointed out as drivers behind the changing ideals or values that university institutions are supposed to sustain (Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002). The rise of mass education during the 1980s and 1990s has made higher education and its costs more visible and contributed to a more intense focus on how higher education institutions are organized and managed. New ideas about how universities ought to be managed and funded have altered the political rhetoric and discourse about higher education issues (Neave, 1998, 2002). The idea that universities ought to be organized and managed as business enterprises and become entrepreneurial universities (Clark, 1998) has deeply influenced the debate on organization and leadership in higher education. Thus, enthusiasts who envisage new alliances and forms of co-operation between economic enterprise, public authority and knowledge institutions as necessary and with desirable consequences for academic institutions and knowledge production have coined expressions such as ‘the triple helix’ (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 1997) or ‘Mode 2’ knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994).

On the other hand, sceptics of these trends have raised scenarios of how stronger external influence over academic institutions lead to the breakdown of internal value systems, symbolized by the rise of ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) and the ‘ruin’ of the university as the cultural institution we have known until recently (Readings, 1996). However, enthusiasts and sceptics alike tend to share the assumption that a radical change has taken place, and focus on how new ideals and policies based on those ideals change the operating conditions for universities.

Traditionally, organization theorists have conceptualized universities as complex (Damrosch, 1995), multifunctional (Kerr, 1995; Parsons and Platt, 1973) and loosely coupled organizations (Weick, 1976). Indeed, the very ideas of loose-coupling and corresponding ‘garbage-can’ processes were developed by students of decision-making in universities (Cohen et al., 1972). The new trends that face universities may be regarded as attempts at changing the characteristics that used to be regarded as essential. Reforms are often presented as radical changes introduced as outcomes of thorough and well-planned structural redesign, and they are based on the assumption that human behaviour easily lends itself to steering by changes in formal structures. However, actual reform processes resemble more often than not the gradual and organic processes of change – which means that reforms, for better or worse, with relatively few exceptions, tend to accomplish less than originally announced (Becher and Kogan, 1992, p. 176). Therefore, we usually expect academic institutions to develop gradually, and the introduction of new social values to add to the complexity of, rather than radically change the conditions for leadership in periods of change. This does not mean that change cannot take place abruptly and be radical, only that the circumstances under which rapid change take place are relatively unusual and specific. According to Greenwood and Hinings (1996), variation in market pressure and intra-organizational dynamics may account for considerable variation in the pace and degree of organizational change. If we interpret the term ‘market’ in a wide sense to include most of an organization’s environment, particularly public policies and funding in public systems, it is worth looking more closely into their proposition in order to understand variation in change processes in academic leadership.

The most influential account of the processes that have affected the conditions for academic leadership and organization over the last fifty years or so is found in well-known contributions such as those of Gibbons et al. (1994) and Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997).



Starting with the process of massification, it runs more or less like this: massification, starting in the 1960s, (with the last wave of expansion during the 1990s), was an international process that affected educational systems and societies, at least in Europe, North America and Australasia, in a uniform way, with respect to a number of general characteristics (Ramirez, 2003). Increased participation rates made higher education and research important to steadily increasing population groups, but at the same time, less exclusive and less associated with elevated social status. In addition, the number of higher education faculties grew, and university professors in particular have felt considerably less exclusive than before, as they have experienced a declining income in relative terms, and a loss of power and influence inside academic institutions in absolute terms. From the 1980s globalization and neo-liberalism have put an increasingly strong pressure on universities to behave like businesses because this will make them more efficient in providing education and research services in large quantities, more competitive on the international marketplace, and better able to secure outside funding and become less dependent on public support. In order to enable universities to meet these challenges, university reformers have set out to integrating universities, tightening the links between the different parts of the university organization in order to make them more efficient, manageable and accountable.

Correct as this argument may be, it is important to keep in mind that universities, no less than previously, are pursuing multiple goals, serving various constituencies and interest groups. The replacement or addition of new goals (such as efficiency, manageability, accountability and profitability) does not necessarily have any direct implications for organizational behaviour. For this to happen, two conditions must be met: First, leaders and influential (elite) organizational members must embrace and internalize the values implied by the new goals. Second, they must develop the practical implications of how they want to protect and sustain these values. Teichler (1988) has demonstrated how the exact implications of massification have varied across countries depending on what institutional and organizational patterns were developed in order to deal with higher education expansion. Comparative evidence from countries such as France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, suggests that the solutions have been contested issues that are shaped by established institutional structures (Kogan et al., 2000; Musselin, 1999).

In particular, the comparative study of university reforms in the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s demonstrates how reforms that apparently are justified in terms of ideals such as autonomy, accountability, efficiency and quality, both were introduced in institutional settings that were quite different, but also followed different paths.

The reforms of the 1980s and 1990s signalled new directions in higher education policies in all three countries, but with different emphases. One characteristic that applied to all three countries was that higher education had become more politically salient over the years. Accordingly, central government authorities, whatever their leaning, were more concerned about the cost of higher education and more interested in affecting the product of higher education institutions in terms of candidates and research than previously. This meant that although governments might steer in a more decentralized manner than previously, they were interested in steering a wider array of affairs and, in this sense, power was centralized rather than decentralized.

Traditionally, direct regulation by state authorities had been much more salient in the almost entirely state-owned higher education systems of Norway and Sweden than in the United Kingdom, where state authorities hardly tried to wield any authority at all. In the former countries, however, university legislation and other legislative measures determined such important issues as the degree structure, examinations, and the obligations of the academic faculty.

The comparison demonstrates how the general ideological pressure in each country is mediated through specific national policies based on experiences and issues that constitute powerful political, legal and financial operating conditions. These national influences moulded and gave shape to the general trends that affect systems internationally. Thus, whereas British universities experienced stronger government control and less autonomy, Swedish universities experienced more autonomy, with Norway placed in a middle position characterized by a less drastic and more mixed combination of reform measures.

Formerly, the ideal university leadership was collegial co-ordination, where leaders claimed authority in their capacity as members of an egalitarian and autonomous disciplinary community. Institutional leadership, in the new reform setting, however, was seen as a task radically different from research and teaching.

‘One of the genuine challenges for any head of institution is to ensure there is a balance between managerial accountability and giving a say to the academic community’ (Kogan and Hanney, 2000, p. 195). University leaders reported quite mixed experiences regarding institutional autonomy. As for institutional leadership, British vice-chancellors experienced positively that additional executive powers were vested in them, Swedish rectors felt unprepared for their new freedom, and Norwegian rectors and directors within the traditional dual leadership structure that still existed, again reported mixed experiences and more ambiguity regarding institutional autonomy. However, the link between academic authority at the institutional level and individual authority was challenged in all countries – although to varying extent.

There were indications in the three studies that the changed rector’s role also had an impact on appointment procedures. Criteria for the election or appointment of academic leaders shifted from the procedural (‘now it’s turn for a person from the Faculty of Law to take over the responsibilities of a rector’) towards the more individualistic (‘we need a person who is a visionary and strong leader’). The internal hierarchy, based on scholarly reputation, was replaced by a more unofficial institutional hierarchy based on a personal reputation as a dynamic and successful research manager. Such attributes as leadership and management skills were now of at least equal importance as academic reputation and a distinguished appearance.

Compared to the European reform experience reported above, the situation in the United States is somewhat different. Overall, the patterns of higher education organization and leadership seem to be more settled and stable. Among the reasons for this may be the fact that the United States system expanded earlier under different economic and social conditions before higher education became ‘a mature industry’ (Levine, 2001); that institutional structures have evolved over time and not as part of a master plan (excepting some systems at state level, such as the famous California Master Plan); and that United States higher education today is regarded as a model for others to emulate rather than a system that needs to learn from others. Finally, one may ask whether the size and diversity of the United States higher education system makes it uniquely capable of absorbing growth and change while keeping its basic structural features.

In a comparison of changes in government regulation of higher education in eight countries – Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States – during almost the same period (late 1980s and 1990s), the comparison found a number of differences that are relevant in our context (Bleiklie et al., 2004). The study looked at the use of four types of government regulation in higher education: oversight, mutuality, competition and contrived randomness. The types correspond roughly to what one might call direct regulation, professional autonomy (by collegiate bodies), competition and random control or inspections. The study revealed the following pattern:

- The United States stood out from the other countries by being less exposed to oversight.
- The United States and the United Kingdom were characterized by ‘medium’ mutuality compared to the rest that were classified as ‘high’.
- As for competition, the United States scored ‘high’, Australia ‘medium’, Japan and the United Kingdom were headed towards increasing/growing competition, whereas the rest were characterized by ‘low’, but increasing competition, with the exception of Norway, whose ‘low’ score demonstrated no significant move in the direction of more competition.
- Finally, the United Kingdom stands out as the only country where contrived randomness (‘medium’) plays a significant role.

Thus, autonomous collegial decision-making still plays an essential role in all university systems, but enjoys a stronger position in continental Europe than in the Anglo-American countries and Japan. Conversely competition plays a stronger role in systems with many and influential private institutions (Japan, the United States) and countries that have pursued more radical New Public Management policies.

I shall conclude this discussion by pointing out that the business enterprise template has influenced the university systems analysed above only to a limited extent. Being affected by common external forces that push all systems in the same direction does not necessarily mean that they are becoming more similar to one another than previously. National distinctive features still exert a heavy influence on the formulation of current reform policies. The findings reported above indicate that national peculiarities have survived, and that some of the oft-cited differences between regions such as the Anglo-Saxon world and continental Europe still persist.

Furthermore, we may draw two conclusions about the conditions for institutional leadership. Universities in the countries studied still enjoy considerable institutional autonomy and, in this sense, conditions for institutional leadership are still present. However, the connection between institutional and individual autonomy has been seriously weakened, if not severed, in many countries. This raises the question about which elites may sustain the autonomy needed to exert institutional leadership. In the next section I shall look at how regional and national organizational leadership configurations may shed further light on the future of academic institutional leadership and the autonomy on which it is based.

### **Organizational forms and emerging knowledge regimes**

The previous discussion has emphasized how changes in the organization of higher education institutions must be understood against the backdrop of massification, expansion and the need to control costs linked to a more visible and politically salient higher education system. The development described may be seen as nationally distinct outcomes of the struggle to define the true nature of knowledge between actors such as states and politicians, institutional leaders and students, researchers and intellectuals, consultants and business leaders. Knowledge interests are therefore the key, together with the linked concepts of knowledge alliances and knowledge regimes. Returning to the Greenwood and Hinings (1996) suggestion that organizational change may be seen as the outcome of market pressure and intra-organizational dynamics, knowledge regimes may constitute the set of organizational conditions that give direction to the way in which these forces play themselves out. In order to understand the different trajectories that higher education systems have followed, I shall distinguish between a few ideal typical constellations of knowledge regimes and the actor constellations and interests on which they are based.

Modern universities and higher education systems are influenced by a number of developments that have implied a thrust in the direction of an extended concept of knowledge and a stronger utility orientation. In the following, I shall argue that the new emerging knowledge regimes may be divided into at least two main groups. On the one hand, there is an academic capitalist regime, driven by university industry alliances, economic interests and a commercial logic.

In spite of its huge influence on the discourse about higher education, and as a symbol of current changes in higher education institutions, the notion of ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) or ‘entrepreneurial universities’ (Clark, 1998), industry funding is an important source to relatively few top research universities, particularly in the United States (Powell and Owen-Smith, 1998; Turk-Bicakci and Brint, 2005). Public funding and ownership of higher education institutions by national or regional governments is still the dominant pattern. This might be taken as an argument to the effect that stability prevails in the face of all rhetoric about fundamental change. Stakeholder principles according to the business enterprise ideal, however, may support the spread of ‘capitalism’ and be supported by a combination of public austerity policies and stronger influence by other outside interests financially and through university board positions.

Although universities are still predominantly public in most countries, the way in which public authorities run universities has changed fundamentally, heavily influenced by notions of ‘academic capitalism’ and ‘entrepreneurial universities’ which manifests itself in the notion of universities as business enterprises and introduction of quasi-market mechanisms in order to promote competition and cost effectiveness. These public managerialist regimes are driven by university-state alliances, political-administrative interests and a semi-competitive logic based on incentive policies where part of the public support depends on teaching and/or research performance. However, they come in different versions that may be understood against the backdrop of the previous public regimes from which they have developed. Comparing the systems of Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, Kogan et al. (2000) point out that the public regimes that dominated the systems until the 1980s or 1990s were different in important respects. Although they were, in principle, public, different actor constellations, alliances and interests characterized the regimes.

Until about 1980, the British regime was dominated by co-opted academic elites who, under state protection, could offer considerable autonomy to the universities, and where policies contributed to maintaining the elite structure with a few top universities that stood out from the rest in terms of academic prestige and social standing. The British version of the public managerialist regime that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s was much more centralized than previously.

Through centralized competitive evaluation procedures (such as the research assessment exercises), the field was, in principle, opened up for all higher education institutions, polytechnics as well as universities to compete for research funding and academic status. This abolished the binary divide between university and non-university institutions and in principle made possible a seamless integration of higher education. However, in practice, the research assessment exercises have reconfirmed the academic status hierarchy, in which a few top institutions receive most of the public research funding, whereas the other institutions must struggle to fund their research from other sources, focus on applied short-term research contracts or devote themselves to teaching. The vice-chancellors traditionally had a different position from Swedish and Norwegian rectors. They had always been a kind of public notable, and this partly reflected the incorporated or chartered status of the institutions they led. They were also appointed, not elected, until retirement. With the reforms of the 1990s, they experienced that their role was further reinforced with executive power and the enhancement of existing privileges of pay, car and house, which constituted a definite pulling away from the professoriate. Thus, British vice-chancellors experienced that the business executive ideal came in addition to, and without necessarily threatening their academic authority. The preservation of the hierarchical and elitist structure of the British higher education system may also indicate that to the extent that institutional autonomy is based on this structure, the conditions for sustaining it are still intact. One important mechanism in this connection is the fact that a considerable proportion of British vice-chancellors are recruited from top institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge.

Between 1977 and 1994, the Swedish regime had corporatist features, dominated by state authorities and unions and strongly influenced by political priorities. The Swedish version of a public managerialist regime was introduced following a transition from a social democratic to a conservative government, and came with a decentralizing move in which central government authorities (in the name of institutional autonomy) transferred decision-making authority to the institutions. At the same time, the internal institutional leadership was strengthened, and external influence through representation by representatives from outside the university on university boards was established. Faced with the increased authority vested in them, Swedish university leaders seemed to look for directions, and it appears that the previous leadership values based in collegial leadership were perceived as inadequate.

Thus, Swedish rectors were apparently left to navigate and find a new balance between expectations of academic authority, executive efficiency and social responsibilities, without very clear directions. The attempt to strengthen central leadership structures by increasing the number of central administrative staff, and not the least the number of vice-rectors to which the rector may delegate tasks, may have been one way of trying to create a more solid leadership base and a basis for an elite on which institutional leadership may rely.

The Norwegian regime was statist, dominated by higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education. The Norwegian public managerialist regime has come with a mixture of centralizing and decentralizing moves whereby central authorities have sought to establish a formal framework that may make Norwegian higher education institutions more efficient, more flexible, more sensitive to students' needs and more open to student mobility across institutions. Activity planning and incentive policies, emphasizing rewarding teaching efficiency and student throughput have been major policy tools. The first major change of the internal governing structure was introduced in 1990 by severing the internal disciplinary chain of representation, whereby elected leaders at lower levels (department chairs and deans) were represented on the governing boards at higher levels, and replace it with a functional system in which categories of employees and students are represented. This system was believed to be better able to address the interests of the institution as a whole and weaken the role of 'special interests' among the faculty (Bleiklie et al., 2000). The higher education legislation of 1995 kept the existing 'dual' leadership arrangements – whereby at all levels of institutional leadership there is an elected office (chair, dean and rector) and an administratively appointed counterpart (head of office, faculty director, and director-general) to all higher education institutions. However, the legislation introduced external board representation and reduced academic staff from a majority position to a command of four out of eleven seats. The government has furthermore tried to deal with the leadership issue in connection with the comprehensive reform process ('the quality reform') that started in 2002. Although it seems to be in favour of introducing a system of appointed leaders, the government has been reluctant to impose a system that faces considerable opposition without thorough preparations, and a period of voluntary experimenting. However gradual and slow the Norwegian reform process has been, it raises with increasing force the question of the basis of institutional leadership and autonomy. Whilst weakening the internal influence and authority of academics, it is not clear by whom institutional values are supposed to be protected.



The expectation of executive leadership is less pronounced and less underpinned by organizational arrangements in Norway than in the other countries. Academic authority is rather challenged from the ministry, and by the expectation of loyalty that is directed towards leaders of bureaucratic agencies within public administrative systems. One possibility is that this may strengthen the 'chain of command' from the ministry down to individual institutions, unless institutional leaders are given space that enables them to modify and defend a new basis of institutional leadership.

## **Conclusion**

These observations suggest, first of all, that when new knowledge regimes arise, their impact may be partial and vary depending on the conditions with which they are faced. The emerging capitalist and managerialist regimes may be viewed as different responses to a number of general trends such as higher education expansion, the rise of 'knowledge society', and a different understanding of the purpose of higher education and research. What I have called an academic capitalist regime has, in many ways, become a global yardstick, despised by some, but espoused by many others. It has until now had a stronger impact on ideology and discourse than on the way in which universities are operated and funded. The practical impact of a commercial logic on Western university systems is still limited, and concerns mainly a relatively small number of major research universities. In many public systems in Europe, a semi-competitive logic between institutions has been introduced in which they are supposed to compete for students and research funding. This semi-competitive logic may provide an important rationale for academic institutional leadership, and may pave the way for further moves in the direction of 'academic capitalism'. However, the way in which this might develop depends on the extent to which business enterprise ideals are balanced by institutional arrangements that protect academic individual as well as institutional autonomy. It is also dependent on how universities will interpret their social responsibilities. The tendencies over recent decades have been conflation of the value of social responsibility and executive efficiency. This has gradually reduced the alternative idea of social responsibility in which universities are considered providers of welfare and democracy through advanced education and research. It is still early to determine to what extent the competitive or semi-competitive drive based on ideas of the efficient corporate enterprise will affect academic institutions in a uniform way internationally, and until recently the extent to which it had gained foothold varied considerably, dampened by still apparently quite resilient alternative values.

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## Chapter 5

### **Commentary on Ivar Bleiklie: Political Dimensions of Evaluation and Managerialism: University Organization and Changing Knowledge Regimes**

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For many years now, the issue of appropriate and efficient management of universities have been at the forefront. Clearly, the driver behind this interest is the transformation that universities are going through with growing external demands and also diminishing platforms of core funding. Ivar Bleiklie, a specialist on political institutions and organization theory, has addressed these issues in a solid and innovative paper. A particular strength of the paper is its reasoning tone and its modesty, even ambivalence, an appropriate position to take as the dilemmas are plentiful and no easy solutions are in sight. A further strength of the paper is that it summarizes a number of organizational trends into one comprehensive analysis.

In this short comment, I shall use Bleiklie's paper as a point of departure for some reflections concerning leadership, management and institutional change in current university systems. The main thrust of my contribution is that the situation is far less predetermined than one might be inclined to believe when one listens to much of the public and policy debates on these issues. There is real choice and there is even likely to develop a rich variety of approaches. Not disregarding the real and potential impacts of New Public Management, and its 'managerialist' extremes – some would say perversions – an important task is to get it into proportion.

In his paper, Bleiklie summarizes and acknowledges the many trends that point in the direction of deep and fundamental change of universities: increased competition, reduced autonomy, and erosion of core values. These changes have already drawn considerable scholarly interest and have prompted commentators to talk of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997), the 'commercialization of higher education' (Bok, 2003), or of an entirely new logic of relations between universities and other societal actors – for example as codified by the concept Triple Helix (Etzkowitz and Leydersdorff, 1997), or under the concept of Mode 2 research (Gibbons et al., 1994), or even of a new form of 'post-academic'

science (Ziman, 2000). Bleiklie is wise not to look at these statements and studies only as empirical and theoretical reports on the state of the art in the academic world. He rightly sees them also as ethical, ideological and political claims on what should be the case, on whether change is good or bad, or on which direction change should take. He cautions us to reflect deeper on the extent to which the changes in external relations and conditions actually do bring about changes in internal operations and in core values. He is not readily prepared to accept as a given that the changes are either so drastic or deep as they are often perceived to be.

Bleiklie proposes what one might term a ‘continuity hypothesis’. Scrutinizing trends in four areas – academic authority, collegial co-ordination, social responsibility, and business enterprise emulation (or ‘managerialism’) – he finds that in all areas, there are clear signs of change, but it is a change within the boundaries of past patterns and trends. First, academic authority has been questioned for several decades by changing the constitution of universities in most countries, allowing for junior staff and other personnel to take position in deciding bodies. Second, collegiate co-ordination is being subverted by moving decision-making power – and control of resources – away from the professoriate. Third, social responsibility increases, and ‘third mission’ activities are increasingly included in accountability and performance measures. Fourth, clearly, the New Public Management ideals of the 1980s and 1990s have put their mark on universities, introducing incentive schemes and accountability regimes to respond to increasing external pressures for deliverables, and for provision of funding and other forms of sponsorship. In that process there has been a professionalization of leadership and management, disentangling the old professorial nexus of academic/administrative/institutional leadership that characterized the continental European chair system in particular. There has clearly also been a focus on output rather than on process, or academic culture, when it comes to assessing the quality of academic institutions and its work.

This being said, Bleiklie’s overall observation is that the changes are, albeit stronger in some countries and universities than in others, so far fairly moderate. He does not sense that we are anywhere near the point where this change has fundamentally transformed academic institutions. He has empirical observations to corroborate his claim. It is still an almost universal fact that academic leaders have to be full professors.

However, universities are increasingly dependent of external resources and benefactors, not business enterprises. Collegiate values are still alive and strong and exert enormous restraining power on whatever formal constitutional power, or managerial will, that rest with the, admittedly growing, leadership strata. However, although output measures and rankings are increasingly influential, collegiate evaluation ('peer review') of the quality of academic work reigns supreme. Bad research is still bad research, and universities show no signs of accepting it to any larger extent today than they did in the past; if anything, the opposite might be claimed as comparisons across disciplines, systems, and nations are much more easily undertaken today (an observation that is mine and not Bleiklie's). In addition, rankings is also a measure of bad research, which is consequently far more effectively exposed today than in the past, and bad research is not easily compensated by success among business or government, at least not for long.

Now, these may seem fairly general and 'middle-of-the-road' remarks – perhaps serving the purpose of tempering the discussion and urging us not to consider the university system worthy of much interest at all; a 'business as usual' message. I certainly do not think that this is the right conclusion to draw from Bleiklie's paper. On the contrary, I think one virtue of his analysis lies precisely in its non-deterministic, open and reasoning approach. Using the gist and broad categorizations of Bleiklie I would like to continue this short analysis by inviting ourselves to think about the perceived threats of managerialism as rather an area of conscious choice and responsible policy-making, naturally taking the changing external conditions into account. If the university, or in a wider sense, the academic community and its workers, is the animal, society is its environment, and we need in a disillusioned way to find methods – the plural is crucial – of adapting successfully to these conditions. There is no reason to believe that we live in a one-street town.

The debates on managerialism often depict two ideal type models that are pitted against each other, much like *les anciens et les modernes* in the late seventeenth century. Not only is this a gross simplification, it is also not taking into account the many distinctions and differentiations that can be made within each 'camp'.

Those who are mostly sceptical of change cannot just be identified with the defence of organizational values through the autonomy of elites, that Bleiklie, referring to Philip Selznick's classical *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation* (1957; new ed. 1984), claims as a valid indicator. The 'ancients' are in fact as diverse a group as any other. The caricature version is that they are protecting privileges that are increasingly outmoded and irrational. However, among the orthodox sceptics are also those who argue for mainstream Humboldtian ideals, claiming that academic autonomy is historically proven to be an outstanding way of producing solid new knowledge. Another claim is that there is a 'virtuous circle of autonomy'. Quality is to be proven under academic freedom, which will approve of the best work, which will then sustain new generations of academics pursuing even better evaluations of even better research, etc. These virtuous circles may be threatened by the introduction of external criteria and the upward spiral of quality may be broken, although more funding may have been brought in and more (but less original) work is done. An implication of this line of argument is usually to defend core funding in order to maintain academic authority and local independence in the making of strategic decisions on research. This is already fundamentally compromised in many European countries, where annual parliamentary decisions govern the size and direction of core funding for research. On the other hand, these are usually quite foreseeable decisions, although Thatcherite shocks do sometimes occur, but, honestly, not so often.

The 'ancients' would most often claim adherence to, or at least feel more comfortable with, a Mertonian logic. Other features of this logic would be an academic world based on CUDOS norms (Communism, Universalism, Disinterestedness, Organized Scepticism), a basic belief in an ideal 'linear model' – it has probably never existed (Edgerton, 2004) – of basic research-applied research-innovation-manufacturing, and caution vis-à-vis too deep connections to industry and social interests. The ancients' chief outlook on what has been going on in Academe, in essence since the early stages of the mass university and the first signs of the breakdown of the binary system in the 1960s and the 1970s, has been pessimistic and nostalgic. 'Decline' and 'erosion' are terms often heard, and these are words used even by those who would otherwise in no way undersign any form of cultural conservatism. When it comes to Academe, this position is perfectly compatible with utmost radicalism as well as with both liberalism and conservatism. A well articulated strand of criticism stems from the so called STS- (Science and Technology Studies), or SSK- (Social Studies of Knowledge) fields.



Based on anthropological, sociological, and historical studies these fields have, over the past generation, provided a new and detailed image of laboratory science which emphasizes continuity, social intelligence and integrity, and clearly an ethos that is not easily compatible with managerialism.

If it was not for the fact that so many academics are clearly for the sort of change that the ‘ancients’ are against, one would be tempted to call this very particular form of self-understanding for ‘academism’, in the same way as there has recently been talk of ‘journalism’ – a self-prophesized special role for an entire profession, ostentatiously on behalf of society. The chief ideologist of this may not be Robert K. Merton but rather Max Weber. There is a distinctly Weberian touch to much of what many of the most articulate ancients say when they speak out. They are clearly not happy when boundaries between the *Beruf* of *Wissenschaft* and society at large are blurred by the *Zweckrationalitäten* of politics, profit or prophecy, not to speak of latter-day horrors such as ‘regional economic growth’. These are monstrosities, the invasion of which threatens the academic profession at its very heart.

In the same way, we should try to discriminate among the advocates of reform, the ‘modernizers’, or the would-be ‘managerialists’. In fact, this wide array of people is probably even more heterogeneous than the camp of ‘ancient’ orthodox. To begin with, the chief ideologists are altogether different, which Bleiklie is also eager to point out. The Michael Gibbons-led group of half a dozen of the most superbly able authors that conceived of the Mode 1/Mode 2 binary divide, were at the core university academics, united by the effort to understand the change that research and innovation was undergoing in the late twentieth century. If they also came out as advocates of sorts of Mode 2 it was not because of any propagandistic conviction but simply because it is, for the realist, crucial to identify the structural and historical changes in order to make the best possible of them. The argument was essentially pragmatic: ‘Mode 2 is where the enterprise is going, therefore it is where we are going. What does that mean?’ It included the equally pragmatic, perhaps tragic, observation that unless a valid social mandate for science is articulated after the Cold War, public support of the entire enterprise will be waning (see also Nowotny et al., 2001).

Henry Etzkowitz, the chief architect and ardent spokesman of the Triple Helix is not just an eminent and eager sociologist of knowledge, researching many countries and their innovation systems in his hunt for the 'Holy Grail of Growth', he is also an advocate of business-oriented universities. When he finds outward looking schools, such as MIT (Etzkowitz, 2002), which can provide innovations, jobs, regional impact, and other features of successful business orientation, he has found a school that suits his palate. If the university also performs well academically it just confirms his theory that research excellence helps, but if it did not he would still not feel discouraged; the job of the cat is to catch rats. CUDOS is not the issue for the believers in Triple Helix, rather, traditional academic values are often obstacles to the overall success that is so important if universities are to fulfil their actual and future duty: to deliver economic growth in a competitive world market of innovation and production.

Among the reformers, one would also find those who may take even more radical managerialist positions. However, the leading lights of 'audit society' have not originated from Academe, nor have they used universities as their central arena of experimentation, or as an exemplar. Rather, the notion of managerialism in Academe is rather one of the concepts, methods, criteria and values borrowed from the New Public Management (Kjaer, 2004) and applied on universities. In effect, as Bleiklie demonstrates, the loans are more or less comprehensive, often less. They are also seeping in, slowly and gradually, to be absorbed by universities only to the extent that they can survive internally, and whether they can survive internally is often guided, ultimately, by pressures externally.

More numerous indeed, therefore, are those that advocate change not for lack of affection of the collegiate structures nor of the university as a classical and very special institution, but out of necessity and as a result of another love, that of widening participation and a higher education and research that caters to all. Behind this position, that may be more or less ideological (mostly on the left), is often the notion that unless this more accessible university becomes reality the nation's competitiveness will go down. To increase the university sector is crucial for survival. This position is, in principle, compatible with all modernizing positions mentioned above.

It may even be further elaborated adding a component of functional differentiation. If, the argument goes, the university sector expands radically, its internal specialization, and also a differentiation of quality, will take place.

In order to avoid a de facto ‘race to the bottom’ competitive schemes must be introduced, and, even more fundamentally, the orthodox privileged equality in principle, must be abolished. It is time to earn one’s merit, even with state funding. Strangely, this radical liberalism has become the mainstay of Labour policy for the university sector in the United Kingdom, and tendencies in this direction are now also seen in Sweden and in some other, notably North European, countries. Bleiklie has seen some of this in his paper, but I would imagine that the logic in this direction is stronger than he and his colleagues’ research project (Kogan et al., 2000) has so far revealed.

In a remarkable way, this turn of events may also be where the ancients and the moderns may be able to meet. There are a number of ‘ifs’, however. If differentiation is widespread, and if levels of external orientation and involvement in third mission are allowed to vary, and if the taking of roles among schools and universities can vary considerably depending on size, location, history and circumstances at large, one would predict some universities to adopt Humboldtian strategies whereas others would adhere wholesale to the gospels of business and social orientation. This differentiation may be further encouraged by increased pluralism among funding agencies and of increasing numbers of success criteria in the accountability of universities. It is already the case that some universities are performing better than others, in limited fields. A good example may be Stanford, nowadays a top-rating university, but also one that is relying extremely heavily on its schools of science, medicine and engineering; in the humanities and social sciences it is still good but by no means in line with the best according to recent rankings published in the United Kingdom ([www.thes.com/statistics](http://www.thes.com/statistics)). Performance in third mission is as yet less often ranked (although some indicators do occur, examples are income from licensing or patent statistics). However, when third-mission performance does become systematically studied and achievements debated, monitored and subsequently published, some universities may wish to prioritize success in that dimension as well, whereas some may wish to put it at a lower priority. Humboldtian hardliners would claim that they hang together – ‘Business will only go for the best research’ – but it would be surprising if that were universally the case; such has not been the pattern in the past. Business goes for useful research, which is to them the same as ‘best’.

It is evident that there are a number ways one could take a positive stand towards change. Overall, it seems to me that all those different positions rely heavily on what I would like to call a realist attitude to external factors.

A growing system of higher education and research in a globally competitive economy does force governments to take action against the risk of quality loss and lacking morality. To frame this necessity with the ‘autonomy of the elites’ argument of Selznick is one way of putting it, but only one way of several that are possible. You might as well wish to term it the upholding of standards and quality assurance. The Higher Education Authority in Sweden – to quote a small nation but one strong in science – has assumed such a controlling function since 1999. However, as yet, it lacks the funds (and, crucially, the mandate) to carry out any performance-based allocation, but it can withdraw degree-granting rights on the undergraduate and master levels. (Interestingly, such rights cannot be taken away for graduate education; truly a remnant of Humboldtian autonomy.)

The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) in the United Kingdom has introduced performance-based schemes in both education and research through the Research Assessment Enterprises (RAE). At the European level, the Lisbon process – starting in 2000 with the ambition to reach a minimum 3 per cent share of GNP for R&D (private and public) by 2010 in all EU member countries – is gaining some momentum, although the target still seems far away. The Bologna Process, facilitating access in higher education across Europe through a common degree system, is soon to be introduced. Both these European initiatives are likely to put pressure on member states to improve their accountability.

Further, there is research to put behind the modernist stance. Whereas sceptics point to ‘functional overload’ and ‘organizational stress’ in universities across Europe (but not to the same extent in the rest of the world), the modernizers would rather quote data claiming that co-operation with many interests and ‘promiscuous relationships’ among researchers and their departments and research groups are good for performance. Research groups with many and diverse co-operative schemes running seem to be successful not only in more categories (education, research, social justice, co-operation with industry), which may not be surprising, but also in the category of pure science measured as publications in science journals. As yet, we know too little on why this is the case. However, what is demonstrated is that isolation in the ivory tower may be not just detrimental to certain dimensions of academic work; it may also be a disadvantage to the quality of the core of academic work, basic research.

This is a counterintuitive conclusion and it should be handled with care. Data are scarce, more research on performance of research groups under different social conditions is clearly necessary. Still, already at this point, it speaks for some caution towards adopting a too nostalgic and orthodox position. It rather underscores the heterogeneity argument that I am trying to make here.

Let me summarize this paper so far. Although there has been clearly a managerialist trend in universities for more than a decade, and although there is clearly a divide in the academic opinion on features such as Triple Helix, academic capitalism, Mode 2 and their likes, it is equally clear that there are a number of unavoidable social, structural, economic, changes in external conditions of Academe that help explain why universities are responding and adapting internally. For the same reason, a very large number of STS scholars, policy analysts, and also academics themselves, advocate some form of change, albeit not any far-reaching managerialism (which is, by the way, an ideologizing concept, with connotations of manipulation and bureaucratic rule that is prone to scare rather than to comfort most enlightened citizens). Rather, for analytical purposes, it is a matter of understanding the enormously strong driving forces behind the change, and to look in a rather non-partisan way at how these changes play out under different circumstances, before taking a position on what might be the best ways of moving forward.

There is certainly no clear-cut road to take. In fact, there are enormous challenges and built-in dilemmas ahead, regardless of how one sees the situation. The fundamental dilemma facing all university systems is one of autonomy versus accountability. Even the advocates of the orthodox version of autonomy (the Humboldtian and linear models), would usually acknowledge that the legitimacy of autonomy rests on performance, and performance needs some sort of verification, either on the market or by accountable success criteria. In the United States, the market serves over the long term the function of quality regulator, although the complex market of higher education – with ill-informed clients – has in turn given rise to a large number of rankings and easy-to-use quantitative measures of success for prospective students, parents, sponsors, donors, colleagues and other concerned parties. In Europe, where the market plays a minuscule role in higher education in most countries, this dilemma is harder to deal with and accountability seems somehow inevitable.

This gives rise to the following question: Will ‘managerialism’ sit well only with the ‘modernists’? Or, how would it at all be possible to advocate a large publicly funded university system that is fully autonomous and can retain full decision-making authority without being accountable? The idea seems utopian.

This, in turn, has to do with the empirical observation presented in Bleiklie’s paper that there are already quite a few different, non-perverted (i.e. not totally given over to managerialism) systems that function all right in different countries. True, in principle one can see increased managerialism as a viable possibility, so that the present level of it is just a beginning, not a full hegemonic phase that may occur later. On the other hand, we may already have seen the peak of managerialism in universities, or it may increase slightly here and there, and even become reduced in other places, depending on a multitude of factors, first of all its own share in success. All this gives rise to another question: Will universities and university systems in the future present, rather, a number of empirical manifestations of a quite inescapable policy logic, of which hegemonic managerialism is the extreme perversion rather than the rule?

Not denying that important values are involved (and I shall get back to those later), I would like to stress the empirical nature of both these questions. After well over a decade of competing theoretical constructs that have become more or less reified and stylized, and that have given energy to heated debates on policy and ideology, it seems the right time to address the actual changes. That is to say that we still do not have all the evidence. Nonetheless, from the literature, indeed from Bleiklie’s paper, and as well from the analysis above, there seems to appear an answer to the two questions, which is that there are in fact already a multitude of versions of increased accountability and efficiency measures being built into the university systems in many countries. I would take that as a provisional given in the remaining part of my analysis.

This is also to say that the dualistic framing of the policy-debate is probably misconceived, as Bleiklie rightly observes. Autonomy or accountability is not the question. A Hegelian *Aufhebung* of the dilemma is already visible. The policy discussion will in all likelihood become less concerned with whether, and more directed towards questions of how the inevitable accountability can be reconciled with autonomy and other properties of universities that may or may not improve performance. This last prediction fits particularly well with the argument on differentiation, presented above.

So far, this paper has largely been an attempt towards an analytical disentanglement – or a deconstruction – of the logic of change of current university systems and the stylized policy positions or ideological controversies that this change has produced. In the final part of the paper, I shall turn to another key issue that follows almost obviously out of the analysis above. If the empirical situation speaks overwhelmingly in favour of a heterogeneity of approaches, the position of autonomy will inevitably vary. Then the following question comes up: Why should universities hold and carry certain core values? I am here thinking not only of autonomy as such a core value but also of the Mertonian CUDOS norms (Merton, 1942) and other rules of honour and indeed even academic liturgy and procedural order. The question seems all the more pressing if it is an established fact that performance and quality assurance are measured and managed through other institutions external to the individual university (which is the case because the university as an interested agent cannot be trusted with assessing its own performance, according to this logic).

In order to deal with this issue we must widen the perspective to include the full potential of the roles and uses of the universities in society. If one does that, one could think of two fairly distinctive approaches. The first has to do with values as support to performance, the second has to do with values related to the wider social role of knowledge and knowledge-based authority. The latter issue is too often neglected in discussions of managerialism, autonomy and accountability.

First, however, is it a value issue, or an empirical issue? Although we have just seen that mission-oriented research groups seem to perform well, even very well, in basic research, there is also overwhelming evidence to support the claim that basic research in traditional academic settings – research universities, with traditional academic funding and with a large degree of autonomy – is an enormously efficient way of producing new theoretical and empirical, if not immediately applicable, knowledge (Pavitt, 2004). If one was to answer the question of how a knowledge-producing system was to be designed – as if on a clean slate – no single proposal would perhaps be a priori better than the other. Nevertheless, an answer that ruled out autonomy and CUDOS altogether would clearly be out of touch with everything we know about the scientific enterprise. The independent researcher discovering truths about nature and society, driven by her or his own quest to know, is not a piece of self-interested fiction invented by the scientific community itself. It is a sound empirical fact.

This historical and sociological fact could be translated into contemporary policy debates simply by applying a set of empirical questions. What is the level of autonomy and CUDOS in different research environments – and how do these perform on a number of dimensions? This is a fully researchable question and it is already being turned into monitoring schemes in many countries. What is, as yet, less well developed, however, is the relation between traditional research performance measures (publications, citations, level of funding, academic invitations, etc.) – i.e. what might be called quality of research, and success in entrepreneurship. There seems to be some positive connection between a very high level performance of research and indicators – such as patents, firm start-ups, licence income, etc. – although the literature is stronger on start-ups and firm formation than on licensing and patents (for examples, see Etzkowitz, 2002, on MIT; Saxenian, 1994 and Lowen, 1997 on Stanford). In the United States universities hold a strong position in this respect (Lach and Schankerman, 2003). Among the top-ten income-earners from licences in the United States are several high-rating research universities, such as University of California, Columbia University, University of Wisconsin, and Stanford University (figures from 2002 according to the [Association of University Technology Managers](#)). On the other hand, there are many top-rated universities that do not have any significant licence income. In addition, there are a few of the major licence-takers that are not highly rated research universities. It is largely a randomized game, with many attempts and very few ‘hits’. In other parts of the world the discrepancies, or the random relationships, between academic quality and license income seem to be even more persistent, although the data are scarce and vulnerable. At best we may claim that good research is a quite necessary but not a sufficient prerequisite for success as an entrepreneurial university.

Similar questions that can be asked for individual universities can be addressed to entire university systems. However, the connections on the systems level are far more complex, and traditional indicators do not seem to work. Evidence again is contradictory. Very complex, pluralistic systems, such as the American, is a high performer in terms of innovation, and there are studies to sustain the claim that this is due to properties of the US system – such as its competitiveness and its pluralism with a large number of research performing institutions (Rosenberg, 2000; Henrekson and Rosenberg, 2000). The cases of Finland, Canada and the Netherlands, all strong scientifically, have recently seen considerable success.



There is, however, also evidence to suggest that small and not particularly strong university systems at times can function very well if they are well embedded in the private and public innovation structures (Italy). On the other hand, strongly university focused systems with persistently very high ratings on the science indicators, such as the one in Sweden, do not seem to enhance entrepreneurial performance (Henrekson and Rosenberg, 2000). Again, data so far can tell us very little in terms of firm evidence in favour of any one particular policy solution, but in principle knowledge in this area should be able to develop and empirical performance of different university systems should be able to measure and monitor much better in the future than today. If so, the conditions for policy-making will change.

In conclusion, on this point, we can say that although we know that academic values such as autonomy are not always necessary to achieve good performance ratings, we can certainly not say that they work against performance. Moreover, to try to reduce autonomy radically, and transform universities more generally along the lines of the business enterprise, is clearly going to overall performance, even though exceptional success could be registered in individual cases, perhaps in particular in third-mission activities.

The entrepreneurial university is, however, only one of several dimensions of the third mission. There are other kinds of services, or 'goods', that universities, openly or tacitly, are expected to deliver, and that they have provided, to a large extent, under the Humboldtian era. These tacit dimensions of extramural service may be: criticism (a reasonably non-partisan platform for informed opinion), credibility, reliability, special expertise and, perhaps most importantly, trust. There may also be others, but making the list very long creates the risk of overstressing the civil benefits from the university to an extent where most universities will fail to meet the standard, so a certain caution is appropriate. The examples given are sufficient.

These are certainly honourable properties. Are we not right in questioning whether it is just the idealized self-proclaimed version of universities – the vice-chancellor's annual address – that they represent? Would not other social institutions be able to provide trust (banks or insurance companies?), expertise (consultants or hospitals?), criticism (media or artists?), platforms for opinion (media or think tanks?). In principle: yes.

In reality: no. Even with knowledge production being increasingly performed in such institutions, as claimed by Mode 2 proponents, there will still be enormous differences, first in the sheer comprehensiveness of knowledge amassed, second in, precisely, autonomy. Even banks and insurance companies cater to readily identified interests. They cannot be expected to provide the sort of independent opinion, criticism, or advice that we can rightly expect from universities or from academic intellectuals.

This extended role of universities is one that they perform by their very nature of being universities – according to a certain system of values. The extended role requires a certain minimum of standards and probably also a certain minimum of intellectual critical mass. Low-rating universities and institutions with a bad reputation cannot expect to enjoy the same credibility as the top-ranking institutions, and this seems interestingly to be true both in market-driven and in publicly funded university systems. The general level of trust in universities exceeds that of all other institutions in most countries where such things are measured.

We may conclude that the legitimacy of universities has very much to do with the extent that they are able to serve as upholders of criticism, credibility and trust. If such properties are dependent on autonomy and non-partisanship – which they are – autonomy is indeed something to cherish and to foster.

We have now further underlined the dilemma described above. There may be cases where research institutions can do well and provide impressive performance and much value for money with less autonomy; such institutions would rate high on accountability. There may evidently be circumstances under which such institutions should rightly enjoy public funding. At the same time, if the large majority of the research and higher education institutions that we call universities lose their autonomy in order to achieve that particular kind of performance and efficiency, there would probably occur a loss of legitimacy that would in all likelihood be a more serious threat to the university system than the gain derived from the (potentially) improved (short- to middle-term) accountability. The autonomy-accountability tension is seriously aggravated if the dimensions of legitimacy and the wider social role of universities are taken into account.

Let me, in relation to Bleiklie's paper, first make the observation that this particular kind of wider performance, or role, of universities is not much discussed there. His analysis, rich and broad ranging enough, does not depart very far from traditional missions in education and research. A second observation is that the managerialism that he does discuss does not seem to pay too much attention to this wider social role either. New public management wizards care little about trust, credibility, or criticism – at least as far as their ideas are reflected by Bleiklie (and I think in that he does not conceal anything important). This omission on the part of managerialists I would expect to follow from a very common disease among institutional consultants and experts: they fail to take into account the tacit, or we may say civic, properties of institutions.

This is not to say, of course, that cases for managerialism could not be made. Universities can obviously shape up their performance through all sorts of incentive programmes and competitive funding systems and other devices. This is what has happened in the United Kingdom, where the RAEs show an admirable record of improved performance on the ground, and a healthy shake out of underperforming institutions.

Is all then good and well? Efficiency is enhanced alongside with managerialism staying away from the areas where it would clearly be dangerous and almost surely would do harm? Well, to address that question, we also have to ask: What if tacit values and properties were to be harmed through the workings of the managerialist culture itself?

That risk cannot be nullified. It remains a memento to all practice and study of policy in this area. The great virtue of Bleiklie's paper, however, is that he makes us see that there is a relatively strong resistance and continuity in the academic culture. Despite the policy logic that is driving most systems towards a managerialist ethos (an ethos that by the way is not just superimposed on universities by governments) – universities do also adopt it deliberately in what they believe to be their own self-interest – despite this logic, Bleiklie observes a modest to low level of managerialist response. He is certainly no alarmist. As an experienced social scientist, he knows that there is always a certain inertia in organizations and some deep-seated love of identity and tradition, not to speak of university 'brand names'. There is a virtue of being credited with trust and credibility in an era of erosion of precisely such intangible but cherished virtues.

What the future holds is not known. From what we learn in Bleiklie's paper, hopefully sustained by the analysis above, I would predict that the changes in universities will stay modest. Variety will probably increase and institutions will take different strategies forward, encouraged by the increasing exposure to external pressures of market and politically driven demands. This process is very much worthy of study. It contains enormous possibilities, alongside with the dangers, and we may, in the process, see new hybrids of institutions, the properties of which we do not yet know.

However, some of the research institutions that will likely thrive under the new circumstances we do already know quite well. They are: special and professional schools, tailoring their education and combining it with profiled research; research institutes, specializing in advanced and mission-oriented research, often in flexible alliances with firms and universities; research companies, that can deliver quickly and that can listen to the need of the customer; university colleges, that are able to focus on the right niches and build solid research competencies. Some of these organizations may score high academically, but that is not always their primary roles. Some may also enjoy trust and credibility, but most of these institutions will not find the only, or even the most valid, criterion to measure their success.

It is extremely important when we try to understand managerialism, that we also discuss these kinds of research organizations. It seems as if in them, managerialism (although rarely called by that name) is the order of the day, rather than the problematic occasional intervention.

Then there are the universities. They are not all similar, some may even repeat properties that are common among the less comprehensive performers (colleges, institutes, special schools). However, by and large, they are a different category. It is reasonable to believe that universities, in particular the full fledged comprehensive research universities, will react differently to the new policy logic. In addition, in a European setting, this is an interesting pattern to follow. In particular, if there is a funding level of some magnitude above the level of the nation state, there will certainly be universities trying to achieve at the highest level and claim their funding from it. Others will opt for other levels. Clearly, the managerialist ethos will sit more or less well with some institutions, depending on their strategy.

Lastly, if we return to the caricature dualism of ancients and modernizers pitted against each other, I agree with Beiklie that it is indeed a false picture. Nevertheless, I would perhaps urge us to take one or two steps further in the analysis to create the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, which is to see that both the sceptics and the enthusiasts are framed within a larger pattern of, I would say, inevitable change. Within that pattern of change, there are probably many more positions to take, along a continuum, than the dualist caricature would suggest.

Maybe there is also room at this point for a timely articulation of a third way in policy, combining the timeless(?) values of autonomy and CUDOS to defend the legitimacy of the university as an institution. If so, it should in my mind be in due acknowledgement of accountability and performance monitoring and some other democratic and ordering features – even though some of those may originate from managerialist culture. This last qualification I have added in order to sustain and enhance quality, and to secure public engagement with and support for an institution that can deliver social value precisely because it is an institution of credibility, criticism and trust.

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## Chapter 6

### **The Impacts of Evaluation upon Academic Identities and the Links with Managerialism**

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#### **Introduction**

Evaluation is no newcomer in academe. It has been an integral part of the dynamic of the academic world and its regulation. It is an essential component in the advancement of scientific knowledge (see, for example, Ziman, 1968), but also in the determination of academic identity, reputation and rewards. Its functions include: the appraisal of new knowledge; the legitimation of academics; the accreditation of institutions; the allocation of appointments and rewards; the certification or credentialing of students; the maintenance of standards within a higher education system; and scholastic improvement.

This is internalist evaluation, administered and carried out by academics themselves within academic institutions, most notably disciplines and universities or colleges. The more recent phenomenon, and the main subject of this seminar, is evaluation as an instrument of public policy, which has assumed a higher profile through the development of new public management, initially by neo-liberalist governments. The particular context is that of: (a) the increasing political, economic and social salience of higher education; (b) the increase in its scale and diversity; (c) demands for change in the functions of higher education and in its relationships with the state and society; and (d) the vesting of increased authority and responsibility in the higher education institution. In some cases, this was part of a move towards decentralization of the system (e.g. Sweden); in others towards centralization (United Kingdom). In the United Kingdom, policies were designed both to shift power away from academe to government and other interest groups and to make academe more responsible for its survival and prosperity. State funding was to be more performance-related and institutions were to compete in a range of markets for more diverse sources of funding and customers.

The aims of this paper are to analyse the impacts of evaluation in higher education, first, on the institutional dynamics within which academic identities have arguably been formed and sustained and, second, on academic identities themselves. In this process, it will examine how far evaluation has been a means by which managerialism has been advanced in higher education. Managerialism can be defined in general terms as a set of beliefs in which management, as opposed to professional or administrative expertise, is seen as the key to the health of public institutions. The outcomes in higher education have been identified by Kogan and Hanney (2000, p. 186) as ‘the shift in power from senior academics and their departments to the central institution and the dominance of systems over academic values’.

Before embarking on this analysis, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the various forms of external evaluation deployed in higher education in the last quarter of a century. I will then present the framework in which academic identity is understood in the paper.

### **Evaluation in higher education**

The introduction of evaluation as a policy instrument in higher education has been associated with the value of efficiency and the language of performance measurement and quality. In some cases it has been focused on quality assurance systems. In other words, it has strong affiliations with the concepts and methods of private sector management and with concepts that in themselves represent no substantive values – cf. MacIntyre (1981) on management itself.

By the early 1990s, there could be said to be a general model of evaluation or quality assessment in higher education, the elements of which were identified by van Vught and Westerheijden (1993) as a national co-ordinating body; institutional self-evaluation; external evaluation by academic peers; and published reports. However, as Brennan and Shah (2000) indicate, within this model, there were multiple variations and not all countries incorporated all of these elements. Different decisions were made on the following issues: (a) Who are the evaluators? (b) What are the purposes of evaluation? (c) What modes of evaluation are employed? (d) What are the units of evaluation?



### *Who are the evaluators?*

Co-ordinating agencies establish the framework for evaluation. Many agencies are, in legal terms, independent of government, but government has determined or been influential in determining their evaluative function. 'Whatever the form of their legal status and sources of funding, in nearly all cases it has been governmental concerns and agendas that have been the driving force behind the establishment of quality agencies' (Brennan and Shah, 2000, p. 30).

Peer review continues to play a central role in external evaluation, but within a framework of aims and values, determined by others. *Prima facie*, it is a guarantee of legitimacy in an academic system. However, it is an elastic term, encompassing a range from departmental colleagues or equals (in the context of peer observation or review of teaching) to those with the highest authority in their field. It also covers co-specialists in a subject, members of the same discipline, fellow scientists or social scientists or humanities scholars, and fellow academics (see also Henkel and Kogan, 1981). Brennan (1990) noted how, when British polytechnics were granted internal validation procedures by the Council for National Academic Awards they at the same time exchanged review by external subject peers for internal institutional peers.

The introduction in the United Kingdom of a system for the external assessment of the quality of education exemplifies how the adoption of peer review does not necessarily accord it legitimacy within the academic community (Henkel, 1998). In the traditional view of academic work, peer review of the quality of education could be quite easily subsumed under peer review of research and scholarship. However, new student populations (and the growing influence upon higher education institutions of the quality movement) had opened up new debates about what constitutes good education, in what circumstances and how it is to be assessed.

The working definition of quality adopted in the British system of teaching quality assessment challenged traditional criteria. The definition of quality as 'fitness for purpose' and the linked contention that all 'institutions have the potential to achieve excellence' (Education Funding Council for England, 1993, para 7) associated the system with the idea that good teaching is not necessarily a function of active research.

The focus on student experience and on the nexus of teaching and learning rather than that of teaching and research suggest a further distancing from discipline-centred teaching. Good teaching may be a matter of generic rather than specialist practice.

This in turn opened up the question of who peers are. Are they those people whose reputation derives from their research and scholarship or those whose expertise lies in their teaching or both? What is the nature of knowledge that is required of the evaluators? If evaluative issues encompass knowledge of process, of what enables students to learn, as well as substantive knowledge of the subject, it is obvious that evaluative criteria can then be derived from educational theory, the psychology of learning or even educational technology, subjects which most academics regard as outside their area of competence and not worthy of their attention (Gibbs, 1995).

This issue links with the nature and role of expertise in evaluation. Amongst the trends in the field of evaluation studies in the 1980s, were moves away from definitive evaluation, based on positivist conceptions of knowledge or theory-driven evaluation, towards pluralist approaches. These were generated by political culture as well as by epistemological change. They took on board the need to take into account not only the different perspectives but also the conflicting interests of different groups in society. The ideas of stakeholder and user evaluation became more important and this development is reflected in higher education evaluation, even if they did not displace peer review.

#### *The purposes of evaluation*

The purposes of evaluation are defined in differing degrees in different countries by law and government policies. They include: (a) accountability; (b) institutional or subject accreditation; (c) improvement; (d) cultural or behavioural change; (e) institutional ranking, sometimes within a policy of quality-based resource allocation; and (f) providing information for various markets or users. They may be established or developed within a political climate of trust or distrust; differing conceptions of higher education and its aims and values; promotion of diversity and distinctiveness or convergence; differing conceptions of the nature and value of academic work and the conditions that support it.

### *Modes and methods of evaluation*

The above implies that evaluation may be summative (judgement and decision-oriented) or formative (development-oriented). In slightly different terms, it is a process of assessment or audit or meta-evaluation of institutions' or departments' own systems for quality assurance or maintenance of standards. Self-evaluation on the part of the evaluands may, and most often does, play a central role in it, although in some cases, this may be as much a purpose of the exercise as an evaluative mode.

It may involve the examination of documents, site visits incorporating interviews or dialogue with individuals and groups, observation, the study of performance indicators, the measurement of performance. Evaluation may focus on input, process, outputs or outcomes, or a combination of some or all of these.

### *Unit of evaluation*

(a) the institution, department, subject/discipline or programme; (b) quality assurance systems, research, teaching and learning, academic work and management.

National systems may be comprehensive, regular and multi-modal or rely on a limited range of evaluations.

### **Academic identities**

The understanding of identity used here is drawn primarily from communitarianism. This embodies an actor/structure perspective, within which it is possible to see academics as both distinctive individuals, and embedded in the communities or institutions of primary importance to them – that is first the discipline, and second the university. They can be seen as shaping individual academic identities, for example, in the myths, traditions and conceptions of knowledge and formative relationships that inform the language and sense of meaning of their members. At the same time, they can be understood as providing, in Bleiklie's terms, the 'normative space' in which individuals make their own choices as they pursue the 'project' of identity (Bleiklie, 1998). The balance between or combination of the two functions of community varies in individual cases and is, in part, a matter of the characteristics of their significant communities.

Values are central in this concept of identity: 'to know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad . . . what has meaning and

importance to you and what is trivial and secondary' (Taylor, 1989, p. 28). So, identity is essentially tied up with what a person is committed to, what overwhelmingly he or she values and strives for. He contends that morality has three dimensions, obligation to others, fulfilment or meaningfulness and a range of notions concerned with dignity, respect and self-esteem. These ideas can be linked with the achievement of the goods that you value, which, in turn, may make your sense of identity more tangible and more public. Public identity or reputation is a critical force in academic systems and in academic working lives. It feeds into the sense of an individual professional identity and self-esteem, and for successful academics a virtuous, if often fragile, circle is created between reputation and self-esteem.

Such concepts and theories of identity provide insights into the stabilities at the core of academia, in the production, reproduction and negotiation of conceptions of knowledge and programmes of work over time within relatively bounded institutions. These stabilities make it hard to change academic values and practices by the imposition of new purposes and structures from different policy and cultural arenas.

### **Evaluation and the dynamics of academic identity**

The evidence on which the rest of the paper draws is primarily based on a study of the impacts of the introduction of quality policies in the United Kingdom in the 1990s (Henkel, 2000; Kogan et al., 2000). There are good reasons for selecting the British case, in that it probably constitutes the most comprehensive and intrusive evaluative system yet devised for higher education.

#### *Main component elements*

- Academic audit system, originally established and owned by the universities before the ending of the binary line, in the hope (quickly to be dashed) that it would prevent the imposition by government of a more intrusive system. The unit of evaluation: institutions' own arrangements for assuring the quality of higher education. A voluntary system, designed to operate in a formative mode of peer evaluation. It effectively survived the ending of the binary line and continued in the ownership of the universities until 1997, when it was incorporated into a new independent body, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (funded by subscriptions from universities and colleges and contracts with the Funding Council).

- The teaching quality assessment (later subject review) system, established under the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992 and originally administered by the Higher Education Funding Council. The unit of evaluation: the providers of all subjects taught at a higher education level. A compulsory system of summative evaluation by peers but incorporating self-evaluation and evaluation by students and other stakeholders (and observation of teaching). Originally envisaged as forming a basis of funding allocations for teaching but, as yet, no direct resource implications. Under the Quality Assurance Agency the evaluative framework became increasingly prescriptive and a subject benchmarking system was introduced.
- Research Assessment Exercise initiated by the University Grants Committee and institutionalized under the Higher Education Funding Council. Unit of evaluation: research, mainly research outputs, but inputs and processes also evaluated. Compulsory system of summative evaluation, mainly by peer review, for all seeking research funding from the Funding Council. It is the basis of a highly selective funding allocation system. Money is allocated to institutions, not basic units.

#### *Institution-discipline-individual dynamics*

A basic assumption of this paper is that academic identities are formed and developed primarily in the interplay between individual, the discipline and the higher education institution. Higher education studies have persistently reinforced the belief that the dominant dynamic is between the individual and the discipline, although to some extent the influence of the discipline and the institution or enterprise can be seen as coming together in the department. In Clark's (1983, p. 32) words, the department '... is simultaneously a part of the discipline and a part of the enterprise, melding the two and drawing strength from the combination'.

In the United Kingdom, external evaluation was one of the most powerful forces within the wave of late twentieth century higher education reforms that threatened that dynamic. In some important respects, institutional audits and the assessments of academic work were mutually reinforcing. They generated a decisive shift in power between the centre of the institution and the basic units (at least in the pre-1992 universities) and promoted a new reliance upon systems and structures in the conduct of academic work. All three forms of external evaluation had these effects. However, academic audit and the assessments of teaching and learning were probably a more evident influence on the bureaucratization of the university.

Meanwhile, research assessment with its more powerful implications for resources, reputations and market competitiveness had more impact on academic recruitment and reward policies and on the departmental structure. Departments could be enlarged, merged or even abolished on the evidence of research performance.

By 1992, when the foundations of a comprehensive system of evaluation were in place and the binary divide was brought to an end, institutional leaders who had long resisted the imposition of external evaluation seemed to be shifting their position. New models of management based on the idea of the university as corporate enterprise (Jarratt Report, 1985) were becoming more influential. Universities could no longer see themselves as working in a protected or bounded space of action; rather they were in an environment where their competitiveness was the key to their survival and prosperity. The sense of belonging to a unified organization continued to be of symbolic importance, but also came to be regarded as an operational necessity. External evaluation began to be perceived as a means of generating internal organizational change in universities at the same time as it was a vehicle of defining, ranking and publicizing their reputation.

Quality assurance was already embedded in the new universities but external audit and external assessment of the quality of teaching had a substantial impact on structures and procedures across the old universities. There was concern to ensure that quality assurance arrangements were systematically developed and linked from the top to the bottom. Anticipation and follow-up of teaching quality assessments had a high profile in these arrangements.

New structures and procedures embodied new organizational concepts, values and priorities. They incorporated the distinctions between what Joss and Kogan (1995) have identified as systemic, generic and technical or specialist definitions of quality, giving greater emphasis to the first two. They established feedback systems, records and measurement rather than professional or individual motivation as the key to the improvement of the quality of education. Administrative values of transparency, consistency, equity and coherence now jostled with those of individualization, responsiveness, departmental distinctiveness and non-conformity. There were shifts towards student- rather than provider-defined quality of teaching.

The bureaucratization of academic work was manifested in other ways, for example in changing relationships between academics and administrators. The functional boundaries between the two became less clear. New senior academic manager roles were created at the centre of the university, while administrators were encouraged to concern themselves with cross-institutional academic policy developments needed if universities were to sustain and improve the standards and productivity of academic work.

These changes were aspects of the shift in power to the centre. Vice-chancellors and their newly formed senior management teams were now redefining what matters for departmental/disciplinary initiatives and self-regulation were. Academic policy-making, extending to such matters as research development, curriculum organization, educational programmes, approaches to teaching and learning and quality assurance, was increasingly a function of the centre, even if in collaboration with departments. Central academic support and development units proliferated, new committees for research and teaching and learning were created, along with new pro vice-chancellor roles.

Now that the quality of academic work had to be regularly demonstrated in explicit and transparent performance, even the most prestigious of disciplines could no longer take for granted their authority or even their security in the institution. Departments and individual academics could find themselves the targets for change in professional practice. Moreover, the change agents might not be fellow academics but administrators or other purveyors of what academics generally regarded as generic and relatively low-level knowledge.

Greater stress on data recording, on procedures and systems, and on the formal appraisal of academic work meant that this work was more open to scrutiny by administrators as well as by senior academic management and academics' own heads of department. This can be understood as a form of the 'visualization of work' (Bleiklie et al., 2000). Academic work, when 'visualized', 'becomes accessible to administrators and academic leaders who may evaluate academic efforts and act upon the information 'from a distance' without any specialist knowledge about it' (ibid.).

The implications of external evaluation for departments were substantial. Recruitment to departments was geared to maximizing research performance and income.

Departments began to be pressed by their institutions to consolidate round certain sub-disciplines and research areas rather than aiming at coverage of the subject for teaching purposes. Teaching quality assessment criteria and methods put a premium on coherence, collective reflection and collaborative action. Self-evaluation exercises could create new levels of understanding and mutual interest in a department.

At the same time, there were more quasi-hierarchical forms of relationship in some departments (e.g. designations as directors of research) and more transparent inequalities. Work was more formally organized and individual performance more formally evaluated. Traditional, often implicitly evolved, divisions of labour and individual exchange relationships, taking account of individual preferences, strengths and weaknesses, and departmental needs for multiple roles, were superseded. In a climate of more explicit and more uniform criteria of performance, departmental climates became more intolerant of the 'unproductive' and individuals were more careful and instrumental about the use of their time.

The overall implications for the relative influence of institutions and disciplines were quite complex. Institutions had more power to shape the lives, relationships and self-perceptions of academics, while they might also be more distanced from them and so weaker forces for identification. Indeed, they could become targets for opposition and a means by which academics consolidated their sense of professional identity through differentiation from the management of the institution.

Institutional changes also had significance for the interaction between academics and the discipline. It could be said to have become more localized and tangible, as the department, or sometimes the subject group, became a more significant mediator or embodiment of the discipline. In so far as teaching was given a higher profile than before in the lives of academics, departments and degree programmes became more important forces in the development of academic agendas. Across the disciplinary spectrum, research was a public and collective matter (as it had not been for academics in the humanities and social sciences, nor even always for scientists), and no longer a private concern of the individual and the discipline. Here, too, departments played a stronger mediating role than before between individuals and their discipline.



However, the increased importance of the local base of the discipline did not mean that cosmopolitan relationships with the more diffuse invisible colleges mattered less. The RAE, in particular, together with a more competitive academic labour market, stimulated more publication, more conferences, more academic networks and inter-institutional connections – at least among those who had not regarded themselves as leaders in their fields.

### **Evaluation and academic identities**

One of the most persistent themes in our research is that, after a decade of reforms, academic working lives continued to be centred in their discipline, whether they saw themselves primarily as researchers, teachers, managers or a combination of more than one of these.

Some academics, particularly in the context of their educational responsibilities, explicitly saw sustaining the discipline as an end in itself. They wanted to ensure that the understanding it afforded and the qualities that it represented, intellectual and sometimes social and moral, were passed on. Many academic values were embedded in concepts of the discipline and often expressed in a language shared by members of the discipline.

Amongst other generic academic values, the most prominent was academic freedom. This meant more than one thing. In part it meant being free to choose one's own research agenda and to follow it through. This was most explicitly discussed by those who felt this freedom to be under threat, that is by scientists outside the highest performing institutions, and by academics in a wider range of disciplines in some post-1992 universities. In the narratives of other academics, it still seemed to be assumed in their accounts of their research and scholarship. It was strongly connected with individuation, recognition in the discipline and the importance of a sense of intellectual continuity and coherence in research agendas.

Academic freedom also meant being trusted and being given the space to manage the pattern of one's own working life and to determine one's own priorities. For some, it was a matter of quality of life for themselves and their families, and perhaps the main reward of an academic career. However, for many it also had a collective significance. Underlying many of the interviews were more basic assumptions: that individual freedom was a function of academic control of the professional arena of teaching and research, that these were the conditions they needed to do work and therefore the conditions in which their academic identity was grounded.

In this section of the paper, we look more closely at what the introduction of new forms of external evaluation meant for these and other academic values: what is most important to academics, their sense of worth and self-esteem, what it means to be an academic.

The organization of evaluation had rather different implications for the meaning of academic work. The separation of evaluation of teaching from that of research reinforced other pressures towards seeing these not so much as integrally connected aspects of academic work as conflicting obligations. This undermined long-held and strongly valued ideas about academic working lives, particularly among those in the humanities.

At the same time, the discipline was a strong feature of the organization of the evaluations of both research and teaching. Research assessment meant that there would be continued pressure on academics to acquire a reputation in their field by publication and other forms of self-presentation and focused connection in the discipline. It reinforced disciplines in some new universities where they had been incorporated into larger administrative units. However, it could also be said to be expressing and revitalizing a myth of profound personal and political importance for academic professional identities, that research was a central and continuing part of them. This was a myth that had no longer reflected the reality of the profession before the institutionalization of the RAE (Fulton, 1997).

Meanwhile, the research assessment exercises were based upon peer review and had strongly resisted a 'drift of epistemic criteria' (Elzinga, 1985) towards economic instrumentalism, and away from the intrinsic value of advancing knowledge.

However, they were having some impact on conceptions of knowledge. The assessments reflected a conception of knowledge centred upon quality and quantity of public output within strict time frames that was becoming embedded in higher education from the undergraduate degree onwards. It is an incremental model of knowledge development, based on an assumption that knowledge advances through structured and focused appraisal, dialogue and interrogation through different forms of peer review, as distinct from internal reflection, integration and maturation, or more diffuse forms of intellectual development and exchange. Only those with a certain amount of published output in the assessment period were considered to be 'research active' and eligible for inclusion in the exercises.

Such definitions state that research undertaken for personal professional development, or for the enhancement of teaching, or to satisfy personal interest or curiosity is not in itself sufficient to be incorporated into a funding formula. Meanwhile, stricter time structures and later specialization might also facilitate more flexibility in research agendas. The foundation of specialist research identities might not be laid down so firmly.

Meanwhile, the framework for the evaluations of teaching also had some implications for conceptions of knowledge. They reflected a new, more instrumental educational agenda whose aims were couched in the language of skills rather than knowledge: skills transferable to the labour market. In addition, they had had some impact on individuals and departments, whose educational traditions were discipline-centred and grounded in liberal educational values. Many had dealt with the new demands by a process of accommodation or, in Latour's terms, translation (Latour, 1987). They believed that they could accommodate the new language of skills within their existing discipline-based curricula without undermining their basic beliefs about the aims of higher education.

However, accommodating new languages and new modes of managing higher education is not so much a final solution to the kind of problems faced by academics as a provisional strategy, the implications of which may be slow to emerge. It may be seen as a form of what Kogan (1996) has termed, in a different context, 'constructive ambiguity'. A strategy of accommodation may prove to be either one of accommodating [change] within existing frames of reference, or accommodating to it. New languages and new modes of management may gradually be assimilated, leaving individuals and departments more in tune with, and able to adapt to, a changing environment, but with their values, beliefs and agendas essentially undisturbed. They may, however, also exercise their own influence and create substantial long-term change in these, and in how they are regulated.

External evaluations generated another set of ambiguities. We have already noted that the assessments of both research and teaching encouraged shifts towards more collective approaches to and responsibility for academic work: (a) research as a responsibility to the department and the institution, as well as to oneself and one's discipline; (b) the importance of a collective approach to curriculum development and delivery to ensure that students had a coherent educational experience; and (c) increasingly prescriptive evaluative frameworks for

the assessments of teaching seemed to promote conformity and orthodoxy rather than creativity and distinctiveness in educational programmes.

Again, academic attitudes were affected by these trends, while at the same time holding fast to the ideal of academic freedom.

Finally, we consider the implications of external evaluation for academics' sense of worth and self-esteem:

- Basic units, departments and subject groups who did well in the evaluations experienced a great boost to their self-esteem, although as the systems developed and expectations rose, the criterion of success was increasingly stringent.
- The research assessment exercise, in particular, created new inequalities and divisiveness in academic departments: between research 'stars' and others and through the classification of 'research active' and 'research non-active'. Once excluded from the category of active researcher, individuals' status and, indeed, their continued employment could come under question. From being a member of a community based on implicit assumptions of status and responsibilities, a person could be consigned to an explicit category of second-class and vulnerable individual. Even in the post-1992 universities, many older staff (who had entered on the assumption that their primary identities would be as teachers) had to come to terms with the idea that their institutions were changing their missions in such a way as to call into question the value of those identities.
- Changes in the balance of power in institutions between departments and the centre and between academics and administrators meant a loss of self-esteem for many academics.

### **Concluding comments**

In the British case, external evaluation can be strongly associated with the advance of managerialism in higher education institutions and challenge to academic identities. The particular features that underpin such developments are: (a) its comprehensive nature; (b) the dominance of summative evaluation; (c) the explicit and quantitative nature of the evaluative judgements, encouraging the ranking of institutions and departments; (d) the increasingly prescriptive nature of evaluative frameworks (teaching and academic audit/quality assurance);

(e) the significance of the evaluations for universities in terms of direct resource implications, reputation, and the signals conveyed to actual and potential markets with their indirect implications for income generation; and (f) the climate of distrust in professionals in which evaluation and new forms of public management were introduced.

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## Chapter 7

### **Commentary on Mary Henkel: The Impacts of Evaluation upon Academic Identities and the Links with Managerialism**

*By Catherine Paradeise, Professor, Université de Marne la Vallée-LATTS, Paris, France*

French scholars and managers should be particularly interested by Mary Henkel's work. It could help them to make the best of the British experience to improve quality and efficiency of the services without breaking professional commitments. They have much to learn from 'the most comprehensive and intrusive evaluative system yet devised in HE' by the United Kingdom since the beginning of the 1990s. In contrast, the French HE assessment and evaluation exercises remain non-unified, and limited in scope and incidence. Yet, the evaluative state has also developed in France over the last twenty years, by extending pluriannual programme agreements, assessment and evaluation from individual research centres to whole universities as organizations. With several essential limitations: (a) evaluation does not impact resources, or in a very limited manner; (b) the mastery of universities on the allocation of resources remains very limited; and (c) French organizational diversity in education and research is an obstacle to a unified (re)-design of accreditation, assessment, evaluation, although the development of the Bologna Process might help to reduce this complexity.

Mary Henkel concentrates on the impacts of evaluation upon institutional dynamics and academic identities in the UK. Based on who evaluates which unit, with what purpose and methods, she contrasts two ideal types of evaluation (professional vs. managerial expertise) and two alternative models of identity (traditional vs. new bureaucratic), each being described through a set of empirical indicators. By encouraging top-down steering based on the use of specific tools by central management, by developing external evaluation embedded in managerial expertise, which 'very concept embodies new organizational concepts, values and priorities', New Public Management bureaucratization impacts the role of teaching departments in universities.

It re-designs teaching and research contents, methods and status, and promotes conformity and orthodoxy of academic identities and by increasing hierarchy and inequalities and intolerance towards the 'unproductive'.

Mary Henkel's results show that 'after a decade of reforms, academic working lives continue to be centred in their discipline', although major changes have occurred. Evaluation has questioned the meaning of academic work by creating conflicting obligations between teaching and research. The conception of knowledge involved into teaching has moved to 'skills transferable to the labour market'. Research has strongly resisted a 'drift of epistemological criteria' towards economic instrumentalism, but has moved an incremental model of knowledge development. How do academics deal with these changes? Many try to accommodate the new language of skills within their existing discipline-based curricula. Yet, it is too early to depart accommodation within the existing frames from accommodation to the existing frames. Altogether, changes have occurred, but they have not been mechanically related to the impulses of NPM. Consequences may be slow to emerge, but change may also favour strategies of accommodation.

### **Mary Henkel's paper in the framework of UK NPM literature**

Many social science papers argue that NPM implementation in the United Kingdom used the narrative on quality and efficiency of higher education as a weapon for managers to take power by breaking professional autonomy, substituting suspicion for confidence between the ruler and the ruled, using supposedly developmental methods as purgative ones, and discouraging professional commitment from scholars. In this vision, the state sets the stage, for instance by tactically using cultural repertoires (Professor Neave) to increase the acceptability of strategic objectives of rationalization through management, while academics have no other choice than to comply (or simulate compliance) or leave the stage. The problem of NPM is set as a question of 'acceptability'. This term imposes a vision of social action that is misleading. Instead of centring on the performative aspect of the rules for the actors, it stresses on the presumably passive acceptance by actors of a new structure, based on new principles, values and tools. Research on organizational innovation and technological transfers has widely shown that it is never so. Neoinstitutionalist sociology of organizations has demonstrated that organizational actors have different targets according to the context, and that decisions are relatively random processes related to the way actors adjust to each other.



It is what Paul Kogan means when he asserts that the (re)-building of collective action and identities is based on the development of ‘constructive ambiguity’, and is that what Mary Henkel shows in her very useful empirical pieces on academic identities.

To a certain extent, it seems that the United Kingdom funding agencies have captured researchers, by mastering criteria of success and controlling access to resources. They have imposed their own principles, competition through market for funding, short-term efficiency assessment and the like. Researchers have been fascinated by NPM organizational design more than they have gone methodically inside the ways actors have played with the new rules in various meso-level settings. They have treated NPM as a narrative or a global ideology. As interesting as it is, this approach can be questioned, especially when it is only based on what actors say or think, without confrontation with their empirical behaviours. What happens when the narrative meets the implementation of principles and tools on the field? Is the result as uniform and non-ambiguous as the narrative tells us? Isn't there any unexpected result? Behind the uniformity of the ideological narrative held by who governs, local actors are not passive. What is important is what really occurs, not what is said to occur.

Changes occur in organizations, not because of top-down imposition of new designs, but when new values develop through social processes to which new rules may contribute by offering new resources or constraints to the actors. Therefore, we should avoid considering change as a simple result of macroscopic injunctions and pay attention to meso-levels and intermediary dynamics. We should check for internal and external validity of methodologies we use, and how they relate empirically to middle-range theories.

Mary Henkel's paper goes in that direction by testing narratives efficiency against hard facts and suggesting that academic identities may be diversely impacted by evaluation. More systematic investigation might help testing for possible sources of variation in the rebuilding of identities. For instance, one might expect that:

- The stress on publication as a major source of identity and status would not be much of a cultural shock in disciplines and universities where it already operated as a local rule. It has long been a condition of being ‘research active’ in research universities as well as in internationally competitive fields, especially where publication obsolescence is rapid. New rules may be considered by active academics as resources to develop effective co-operation

against free riding based on the use of the myth of collegiality in professional bureaucracies.

- The degree to which excellence requires conformism vs. non-conformism may vary according to disciplines.

Cultural values may be more or less receptive to competition incentives.

## Chapter 8

# University Strategy Consistent with Accreditation and Quality Assessment: The Spanish Experience

*By Francisco Michavila, Professor, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain*

### **Instruments and aims**

Improving the quality of state provision of higher education is an obligation for universities and governments, both regional and central. Each has responsibility for taking specific actions, depending on their areas of competence. After the last two decades, dominated fundamentally by coping with the increasing demand for university studies, principally from young people, the growth in the number of students enrolled in universities has now fallen, or has at least slowed down, both for demographic reasons and because of the both rational and welcome wider access to higher education. The time is now ripe for other initiatives and new priorities, so opening the way to greater quality in the choice of higher education on offer.

The definition of strategic aims for the university system has first priority in the sequence of actions leading to better teaching and learning in universities. The academic objectives of universities in Spain have little in common today with those existing when the *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (Law of University Reform) was passed in 1983. The context is also different, with the integration of the European Area of Higher Education. Therefore, to achieve the objectives set, universities must adopt appropriate strategies. This is not a minor matter if they are to have, each individually and the whole system, clear, specific and incentivized aims.

The answer given to the question: ‘What do you want to do?’ will serve to profile the identity of a university, each different from the others, headed towards a process of redefining their areas of competence and so making each both different and complementary at the same time. The question: ‘What does society in general and its individual members in particular ask you to do?’ will cause universities to analyse the opportunities and difficulties encountered in their mission to serve the public. ‘What can be done?’ will shed light on the weaknesses and strengths of their search for academic excellence. These questions and the answers to them

will define university objectives – that is, ‘What is this institution going to do?’ – and its strategies for action: ‘How is it going to do this?’

The above digression is opportune, given the current situation of Spanish universities. Following the enactment of the *Ley Orgánica de Universidades* (LOU) just a year and a half ago a fanatical faith in quality assessment and accreditation has emerged – a faith that I would venture to call the faith of the converted. Over recent months the words ‘assessment’ and ‘accreditation’ have been very much in vogue – to the great satisfaction of those who have spent years locked in a battle for their implementation and for the imbuing of university activities with this new culture of quality. Above all, however, everything must be in its right place for higher education to function well and the ends must be clearly differentiated from the means.

Ends should not be confused with means. The prime aim of a university is the best possible teaching and research through improvements in its teaching and research capabilities. To achieve this, the more instruments we have available, the better. The assessment of quality and the processes of accreditation are not in themselves the ends of university activity; they are, rather, instruments with which to achieve this quality and accreditation. Making such a distinction is timely at this moment in Spain for it appears that today, in the actions of recently created bodies and numerous academic staff associations, everything is subordinated to the procedures and methods of accreditation.

University activities must not be organised just so that they may be accredited, for accreditation should be an instrument for quality assurance and improvement. The former should not happen. It does not happen in countries with extensive experience of assessment, accustomed to the systematic use of the results of accreditation; nor will it occur in our country, despite any accommodation of awkward egoisms in the interests of harmony in the university system.

### **Institutional assessment and accreditation in Spain**

Institutional assessment of university quality has existed in Spain for somewhat longer than ten years. After some isolated experiences and meetings to consider the topic, there began, in the first half of the 1990s, a process that has become unstoppable. An experimental programme involving seventeen universities and a European pilot project on teaching

preceded the first *Plan Nacional de Evaluación* (National Assessment Plan), approved in September 1995.

Since then a new university language has spread, incorporating innovative visions of a culture of quality, and the first concrete results have become clear, both successes and failures. In almost all universities, technical and management units have been created, with their corresponding organizational structures; the first official reports with their interesting information on the health of the university system have been published, and so forth.

The methodology of assessment has been the main discovery. Its three stages – the internal report produced by an institution and then checked against a later assessment carried out by external experts, leading to the preparation of a public document containing the main conclusions on the plus and minus points of the qualification or unit examined – are the same as those followed in similar processes in other countries. This brief history has opened an enticing path towards international recognition and transparency, basic principles in the construction of the European Area of Higher Education. However, another piece has to be added in order to complete the puzzle: accreditation.

It is not just quality improvement that is of interest; also important is quality assurance – an assurance that the courses of study taught by universities comply with at least the minimum standards for levels of knowledge of academic staff, adequate infrastructures and appropriate educational methodologies. Faced with the expected future panorama of growing diversification in the university system, it appears perfectly logical for the public authorities to be concerned that the public does not feel cheated in its expectations of access to higher studies and that scientific work is of a level in accordance with international standards.

The report *Universidad 2000* offered a solution to this new uncertainty: Chapter VII proposed the accreditation of teaching programmes and the creation of a national *Agencia de Acreditación*. The LOU later made this idea its own by devoting *Título V* to the topic of assessment and accreditation. Since then accreditation has always been in the news, and above all those bodies formed after the enactment of the LOU to perform the tasks of accreditation: ANECA - the *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación* (National Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency) and the similar agencies created by the *Gobiernos Autónomos* (regional governments). More specifically, the establishment of

ANECA has aroused much distrust and doubt, its independence has been brought into question and, at the same time, it has suffered resignations and conflicts.

The importance given by the LOU to assessment and accreditation is not limited to teaching programmes, but extends also to the individual scrutiny of the merits of candidates applying for lecturing posts. The latter will entail a great amount of work over the coming years. Such a concern with teaching staff, administrators and technicians, with its consequent cost, should not become merely a bureaucratic processing of an enormous number of applications. For our immediate university future, it concerns an area of crucial importance: that all this energy is directed towards stimulating better teaching and the development of innovative methodologies, and not solely to routine procedures, the obligatory compliance with certain formalities. The networking operations of ANECA and the regional agencies will be beneficial for the system only if each defines its mission precisely and links this to those of the others.

ANECA must supervise the overall work of assessment and accreditation in Spain, so guaranteeing the quality of the assessment processes. The practical application of procedures – that is, the development of the assessment programmes – will be easier and more fluid if it is performed by the agencies created by the regional governments. For the smooth operation of the whole system, the dovetailing of competences and responsibilities between the various agencies is crucial.

There are two ways of interpreting this powerful instrument of university policy: assessment and accreditation. One leads to a reduction in university autonomy through the introduction of greater external control, from the sphere of government, over the activities of universities. This is a way of taking a step backwards, though camouflaged in the uniform of modern working methods. The other favours transparency and matches greater organizational and academic autonomy with a rapid system for revealing the results achieved to society and to its representatives. With this latter way of interpreting assessment tasks, the emphasis must be placed on whatever favours innovative teaching and research excellence.

Two fundamental elements in the correct orientation of the assessment and accreditation processes are credibility – of the assessment bodies and of the individuals responsible for the actual assessing – and their capacity to look towards the future. The agencies should not limit themselves to producing a single snapshot, as it were, of the level of quality apparent in the

university and in its educational programmes. Rather, they should consider prospecting for the future, investigating emerging social demands in training and research.

We find ourselves at the beginning of a long path and we must let matters take their course. It would be wise for those who hold in their hands such a powerful instrument for constructing university policy not to try to reinvent the wheel; let them learn from the experiences of other countries. Moreover, the correction of ‘excesses’ and defects already present in the new system would also be timely. For example, the LOU does not give consideration to a truly authentic system for accrediting programmes – a fundamental aspect of which should be its periodic, cyclical nature. It only stipulates that there should be one single reapproval after qualifications, adapted to the new legal framework, have enjoyed a few years of legitimacy. This presents a serious problem in gaining international recognition for the implemented accrediting processes.

### **Priorities in the planning of university strategies**

Once assessment and accreditation are incorporated into the Spanish university system, the question then centres on how such changes can be used to define more accurately the priorities in university strategy. The five given here are fundamental for Spanish universities, but they are not the only ones.

The first is integration within the European Area of Higher Education. In the context of the now popularized European harmonization, comparability between the higher education systems of the different member states has progressed through the strategies, agreed upon at the Bologna meeting, of introducing European credits, as a unit of measurement of teaching-learning, and of the supplement to be incorporated into diplomas containing previously approved additional information. In this way, recognition of study programmes within the European Union will be made easier, with the proviso that action is taken to provide adequate and verifiable information on the quality of the relevant programmes. It is at this point that assessment and accreditation have a significant role, in addition to their contribution to strategies for the mobility, both real and virtual, of young people within the EU. Furthermore, within the system of indicators used in the processes of assessing the quality of teaching, it would also be advisable to include a section dedicated specifically to the measurement of progress in the education in those values and subjects leading to the formation of European citizens.

The correction of evident weaknesses in our higher education is the second contribution of these assessment and accreditation plans. Thanks to the assessment of universities and the accreditation of programmes and lecturers, it will be possible to diagnose accurately those outstanding defects that require urgent corrective measures. The appropriate strategic actions are many and varied. To mention one of the most outstanding, we may refer to the training of academic staff. If educational methodology is considered when assessing lecturers, then the interest of junior staff in this will be stimulated and this, in turn, will encourage the development by universities themselves of training programmes, which will be accredited by the regional agencies. The training in methodology and in educational technology offered to lecturers, on whom the innovations in teaching depend, is a responsibility to be shared between universities and local authorities.

A third university issue which will benefit from the proposed changes will be improvements in the financing systems, so that they may be efficient, fair and provide resources in accordance with their exploitation – the latter being understood as results satisfying previously defined objectives. Assessment and accreditation information will facilitate the introduction of mechanisms for differential financing whereby one part, small though it may be, will be conditional upon the achievement of good results. Financing, in addition to being transparent and objective, should be broken down into a major share without conditions, so that minimum quality standards may be assured, and a minor share conditional upon the introduction of quality improvement standards agreed between each university and its regional government. Strategic exploitation of assessment and evaluation processes will depend upon the existence of objective indicators for assessing universities, so permitting the apportioning of economic resources in relation to results obtained and the attainment of specific predetermined priority objectives. This will encourage the application of strategies leading to objectives linked to incentives dependent upon their attainment.

Of the points chosen from those that will positively influence assessment and accreditation, the fourth is the redefinition of the limits of university autonomy. This will allow for the adoption of strategies replacing the current a priori control with an a posteriori check on academic results. It will also help to introduce a more flexible university structure, one less rigid in its organization and more open to society.



One specific aspect of this opening up will be the participation of professional bodies in the accreditation processes, for these should measure not only academic competence but also the professional training acquired by students.

University autonomy is not merely a rhetorical topic, empty of any meaning. University autonomy is an essential condition if academic activities are to develop satisfactorily. Its development, balanced against systematic accountability for the efficient use of public resources, is a firm step along the correct path.

From the recent history of Spanish universities we may extract one example, negative in the extreme, when the *Partido Popular*-controlled Regional Government of Valencia attempted to interfere with the autonomy of the University of Valencia. (The *Partido Popular* is the principal conservative political party, currently in power.) At the other extreme, and also damaging in terms of inefficiency and lack of accountability, is the tolerance allowed to many universities in their poor application of good legislation – that is, the Royal Decree of December 1987 on the production of course plans. The vested interests of many departments have been given precedence over the social expectations of modernization of course contents, so jeopardizing the reform.

A fifth and final area, which one will see improved by the implementation of assessment and accreditation, is that of student care. Students must be given better and more accurate information, for this is one of the functions of a quality assurance system. In this way, they can choose both their studies and the university at which they will follow them, having to hand information on the institutional quality of universities, the quality of the courses offered and the facilities available. The right strategy will be one that leads to the generation of information comprehensible to the general public and not only abstruse technical data. Through such information, people will have access to a principle of quality assurance. The socialization of the university does not mean only an increased physical proximity to its students, for at the same time it must comply with minimum standards of quality.

### **Final comments**

We find ourselves on the threshold of a new era for the university. New values and new demands will determine what takes place in classrooms, laboratories and libraries.

A new context is taking shape – one characterized by the spreading of a culture of quality, the implementation of compulsory systems with a universally recognized methodology for assessing the results of teaching and research, differentiating specifications which distinguish one university from another, and the mobility of students and staff within the European area.

What will be the dominant trends in the spread of quality and assessment programmes? The future is not assured for any human activity, but in relation to university quality, one may venture to suggest two characteristics of the times to come. The first will be less state involvement in assessment and accreditation programmes. In the United States, such work is carried out by agencies that are recognized, but private in character; though I do not think we shall go so far in Europe, nor would it be advisable. However, the autonomy of assessment bodies and their equidistance from both universities and the state is essential for the acceptance and credibility of their work. The second characteristic will be the involvement of social interests in the criteria, standards and indicators used. This also assumes greater interaction between the academic world and society in the accreditation processes, with a sharing of certain responsibilities between professional organizations.

Although, at the beginning, the introduction of assessment and accreditation programmes aroused a certain amount of distrust within the academic community, the public perception of accreditation is without any doubt a favourable one. It will continue to be so if actions taken in the next few years are guided by prudence, and if certain of the newcomers now holding high positions in this area do not, in their newly paraded enthusiasm, rush headlong into changes, steamrolling everything in their path.

Information coming out of the United States on the value of accreditation is very encouraging. In studies carried out by the middle states' regional accreditation agency in Philadelphia it has been shown that accreditation is itself considered to be an indicator of quality. There is, furthermore, recognition of the effectiveness of accreditation in improving the activities of institutions assessed by this agency. Almost two-thirds of selected managers and socially prominent individuals polled believe that assessment and accreditation programmes are very useful for improving university quality.

Assessment and accreditation will play a prominent role in the construction of the European university. Important technical aspects still have to be resolved: Discipline-based European agencies? Network operation? Mutual recognition of results, based on a common methodology? etc. However, there is no doubt whatsoever as to their crucial role in the construction of the European Area of Higher Education.

## Chapter 9

### **Commentary on Francisco Michavila: University Strategy Consistent with Accreditation and Quality Assessment: the Spanish Experience**

*By John Brennan, Professor, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University, United Kingdom*

It seems to me that Professor Michavila has been both bold and cautious. He has been bold in his references to the financial consequences of evaluation and bold in his comments about the representation of social interests. He has been cautious in his warnings against over-enthusiasm and excessive zeal.

I would like to raise a number of points regarding institutional reactions to and perspectives on assessment and accreditation. These are based on my involvement in a number of international projects on higher education evaluation systems.

#### **Compliance culture**

Professor Michavila refers to the danger of a compliance culture, but is it not inevitable that behaviour switches to 'getting a good result in the assessment'? Does this matter? Is compliance good or bad? Does it undermine professional responsibility? Can it be avoided? Perhaps the answer lies in the kinds of behaviours that are required in order to comply.

#### **Purposes**

Are different purposes of assessment/accreditation compatible? The most commonly referred to are accountability, improvement and the provision of consumer information. It may be difficult to achieve all three in the same evaluation system.

#### **Diversity**

How can assessment/accreditation cope with diversity? For example, the creation of a European higher education area implies a degree of 'standardization' and comparability. Yet most of our national discussions emphasize a need for greater difference and diversity. Is assessment/accreditation necessarily conservative; that is, setting limits to innovation and diversity that would otherwise be desirable?

## **Impact**

What do we know (really) about impact, especially in relation to the quality of learning?

There is often still confusion about the difference between quality and reputation. There are a number of ‘quality myths’ around, including perhaps a rather premature consensus within the ‘quality industry’ based on little evidence about the effectiveness of various quality procedures. Senior administrators within institutions may have a vital role to play in mediating the effects of external quality systems.

## **Implications of a unit of assessment: subject/institution**

Subject-based assessment can employ the reference point of peer consensus over ‘what constitutes a good education in subject X’. Institution-based assessment is more contentious. There is often a lack of an evidence base for assertions, and a lack of consensus about what would be suitable quality criteria. Institutional-level evaluation or assessment is more linked to managerialism, i.e. its authority based on position rather than expertise.

## **Quality, power and values (with regard to teaching quality)**

Different approaches to quality assurance invoke different sources of power and values. Thus:

Subject based	Academic peers (focus on content)
Pedagogic based	Educationalists (focus on generic pedagogy)
Institution based	Managers (focus on procedures)
Employment based	Graduates (employability/outcomes)
Consumerist based	Students (focus on information)

We see a different balance between the above in different places and systems. Thus, different quality systems empower different groups within higher education institutions (HEIs).

Finally, I would make some general comments. Quality assurance and evaluation is often a controversial subject. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the European evaluation system with the greatest longevity – the *Commission d’Evaluation Nationale* in France – is often regarded as having had relatively little impact, and hence has been less controversial.

We can also note an international trend where the simple existence of a national accreditation or quality system is taken as an indicator of the presence of ‘quality’ in that national higher education system. This seems to be a very large assumption to make! Perhaps this suggests a rather larger notion of ‘compliance’ – suggesting that a range of actors may find it convenient to ‘pretend’ that external quality systems are valuable and effective. There may be a distinction to be made here between individual and collective rationality. Whereas the higher education collective in any given quality system might find it rational to oppose the introduction of an external evaluation system, it is rational for the individual higher education institution to follow the rules and try to be successful in the evaluation game.

Quality agencies – like other intermediary bodies - occupy difficult political territory between the state and the academic community. Some observers have drawn the parallel between quality assurance and a religion. Perhaps that should also remind us that it is not necessary to believe in the religion in order to recognize it has a function.